Connecting expressions and verb phrases in the essay writing of first-year students:
pedagogical implications for course design

BY

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Acknowledgements

I declare that *Connecting expressions and verb phrases in the essay writing of first-year students: pedagogical implications for course design* is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

SIGNATURE

(A COETZER)

5 Sept 2019

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Summary

The aims of the study were to compare connector use and verb phrase use between two achievement groups. The achievement groups comprised the Highs, students whose essays were highly rated (124 essays; word length 59702), and the Lows, students whose essays were rated poorly (126 essays; word length 60524). The analytical frameworks for the analysis of appropriate use were taken from Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan (1999).The analytical frameworks for inappropriate use were designed by the researcher. Connectors comprised circumstance adverbials, linking adverbials, co-ordinators and relativisers. Verb phrase uses comprised all the categories described in Biber, et al. (1999). The analysis entailed counting number of occurrences per use for each achievement group and determining whether difference in use was significant or not by undertaking Log Likelihood calculations using Paul Rayson's Log Likelihood calculator available online. These also indicate the relative frequency of each use. The results for appropriate connector use revealed that although no significant differences occurred with respect to connector categories, highly/significant differences did occur with regard to specific forms. Regarding inappropriate connector use, results showed that differences between the two achievement groups were overall highly significant, with a substantially higher occurrence of inappropriate uses in the Lows compared to the Highs. The results for appropriate verb phrase use revealed highly/significant differences between the Highs and Lows for several verb phrase categories, such as modal auxiliary use and Perfect Aspect. The results for inappropriate verb phrase use, as was the case for inappropriate connector use, showed highly significant differences between the two achievement groups, with the Lows having a much higher incidence of inappropriate uses than the Highs. The study finally considers the pedagogical implications arising from the results and makes suggestions for course design relating to writing instruction.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an overview of the study by examining the context in which it is situated, discussing the rationale for the research, setting out the research aims and questions, outlining the methodology used, and describing the overall structure of the thesis.

1.1 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The setting of the current study is the University of Limpopo (UL), which, at the time of the study, used to have two campuses, namely Turfloop campus in Limpopo and the Medunsa campus, on the border of Ga-Rankuwa and Pretoria. The University of Limpopo is traditionally an historically disadvantaged institution, and continues to have mainly black students, for whom English, the medium of instruction, is an Additional Language (AL). Although the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) at most South African schools is also English, first-year students and beyond, continue to experience difficulty with English, more particularly when it comes to academic/writing. Writing challenges are often referred to as a matter of concern by most discipline staff at UL, and requests for support in this area are common at both under- and postgraduate levels. One of the problems expressed frequently is the students' inability to produce coherent writing, which includes accurate reporting.

In this regard, in an attempt to address the wider academic literacy needs of the students, all the Health Sciences students at Medunsa campus have to complete a compulsory first-year English for Academic Purposes course, whereas at the Turfloop campus, only those students whose degree programmes require them to enrol for the EAP course do so. Of necessity, our EAP courses have to include as many aspects of academic literacy as possible, and as a result, writing instruction tends to be limited. A further compounding factor is staff shortages within the language support structure. Due to this, often only one essay is written by the students. This is usually a once-off product rather than a writing process draft experience where students have the opportunity to revisit their texts upon feedback from the lecturers. The outcome of this is frustrating for both the student and lecturers since very little meaningful writing skills

development occurs. Neither campus has a writing centre facility where senior language degree students can provide one-on-one tutoring so students never really gain a sense of how text develops in terms of content and language improvements.

Quality writing is especially important for those Medunsa students enrolled for the Health Care Sciences programmes since many of the programmes require research report writing in the final year of study, for example Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Dietetics. The medical students who do Practice of Medicine (POME) across the six years of study are also expected to produce coherent writing when it comes to on-the-job writing of medico-legal reports (for the Bioethics component) which cannot afford to be rejected due to confusing text and inaccurate reporting, a common concern expressed by the POME lecturers, all practising medical doctors. Good writing is further important for the Turfloop students who are enrolled for language/-related programmes, such as Communications and Media studies.

However, in spite of a major concern at UL being students' incoherent writing and not being able to report accurately, no studies of first-year student writing in English with respect to these areas, have to my knowledge, been undertaken at UL. In the past, we participated in the National Benchmark Test (NBT) designed by the University of Cape Town (UCT). Medunsa campus additionally administered the Test for Academic Literacy (TALL) designed by the University of Pretoria (UP) but the focus of our interest was academic literacy (tested by means of multiple choice questions only) and not writing, so the writing components were omitted from the testing. As a result we have had no reliable indication of our incoming students' writing ability. In this respect, the National Senior Certificate (NSC) results are also not viewed as providing a reliable indicator of language proficiency (cf. van Rooy & van Rooy, 2015 on page 144 in chapter 2), let alone quality writing skills.

Given the above UL background, it was considered important to undertake an in-depth study of students' writing with a focus on two aspects which discipline lecturers have pointed out as problematic, namely incoherent text (in this regard, the role of connectors in creating coherent text) and inaccurate reporting (in this regard, the role of verb phrases in reporting). The rationale for the study is described in the next section.

1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The rationale for the study is presented in two parts: the first focuses on the reasons for choosing to examine connectors (also referred to as connecting expressions in this study) which play an important role in achieving coherence (an aspect of writing quality), and the second part focuses on the reasons for examining verb phrases which are seen to play an important role in achieving accurate reporting.

1.2.1 Connectors

One motivation for this study was to determine to what extent student writers use connectors in their essays and to explore the relationship between connector use and coherent writing in terms of the holistic ratings of essays into two achievement groups, namely Highs and Lows. In this regard, those connectors which are used more frequently, and differences in the use of connectors between the two groups will be examined. Both appropriate and inappropriate use will be considered.

An overriding reason for the current study has been UL students' inability to produce coherent text and sound argument in the sense that the student has to be able to move between reporter and interpreter over the course of the undergraduate degree programme (Aull & Lancaster, 2016). A further reason is that although a considerable amount of research into connector use is continuing, the focus tends to be on more advanced academic native speaker (NS) compared to non-native speaker (NNS) writing, often further compared to expert writing, rather than beginner-level writers (to mean those students with no tertiary level writing experience) producing essays similar to freshman college essay composition where an opinion piece is written based on their own ideas, without reference to external sources. For the purposes of the current study, the freshman college essay was believed to be more realistic and achievable by entry students rather than actual academic writing without prior instruction in this regard. A related goal was to have insight into the students' writing ability before instruction to be able to better comprehend what students could reasonably achieve in their writing in one year of EAP with limited time devoted to writing per se. In addition, research has tended to examine production or error-free T units instead of incorporating inappropriate uses which may be helpful for EAP teaching purposes. What is often investigated is over- and under-use rather than misuse

or idiosyncratic use. It is in this respect that the present study hopes to fill the gap, with its focus on entry-students' writing prior to writing instruction, students' use of connectors both appropriately and inappropriately, where the latter entails an error analysis, and keeping the focus on AL learner writing by comparing two learner achievement groups. Although the research literature in this area commonly points out that one of the characteristics of AL writers is the failure to use connectors appropriately, the tendency to over-use a few, not having access to a broad range, and not always knowing how to apply those with which they are familiar appropriately in terms of syntax, semantics and pragmatics, studies, generally, do not investigate deviant uses. In this regard, hopefully, the insights gained from the current study will shed light on differences in the students' use of connectors and the creation of coherent texts.

Further reasons for the current study are that connector studies pertaining to over- and under-use are often reported as having mixed results, sometimes with no significant differences between learners and natives (Gao, 2016). These mixed results may be a reflection of the fact that it is difficult to directly compare studies when connector classifications have differed, which they often do. Furthermore, it is difficult to compare findings when writing cohorts differ, for example, learner writers at beginner levels cannot be compared directly with more advanced NNS cohorts, or experts, where texts may have been revised based on expert or editorial input (Charles, 2011). Also, coherence rating judgements have been found to be different for first language (L1) versus second language (L2) writers wherein the former the use of local cohesive devices (connectors) is associated with lower writing quality judgements whereas higher rated L2 writing contains greater subordination (Charles, 2011; Crossley, Kyle & McNamara, 2016).

With regard to local connector use, many studies have tended to concentrate on linking adverbials at the inter-sentential level (Leedman & Cai, 2013; Liu, 2008). Linking adverbials are popular study foci because of their high frequency in academic prose. Those that feature commonly are adversative/contrastive and counter/concessive markers since they perform an important function in elaborating and explaining information and in so doing, help the writer to create textual cohesion (textual meaning) and to position himself in relation to the content (interpersonal meaning). What appears to be lacking in the research literature is studies on co-ordinator use, relativisers and circumstance adverbials, all of which contribute to local cohesion. The difference between linking adverbials and the other types of connectors, is that linking

adverbials function to make semantic connections between spans of discourse of varying lengths or levels whereas the other types provide both semantic and syntactic links at the same time. They can join two clauses syntactically, with or without a comma (Liu, 2008).

The lack of co-ordinator research is most likely due to the fact that this type of connection is linked to early development in the sense that it is a basic way of complexifying – the least complex, and are few in number (Vercelloti & Packer, 2016), and is therefore assumed to have been mastered by later development levels, and would not then subsume other connector types. However, my experience has been that poorly rated university essays tend to over-rely on, or wrongly use co-ordinating markers. I also argue that relativisers should be examined since they tend to characterise more mature writing. They are the most explicit types of noun modification. Relativiser frequency is often used as indices of syntactic complexity (Mazgutova & Kormos, 2015). They are generally considered more difficult than other structures because they have an additional syntactic node in formal syntactic descriptions (Vercelloti & Packer, 2016). Circumstance adverbials are also viewed as relevant in the current study as they assist in packaging information; they assist in organising, conveying and interpreting meaning in three ways: to establish specific references to circumstances; to convey stance and comments, and to perform connecting functions that facilitate logical flow (Zareva, 2009). Crossley and McNamara's (2014) study revealed that highly rated essays used more relative and adverbial clauses than poorly rated essays.

My contribution will mainly be applicational in the sense that the results of the analysis (of both connectors and verb phrases) will provide an empirical basis for EAP course design. The analysis entails examining four connector types, therefore: co-ordinators, relativisers, circumstance and linking adverbials. Uses will also be examined intra- and inter-sententially since as Charles (2011) points out regarding adverbials of result, the phraseology is affected by whether the adverbial is used to link sentences or clauses, and therefore gives a fuller account of patterning associated with each adverbial. In this regard, the current study examines three related aspects of connector use, namely: typical phraseology; sentence position; discourse functions, and idiosyncracies (inappropriate uses). My interest is to establish whether the student writers were able to integrate connectors into complex sentences and use punctuation accordingly.

Although my focus was local cohesion and not global cohesion, where necessary, texts were examined in their entirety to determine the use of local connectors.

An additional motivation for the study is that more recent research on connector use, as is the case with older research, regularly refers to the inadequacy of old and new textbooks and grammars in dealing with connector use in spite of connector use being a perennial AL or L2 problem. Instead of a contextualised approach incorporating syntax, semantics and pragmatics, the tendency is to treat connectors without reference to the four factors which influence their use, namely: genre, discipline, context and function (Charles, 2011), and to present them as being interchangeable, which is seldom the case. An outcome of this uninformed approach is that often students will use connectors when these are unnecessary. This creates a sense of surface logicality where no deep logic exists. Clearly then, students have not understood the interrelationship between syntax, semantics and pragmatics when choosing connectors. This is an important motivation for doing error analysis to determine what students have difficulty with in order to assist them. In this regard, suggestions will be made for course design purposes.

To conclude this section, the research reveals that connectors play a significant role in facilitating text-structuring both in terms of content and interactively where the reader is invited to participate in the meaning-making process. Connectors are therefore important in creating textual meaning (syntax and semantics) and discursive meaning (pragmatics). In this sense, they contribute towards coherence – a reader's sense of textual unity, an important feature of good writing.

1.2.2 Verb phrases

My interest in verb phrases has its roots in my masters' study on hedges in occupational therapy (OT) writing by undergraduate students and OT professionals. The text analysis involved examining reporting verbs including the use of modal auxiliaries. Overall, both good and poor student writers had difficulty in verb use as a reporting strategy. Not only were verb phrase constructions problematic, but there was also evidence of a limited verb lexicon. Subsequent to this study, I have included verb phrase study using authentic Medunsa campus (where I am based) discipline-based materials to acquaint students with verb phrase constructions and communicative functions to assist them with their reporting of incidents or processes in their

writing for the disciplines. But in spite of my efforts, my students continue to have difficulty in recognising parts of verb phrases, for example, *is/are* as part of a verb phrase, or used as primary verbs, are overlooked. Also, time frames in terms of tense and aspect are not understood, and students therefore have no idea of how to construct verb phrases to reflect accurate time frames (the form/function relationship is beyond their comprehension). Given this, and the role verbs play in reporting, one would expect that verb phrases would be included in an EAP course, but this is not the case at Medunsa campus. At the Turfloop campus, verbs are taught but in relation to tenses – with the aim of correcting the students' wrong use of tenses. My argument is that unless verbs are seen as playing an integral role in communicating information, and unless form alongside function are made explicit, AL students more particularly, will never fully comprehend the relevant role that verbs play in accurately communicating information in written texts. I further argue that unless students have control over verbs, they will not understand the prescribed or recommended material they read for their studies, as they will not recognise or make sense of the reporting strategies in the text, with verbs being a common strategy that expert writers use when conveying information. Perhaps, too, with improved insight into how verbs function as a reporting strategy, students may begin to better understand the notion of source integration and referencing in their academic writing in the disciplines, in the sense that the verb phrase points to an agent (a noun phrase), and even when the passive is used an agent is usually discernible.

In order to shed light on the UL students' use of verb phrases, the focus of verb study here is very broad in that the entire English verb system is examined, rather than a particular use such as the passive, or modal auxiliaries, or verb lexicon (as referring to a main verb specifying content). The reason for this broad approach is to gain insight into what it is that students are in control of, and what it is they have difficulty with to be able to address this by way of including these areas in the EAP syllabus at UL[1]. To my knowledge, I am not aware of any study that has examined first-year, more particularly AL students' use of the entire English verb system. As the literature review (chapter 2) in the current study shows, studies tend to focus on a specific feature, for example: tense; aspect; modality; agreement or verb phrase syntax.

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[1] When I taught English as a First or Home Language at Pretoria High School for Girls in the 1980s, we noticed that the Standard six or or what is now termed Grade 8 learners had difficulty with verb use and we therefore addressed this over the five years of study at secondary school. By matric or Grade 12, the learners were able to use verbs effectively in their writing tasks in all subjects, ranging from the Humanities to the Sciences.

A review of the literature reveals that in English writing, verbs play a pivotal role in the construction and understanding of clauses. In terms of their function, they are largely responsible for the grammatical structure of the language, for example, the verb *give* designates an event involving at least three entities: the giver; the object given, and the person/entity given to (Partridge, 2011:135). Nevertheless, in spite of their centrality in clauses (and by implication, academic/writing), research on verb use in student writing does not appear to attract much interest. Similarly, it appears that instruction on verb use in English as an AL or for academic purposes is marginally attended to These concerns are echoed by Housen (2002:77), who bases his study on the assumption that the verb system "is a centrally important area for the structure of any language which is moreover likely to pose major learning problems", more particularly in English, which has over 200 grammatically possible verb forms or combinations of forms that can be distinguished (Joos, 1964, cited in Housen, 2002:78). Collectively, these forms express a very broad range of semantic meanings (tense, aspect, mood), grammatical relations (agreement, voice), and discourse-organisational functions (grounding), "many of which are crucial to communication" (Housen, 2002:78). It, therefore, comes as no surprise that learners of English have difficulty in identifying the correct verb form and mapping them onto their appropriate meanings and functions, a task that is compounded by the lack of structural congruity and of isomorphy of form and meaning in this subsystem of language.

Another area pertinent to use of verbs in English is modal auxiliaries and their role in argument, with reference not only to epistemic meaning, but deontic and dynamic senses as well (§ 2.6.1.2). Nevertheless, I am not aware of modality being explicitly taught in EAP courses in South Africa, where attention to modal use covers both structural categories for expressing modality and discourse considerations (tone; register and semantics). I believe this can be taught without burdening students with overly technical language to describe the functions of modal auxiliaries.

Tense and aspect (§ 2.6.1.5) also appear to be glossed over in EAP courses, with perhaps more attention to tense than aspect, and not demonstrating how tense and aspect combine to achieve communicative goals. I find the neglect of aspect concerning given its important role in academic writing, where the perfect aspect functions as highlighting the general relevance of previous research findings and practices in relation to the writer's current argument. Also, while one acknowledges English varieties, the progressive aspect use in Black South African English

(§ 2.6.1.3), may not be acceptable in certain academic contexts, and these would need to be pointed out giving reasons for why the use is inappropriate.

Although the current study did not examine lexical verbs per sé, studies on lexical verbs in terms of verb types, such as communication verbs, show that, generally students underuse these verbs (§ 2.6.1.6). These are important in conveying: personal stance, reviewing the literature, quoting, expressing cause and effect and summarising and contrasting. Cognition and relational verbs have also been shown to be relevant in academic writing. (cf. Granger & Paquot, 2009 in § 2.6.1.6).

While passive constructions are generally taught in EAP courses, their pragmatic function and the various passive constructions in terms of tense or aspect tend to be overlooked. In this regard, Hinkel (1999; § 2.6.1.6) points out the importance of the passive in achieving objectivity in writing.

Based on the above, I would argue that an all-round examination of students' use of verb phrases could provide reliable evidence for including verb phrase study in EAP courses.

To conclude this section on the rationale for the current study of both connectors and verb phrases, I believe that a particularly important contribution lies in the conceptualization of the two frameworks for analysing inappropriate uses of connectors and verb phrases. These may be helpful to those wishing to analyse these features, and/or teachers in the classroom who need to explain in what sense uses may be inappropriate. In this regard then, my contribution is applicational.

In the next section, the research aims and questions of the present study will be set out.

1.3 RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTIONS

This study is aimed at primarily making a contribution at the descriptive and applied levels. The descriptive contribution follows from the development of two student samples, the two achievement groups as the Highs and Lows are compared to determine the differences in the four types of connector use, namely: co-ordinators, relativisers, circumstance adverbials and linking adverbials, and to determine differences in verb phrase use.

In this study, good writing was operationalised in terms of the occurrence of connecting expressions for signaling logical relations between meaning units or clauses, thereby creating textual unity, and verb phrases, whole verb constructions signaling specific communicative functions, thereby contributing towards accurate reporting.

The applied contribution relates to suggestions based on insights gained from findings for course design.

The overall aims of this study are:

1. To compare connector use between the two achievement groups.
2. To compare verb phrase use between the two achievement groups.

The aims regarding connector and verb phrase use are addressed in the course of investigating the following research questions:

1. Is there a difference in the frequency of appropriate connector use by the Lows, relative to the frequency of appropriate connector use by the Highs?
2. Is there a difference in the frequency of inappropriate connector use by the Lows, relative to the frequency of inappropriate connector use by the Highs?
3. Is there a difference in the frequency of appropriate connector use by the Lows, relative to the frequency of appropriate verb phrase use by the Highs?
4. Is there a difference in the frequency of inappropriate connector use by the Lows, relative to the frequency of inappropriate verb phrase use by the Highs?

In the following section, a brief outline of the methodology will be provided.

1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.4.1 Research design

The research design of the current study was essentially quantitative in the sense that the text (essay) analysis of connecting expressions (CEs) and verb phrases (VPs) entailed counting number of occurrences (both appropriate and inappropriate uses) and testing whether differences in use between the two achievement groups were statistically significant by doing Log-Likelihood calculations (§1.4.4.2). However, the present study also entailed qualitative analysis

since the text analysis incorporated illustrating and sometimes explaining appropriate and inappropriate uses.

1.4.2 Sampling method for essays

The essays that scored a pass mark (50% and above) comprised a convenient sample in that out of the original 669 essays that constituted the UL sample, only 124 passed, referred to as the HIGHS or Hs. The remaining essays scored less than 49%, and therefore failed, referred to as the LOWS or Ls.[2] In order to obtain a similar sized sample to the HIGHS, a systematic sampling procedure was undertaken. However, in order not to lose small sub-samples comprising ten or fewer essays in the different degree programmes, these groups were retained as far as possible depending on whether the essays met selection requirements (cf. exclusion criteria below). When groups were bigger than ten, every third essay was selected, till the sample size approximated that of the HIGHS.

1.4.3 Exclusion criteria for essays

Essays with a change of topic, and those that disregarded length specifications (majorly long or very short), were excluded.

1.4.4 Data collection

1.4.4.1 Student essay

At the Medunsa campus, all the first-year entry level students wrote the essay. At the Turfloop campus, students registered for particular degree programmes had to be selected to facilitate logistics since not all degree programmes could be accommodated. The students wrote an unprepared essay on a particular topic in a one hour session. No reference materials were permitted.

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[2] The marking procedure used at Medunsa campus was followed. The essays were divided equally among the EAP staff at Medunsa campus and were holistically assessed in terms of content and organisation or text structure (out of 25 marks) and language control (also out of 25 marks). The total out of 50 was then converted to a mark out of a 100. The Head of Department (who has a PhD in English literature and an M Ed in Language Education, with 40 years of secondary and tertiary teaching experience) moderated the marking to ensure consistency. Due to this marking practice, an interrater reliability test could not be administered. Nevertheless, the moderation (common practice at Medunsa campus) should have ensured a reasonable degree of consistency in marking, further ensuring a reliable sample of both HIGHS and LOWS.

1.4.4.2 Data analysis

All the UL student essays were marked by EAP language practitioners involved in first-year teaching. A holistic scoring guide jointly compiled by the Medunsa EAP staff was used. This comprises two components: content and organisation (text structure) and expression (language use). The scores that were obtained were used to distinguish the two achievement groups, namely those that passed with 50% and above, referred to as the HIGHS and those that failed with 49% and less, referred to as the LOWS. This distinction was necessary in order to determine whether there were differences in connectors or connecting expressions (CE) and verb phrase (VP) use.

The text (essay) analysis involved a detailed examination of both appropriate and inappropriate use of connecting expressions (CEs) and verb phrases (VPS). The CE analysis was confined to co-ordinators and subordinators (relativisers and adverbials) as it is believed that entry-level students commonly have difficulty with signaling logical relations between meaning units in extended writing. The VP analysis comprised whole constructions and the full range thereof (e.g. Passive with Perfect Aspect). This approach to verb study was seen to be relevant since AL student writers, in general, have difficulty with the English verb system, besides tenses. The corpus grammar by Biber, Johannson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan (1999) served as the primary reference for the analysis of both CEs and VPs. Prior to the VP analysis, all the texts (essays) were tagged using Paul Rayson's CLAWS7 POS (Parts of Speech) tagging online software (Lancaster University) to assist with the identification and verification of verb forms in verb phrases. [3] What is important to emphasise, is that the analysis of connectors and verb phrases did not entail a study of patterns with respect to use, which is the case in a Corpus Linguistics approach. This was not the aim of the current study. The primary aim was to determine to what extent first-year entry-level students were using the features appropriately or inappropriately. For this reason, no reference corpus was developed or utilised for comparison purposes.

In order to determine how the student writers used connectors and verb phrases, both appropriate and inappropriate uses were counted, yielding number of occurrences per use per achievement group. Thereafter, Log-Likelihood calculations were undertaken to establish whether differences

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[3] Because verb phrases in English can be quite long and amorphous – with verb parts not necessarily following on one another, I found using CLAWS7 POS helpful in identifying the parts or forms constituting the VP. This would also be useful for English language practitioners to use as a guideline when pointing out specific communicative functions of a VP and concomitant forms making up the particular VP for teaching purposes.

with respect to the use of particular connectors and verb phrases were statistically significant. Rayson's Log-Likelihood calculator (Lancaster University, 2003) available online was used. [4]

Log-Likelihood statistics work out the percentage of occurrences of a feature in each student cohort (HIGHS; LOWS), relative to the total number of words in the corpus of each cohort. Log-Likelihood calculations give a more nuanced, richer analysis since they are done relative to the length of each corpus, i.e. total word length of each corpus or essay sample. The Log-Likelihood calculator also gives the relative frequency of number of occurrences per feature per achievement group, which helps in comparing the use between achievement groups.

1.5 RELIABILITY, VALIDITY, OBJECTIVITY AND BIAS

The following measures were taken to meet objectivity and bias concerns with respect to the text analysis. The handwritten essays constituting the UL sample, which were coded for anonymity, but which indicated degree programmes and the achievement levels (HIGHS or LOWS), had to be typed in Word in order to be converted to Txt format for the CLAWS POS tagging for analysing the verb phrases. This constituted the initial batch (Batch 1) that was printed and reserved for later reference after the completion of the text analysis. Thereafter, a second batch of the texts was created where the labels indicating achievement groups (H versus L) was created where the labels indicating achievement groups were deleted (Batch 2) from the Word texts to eliminate possible treatment bias that could arise if the achievement levels were known beforehand. Batch 2 texts where the achievement groups remained unknown were then analysed. In this way, the results pertaining to the analysis are based on objective and unbiased treatment of the essay data.

Reliability measures involved co-analysing twenty-five texts in the UL (final) sample at the onset of the text analysis by both the researcher and a colleague at Medunsa campus. Here too, Batch 2 essays were used for the preliminary analysis. Every 10th essay from Batch 2 was selected till a total of twenty-five essays was reached. The co-analyst had over forty years of teaching experience in English, both as a home and additional language, and held a PhD qualification in English.[5] While the twenty-five texts were analysed independently by the co-

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[4] *ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/llwizard.html*

[5] Both the co-analyst and I also have extensive teacher-training experience gained from work at teacher-training colleges in townships and cities. Because this involved extensive work at primary and secondary schools where

analyst and the researcher with respect to CE and VP use, guidelines and a framework drawn up by the researcher for what constituted a CE and VP were discussed. As indicated earlier, the framework was based on the work by Biber, et al. (1999). This ensured that both analysts could reliably identify a CE and VP every time, and ensured validity in the sense that only CE and VP constructions were identified, and not others. Thereupon, the two analysts met to discuss their analyses. The co-analysis was particularly helpful in addressing problematic cases, and for the categorisation of inappropriate CE and VP uses. Once agreement was reached between the two analysts based on this preliminary analysis, the researcher was able to refine the analytical framework and continue analysis. Based on this, the findings pertaining to the text analysis may be considered reliable and valid since two independent analysts were involved in a preliminary analysis that informed the final analysis.

1.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The UL students who wrote the essay were informed at the outset both verbally and in writing (this section appeared on the Essay Task document) what the purpose of essay was, and were requested to participate in the study. Those students who did not want to participate were not expected to write the essay. All students chose to write the essay. No-one was disadvantaged in the process since this was simply an entry-level essay and not for assessment purposes. Although students were requested to indicate their names and student numbers on the essay for essays to be returned for a session on feedback, as indicated above, the essays were coded (to ensure anonymity) and typed for analysis purposes; the latter was necessary for the CLAWS POS tagging for the analysis of the verb phrases.

Students were additionally informed that the results of the study would be made known to the University academic community during the annual University's Academic Research Day programme.

The necessary Ethics Clearance from the University (refer to Appendix A) was obtained.

English was the medium of instruction, and an AL for learners, we have a fair amount of insight into the difficulties learners have in using connectors and verb phrases in their writing.

1.7 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis consists of five chapters, the first of which provides an overview of the study, presents a broad outline of the educational context in which the research is situated as well as the rationale for the study, indicates the research aims and questions, and provides a summary of the methodology used.

Chapter 2 presents the literature review and a discussion of related research. The two themes that form the focal points of the literature review are coherence, cohesion/connector use and verb use in English. This discussion investigates research questions, methodologies and findings in previous studies that have a bearing on the current study. Chapter 2 is divided into two parts (reflected in the Table of Contents).

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the research aims and questions, as well as a description of the research design. This includes a detailed description of the participants, the data collection procedures, the compilation of the sample, and the procedure to test for significant differences. Chapter 3 is divided into two parts (reflected in the Table of Contents).

Chapter 4 presents the results of the quantitative analyses. These are interpreted with specific reference to significant results. Interpretation includes text examples of connector and verb phrase use. Chapter 4 is divided into two parts (reflected in the Table of Contents).

Chapter 5 presents the overall conclusion in which the main findings are highlighted, the study's contribution is considered, and the pedagogical implications are explored, with recommendations for classroom applications. The limitations are then considered followed by suggestions for possible future research.

1.8 CONCLUSION

The aim of the current study has been to establish whether there is a relationship between students' use of connectors and verb phrases in their essay writing and essay ratings by comparing two achievement groups. In this regard, it is hoped that the findings will provide insights for the development of teaching materials and activities relating to students having to produce well-written texts during the course of their studies at university.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW: PART ONE

2.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter overall, various aspects which are considered pertinent to the study on student writing at the University of Limpopo described in this thesis will be discussed. It is to be noted that while these aspects are presented separately, they are in essence, inseparable, since each explores and illuminates particular language issues that ultimately come together to help English language practitioners better understand the nature of language/learning, learners' strengths and challenges with respect to learning/writing in English as an additional language, and ways of creating an optimal teaching environment, more particularly for developing academic writing skills. The following aspects will be considered, in this order: world Englishes and multilingualism; multilingualism in South African education; English as Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) and Language Across the Curriculum (LAC); academic literacy, including the notions of multiliteracies and language proficiency; errors in additional language learning; language and academic writing research, and finally writing pedagaogy. How each of these aspects relates to the current study, and one another, will be elaborated on in the respective sections.

Part One of this chapter seeks to provide a broad overview of those aspects which impact and influence our approach to teaching English for Academic Purposes. The relevant sections here are §2.1-§2.5. They have been included in this thesis as providing a frame of reference to the current study.

2.1 WORLD ENGLISHES AND MULTILINGUALISM

English as a world language and its evolution into identifiable varieties is clearly recognised in the plethora of literature in this field. The term world Englishes refers to the spread of English, initially by settler communities (North America; Australia), secondly, the ex (colonial) communities (India; Nigeria) and thirdly, as foreign language (Japan; Germany) (Davies, 2012). These waves correspond to Braj Kachru's (1992) inner, outer and expanded circles, described in the subsequent paragraph. World Englishes is used to designate the diversity of varieties around the world. The plural term indicates that any one variety is part of a wider complex of related yet

recognisably different varieties; the emphasis is on WE-ness as opposed to the us – them dichotomy (non-native versus native). Initially the focus was on second language varieties which developed in former British colonies (such as South Africa), but research in this area is now much wider (Seargeant, 2010). The world Englishes paradigm is based on the pluracentric assumption that English belongs to all those that use it (Seidlhofer, 2009), and its relevance to modern society of world Englishes, and how Kachru had intended this to be understood, is aptly captured by Schneider (2014:28):

> … there are signs that English will be able to transcend … economic motivations and become a multicultural resource, dissociated from Western and English/American cultural contexts, … a process which opens new roles to the language ....

Kachru's (1992) Concentric Circles Model of English varieties has been especially helpful in understanding English varieties development. Inner Circle (characterised by migrant functionaries and settlers) varieties are norm-providing. Outer Circle (characterised by indigenous peoples) varieties are norm-developing. In the Expanding Circle where English is a foreign language rather than the language used for intranational (daily instrumental use) communication and/or as a medium of instruction, Inner Circle external norms are operative. Whereas the Inner Circle varieties have validity in terms of both ideology and linguistic stability, the Outer Circle varieties are ideologically contested, but have emergent linguistic stability.

In terms of the ongoing evolutionary dynamics of World Englishes, Schneider (2014) describes five consecutive phases that emerging varieties proceed through. How these relate to the development of South African English varieties is relevant. Phase 2 (exonormative stabilisation) still applies in the sense that in terms of academic writing, the norm is largely British (with American usage most likely having a greater influence on spoken discourse). Phase 3 (nativisations) in terms of language shift is viewed as central during which cultural and linguistic transformations take place. Makalela (2013) emphasises that this is the most important phase as it involves the establishment of a new identity and restructuring of the language at the level of vocabulary and grammar. Bekker (2009:86) sets Black South African English (BSAE) at Phase 3, and describes White South African English (WSAE) as being "original, settler-based regionalisms" rather than Phase 5 developments. Van Rooy and Terblanche (2010) set South African English (SAE) at Phase 4 (endonormative stabilisation) for lexical innovation which means words having been fully incorporated and accepted, that is the new variety is accepted as

a norm and is used in a range of social functions, but not completely for morphologically complex forms. Spencer (2011), likewise, sets BSAE at Phase 4, indicating that both white and Afrikaans teachers are more tolerant towards and accepting of BSAE features, which she considers a sign of linguistic convergence.

In understanding BSAE uses, de Klerk (2003) is careful to point out that treating BSAE uses together, is imprudent, since one would lose sight of the salient differences that might exist between the different indigenous languages. For the purposes of the current study, insight into possible differences may be helpful in addressing students' use of non-standard forms in academic essay writing.

The findings of Makalela's (2013:93) investigation into high-frequency features of BSAE collected from a rural English-medium community radio in Limpopo Province are evidence that BSAE has, indeed, developed alongside the nativisation and endonormative phases described in Schneider's (2014) Dynamic Model , and that both the radio usage and reliance on Bantu logic substrate forms reinforce its stabilisation. Examples of how Bantu temporal logic or reasoning is expressed linguistically is in the use of the progressive aspect and tense sequence patterns (§ 2.6.1 Studies on English verbs). In terms of the latter, Makalela (2013:101) explains that tense usage for narration in African languages is semantically different from the grammatical norms in standard English. In Sepedi, for example, only the first clause is marked for past tense and not the consecutive clause in the second clause of complex and compound sentences. The example given is:

We played this ... and we dance (where time reference is a week ago)

Makalela (2013:101-102) refers the above tense usage as Consecutive tense and explains this phenomenon as follows:

> … time is viewed holistically rather than as in discrete units, with past and present spaces conflated into a larger whole. This means that the speakers transfer a temporal reasoning (a way of thinking about time) from their first language into English and grammaticalize time using the mother tongue logic to produce speech forms as seen in [the] example [above].

Another illustration by Makalela (2013) of Bantu language logic is being indirect about suggestions (cf. Kasanga's study in § 2.4 where it is shown that directness is valued above indirectness in requests made in Black South African English), and using what could be

described as a circular discourse pattern without discourse markers to express a suggestion. In English, while it would similarly be viewed as impolite to be direct in offering suggestions, the circularity of discourse would most probably be considered an inability to be concise, since conciseness is valued in English logic. Van Rooy and Terblance (2006) found in their study on a learner corpus of mother tongue speakers of Setswana that speech patterns were characterised by ambiguous cohesive ties, which may relate to the circular discourse pattern in some way.

A survey on black teachers' and learners' attitudes towards and perception and reception of the norm in BSAE by van der Walt and van Rooy (2002) yielded three key findings: although there are conflicting views on what the norm is, there is, nevertheless, general agreement that English must adjust to the new South African context, also while the participants displayed a high level of acceptance of standard English forms, they appeared to be uncertain regarding acceptability of several non-standard forms. Van der Walt and van Rooy (2002), therefore, conclude that while BSAE is most certainly an emerging norm for South African Englishes, it has not yet been established securely (cf. Kamwangamalu, 2002 in § 2.2 & 2.3).

Although BSAE uses did not form part of the present study, and were therefore not highlighted as such, where such uses occurred in relation to the features that were analysed and were intelligible, they were accepted. In terms of rating or grammaticality judgements, Davies (2012) points out that when raters share the same language background of Standard English norms, both non-native and native raters make similar judgements regarding language use. This would similarly apply to rating academic English use and judgements regarding language innovations.

Although South African Indian English (SAIE) has no direct relevance to the current study since there were very few Indian student essays in the UL sample (<10), and all these students were home language users of English, insights into how Indian university students perceive SAIE are informative. According to Mesthrie (1995), the language shift to English as home language among the South African Indian population began in the 1960s during the apartheid era. Mesthrie (1995) ascribes the distinctive character of present SAIE to the fact that learning conditions were imperfect with limited opportunities to learn the target language. Wiebesiek, Rudwick and Zeller's (2011) study was based on interviews with twenty participants individually. They were all students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) in Durban and sociolinguistic variables which could influence responses were controlled. In a grammatical

judgement type task, participants were required to choose a response from a list (that would shed light on their perceptions of SAIE *vis-à-vis* the reference (target) variety. The construction in question was the use of interrogatives without Subj-Aux inversion (a common feature of SAIE), for example:

Where you are?

When you did that?

The control was a *wh*-question exhibiting reference variety-type Subj-Aux inversion:

Why didn't you tell me?

After the grammatical task, participants were engaged in a discussion about their responses which shed light on their attitudes towards the non-standard uses compared to the standard use. Overall, the findings suggest that while the students were familiar with SAIE as a distinguishable variety, they either did not take ownership of it, although they believed that South African Indians were the owners of this variety, or they displayed ambivalent feelings towards it. They drew a clear distinction between "proper" English and SAIE, and by implication, regarded SAIE as "improper". This may be a manifestation of the more broadly held perception that the reference variety is associated by most people with a higher educational status and socioeconomic class. In terms of *we-* and *they*-codes or distinctions referred to earlier (§ 2.2 Multilingualism in South African education), these participants would consider SAIE as *they*-use.

Whether to consider English as Lingua Franca (ELF) as a variety is also receiving attention, with some claiming that this is justified, while others, such as Sung-Yul Park and Wee (2011:370) who instead suggest a practice-based perspective, where EFL is viewed as an activity-type, which emphasises that the EFL interaction between diverse speakers is an "emergent product" of the "accommodative practices of the participants" rather than being "tied to a distinct group of speakers as their unique, distinguishable feature". Seidlhofer (2009) echoes this phenomenon by picking up on Swain's (2006, cited in Seidlhofer, 2009) notion of languaging, which Seidlhofer 2009:242) describes as the "emergent on-line exploitation of linguistic resources to achieve communicative ends".

The relevance of Varieties studies to the present study is in two senses. The first relates to the importance of the English language practitioner's not viewing all non-standard forms used by Black students as errors due to faulty teaching or lack of exposure to standard forms (Makalela, 2013:103). Van der Walt and van Rooy (2002) mention several factors within rural school contexts that are viewed as contributing towards the transmission of BSAE, namely: teacher modelling in the sense that teachers who themselves are second language users of English and whose language proficiency may be inadequate, pass their language use onto their second language learners, the supply of books which are either unavailable or too few and learners have to share; and a lack of basic facilities and resources, such as libraries. They point out that the natural language developmental phenomenon of interlanguage is also seen to influence non-standard uses: "Learners operate cognitively on the input they receive, and attempt to develop rules that become productive in yielding previously unheard forms" (van der Walt & van Rooy, 2002:116). In terms of the Varieties paradigm, these rules then fossilise, that is they "become stable and 'normal', and within the new English paradigm, can no longer be regarded as fossilisations". Clearly, the Varieties or new English paradigm does require a mental shift in how one approaches non-standard forms: either as innovations or as errors. This is why continuing research into what comprises the norm for BSAE is critical, since without research-based clarity to inform consistency in teaching, learners will be confused and compromised: evidenced by "learners' overall high levels of acceptance of non-standard features" (van der Walt & van Rooy, 2002:125).

The second relates to the notion of intelligibility which aids the analyst (in the present study, the researcher) to make decisions about language innovations. Intelligibility is seen as comprising three components: intelligibility (in the narrow sense to mean recognition); comprehensibility (in the sense that an utterance or text is linguistically meaningful); and interpretability (in the sense that the utterance or text can be understood with respect to specific goals or intentions) (Sung-Yul Park & Wee, 2011:371). The text analysis of the student writing in the current study was largely informed by this conceptualisation of intelligibility in distinguishing between appropriate and inappropriate features. Another significant insight from Varieties research is the importance of incorporating accommodation and intercultural skills into language (and writing) pedagogy. In this regard, within an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) context (such as the University of Limpopo), one would need to make explicit those conventions that are expected and rewarded,

but at the same time, show sensitivity towards different practices, by not penalising non-standard uses indiscriminately, and keeping an open mind to possible innovations.

From the beginnings of world Englishes as a field of study, Yamuna Kachru (1997) advocated for language teaching and language acquisition research that acknowledged the diverse bilingual and multilingual contexts in which English is learned and used. With respect to writing pedagogy, Yamuna Kachru (1997) affirms an inclusive approach to teaching academic writing, where alternative traditions of literacy are validated alongside the linear pattern of academic writing identified with British and American norms (Berns, 2015:27). This acknowledgement of learners' language worlds is encapsulated in the principle of multilingualism which the Constitution of South Africa enshrines and which is DoE policy. This and related issues will be discussed next.

2.2 MULTILINGUALISM IN SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION

Kathleen Heugh's (2013) overview of the constraints on multilingual education policy in South Africa provides crucial insights into the current situation. In this regard, she points out two important disjunctures. The first refers to constitutional and other government practices that advance a multilingual policy without providing the necessary support for implementation, and the second refers to the overwhelming majority of South African learners having to transition from home language education in grades 1 to 3 to English (additional language or AL) in grades 4 to 12. She discusses the various attempts at curriculum transformation, and identifies what she considers serious flaws regarding the interpretation of language learning theory. The first is that the discussions on language education were kept separate from debates on curriculum. Secondly, in curriculum discussions, language was treated as a subject, with little attention to its role as a language of learning across the curriculum (§ 2.3). Thirdly, literacy was conceptualised as largely independent of the language(s) through which reading and writing take place in school (Heugh, 2013:220). In spite of subsequent revisions by the Department of Education (DoE) and Department of Basic Education (DBE), early transition to mostly English in grade 4 continues. This practice clearly flies in the face of decades of research into additive bi- and multilingualism, and more especially research in sub-Saharan Africa showing that the transition to English is successful "only when students [learners] have sufficient academic literacy in both languages to facilitate this safely, usually after 6-8 years of learning the additional language as a subject"

(Heugh, 2013:.220). A six to eight year period of learning the AL (English) takes the learner to grade 8, or at the least grade 6, as opposed to the present transition in grade 4. In other words, the learner is deprived of the necessary time needed to not only learn English sufficiently, but also to develop literacy in the learner's home language to serve as a steady scaffold to further develop literacy (Pretorius, 2002) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP, in English) for academic purposes. This may be further compounded by the fact that, often, schools with English as medium of instruction (MOI) practice extensive code-mixing and code-switching in spoken communication even though all reading and writing is in English.

The concerning reality described by both Heugh and others (Pretorius, 2002) is that the revised DoE curriculum has not provided guidance to teachers on how to develop learners' reading and writing beyond narrative texts framed in the active voice using simple present, past and future tenses (grade 3 writing) to prepare them for the range of genres, particularly expository, they are exposed to in grades 4 and beyond, and the syntax used in cause and effect, comparative, and hypothetical text.

In addition, the DBE has wrongly assumed that learners would be provided with books on a daily basis for reading at home, and that writing was a frequent occurrence in all subjects. Critiques by MacDonald (2002) and Pretorius and Ribbens (2005) indicate that the reverse holds true. A consequence of this underlined by Heugh (2013:228) is:

> In South Africa, neither most students [learners] nor most teachers are equipped to accomplish the English medium target of the secondary school examinations, nor are they able to ensure reading and writing skills that match those of students [learners] in other poorer countries of Africa.

This concern is echoed in the Progress on International Reading Study (PIRLS) report (2006; 2011) on South African learner achievements in reading. The overall PIRLS finding is that there is systematic failure of literacy achievement across the South African system in all languages, including Afrikaans and English. "Literacy in whichever language is not being taught well [enough and long enough] and is under-resourced" (Heugh, 2013:228). The importance of having sufficiently developed levels of literacy for academic learning is demonstrated in a study by Thamaga-Chitja and Mbatha (2012). They conducted a focus group discussion with fifteen students in the School of Agricultural Sciences and Agribusiness at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Students agreed that not being competent in English, the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT), hampered their understanding of information, and that home language use in

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study groups was thwarted by a lack of terminology and conceptual equivalents in mother tongue. They were also strongly opposed to the use of African languages in teaching since their goal was to improve their English for upward mobility. Here too, the foreign students were concerned that this practice would disadvantage them.

In Heugh's (2013) view, the two primary threats to successful multilingual policy and practice in South Africa are treating languages as separate entities rather than as cognitive-linguistic resources that can work together to develop and enrich learning, and not developing African languages for use in the educational domain alongside English. Kamwangamalu (2007) offers fresh insights into what has contributed towards the continuing predominance of English over indigenous languages, which he refers to as three identities or *we*-codes in terms of Kachru's Concentric Circle Model paradigm. One such *we*-code is having experienced English as the language of liberation in the sense that its use aided in communicating to the rest of the world the horrors of apartheid and thereby strengthened world support in overthrowing the apartheid regime. In post-apartheid South Africa, the pragmatic *we*-code is apparent in all official business of the state and media, and is often the only medium of communication among interethnic interactions. (In spite of these *we*-codes, a *they*-code continues to exist which refers to South Africans who do not have formal education, and for whom English is much the same as it was in the apartheid era.) The third *we*-code is new and indicates a naturalised language shift from indigenous African languages to English in urban black communities in South Africa (Kamwangamalu, 2007:268); this is very often initiated by parental ambitions for their children. This is also characteristic of some Afrikaans white, middle-class communities. Because this naturalised identity tends towards unilingualisation in favour of English, the other indigenous languages are at risk of marginalisation (Kamwangamalu, 2007).

An additional pertinent issue in consolidating multilingualism (and its use within higher education) is affording equal official standing and respect for all the languages of the country; this means developing "all the indigenous languages as media of instruction [and thereby what Neville Alexander (2005) calls the intellectualisation of all languages] and enhanced public and social use of these languages in the daily lives of South Africans" (Thamaga-Chitja & Mbatha, 2012:341). However, the dearth of interest in language studies by the youth does not bode well for the promotion of indigenous languages in formal contexts. A study by Carol Thomson (2009,

cited in Thamaga-Chitja & Mbatha, 2012) revealed that when rural isiZulu learners were confronted with academic concepts in their home language (isiZulu), they complained that they were unfamiliar with this type of (elevated) language because they did not "speak" it (which is some evidence of not possessing CALP in the home language), and reverted to their English texts on the subject matter.

Where South African higher education stands at present with regard to both the development and implementation of a multilingual approach is poignantly described by Pillay and Yu (2015:451) as a "visible linguistic storm" that is "brewing" based on their quantitative survey of humanities enrolments and throughput rates at South African universities. The findings reveal that, overall, English is secure (with African enrolment being the largest English studying population), and that there is revived interest in Afrikaans. However, while African students remain the single largest racial group studying any of the nine indigenous languages, the popularity of indigenous languages measured in enrolments and graduations is on the decline, with a decrease in 68% of students studying indigenous languages in little over ten years (1999-2012), in spite of the 1 542% increase in the African student population over the same period. Pillay and Yu (2012:449) warn that this reality could potentially "threaten any possibility of the indigenous languages becoming part of the higher educational institutional fabric". In this regard, the latest move to English-only as medium of instruction at the Universities of Pretoria and Stellenbosch, and the University of South Africa (UNISA), is also of concern in the sense that one wonders how this would impact the implementation of multilingual policy in South Africa.

Keeping in mind the benefits of a multilingual approach to learning within a context such as South Africa, and considering the current reality that is not conducive to its implementation, what will be discussed next is English as Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) and English as Language Across the Curriculum (LAC).

2.3 ENGLISH AS LoLT AND LANGUAGE ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

First, distinguishing the terms English as a second language (ESL) and English as an additional language (EAL, or AL to refer to additional language) is important for the purposes of the current study in understanding the learner's language use. Within the South African context, for the majority, English is a second language in that it is the predominant means of communication

for official and educational purposes, and is being learned by people from non-English speaking backgrounds (mainly Blacks; Coloureds; Afrikaners). The term English as an additional language, however, is seen to be more sensitive to multilingual contexts, and obviates the ranking implied by English as second language, since English is often a third, fourth, or fifth language. English as AL is the preferred term by the Department of Education (DoE), and is, therefore, the term that is used in the current study. Another term requiring clarity is "learner" which is commonly used in language research literature to designate a language learner at any educational level. However, in South Africa, learner is usually associated with school level, whereas student refers to post-school level, such as university. In the current, the term student is preferred.

Before considering the South African education context and the language of instruction, a brief glimpse into the effects of policy on English-medium instruction in Africa is helpful in setting the scene. Kamwangamalu (2013) reports that in Rwanda, for example, teachers are required to teach in English that neither they nor the learners know well, and therefore use the vernacular to navigate their way through lessons. Secondly, a lack of sufficient literacy in both the mother tongue and the former colonial language, French, results in underdevelopment of literacy skills in both languages, which impedes transference to literacy acquisition in the new official language, English. French and English are the two LoLT. According to Kamwangamula (2013), early transitioning to English in the formative years (grade 4) does more harm than good; learners are not afforded crucial time to develop literacy skills in their home language that they can transfer to literacy acquisition in the foreign language (as is the case in Anglophone countries, such as Rwanda), and the cost of this is high illiteracy rates in Africa. Kamwangamula (2013:331) citing Bamgbose (2003) describes the impact of illiteracy as:

> … the most devastating source of social exclusion, for not only are illiterate individuals unable to participate in the national socio-economic and political development using an ex-colonial language such as English, they cannot do so either using their own indigenous language in a written medium.

The issue of writing and being able to write in one's home language and the LoLT will be further considered in the section on Multiliteracies and Academic Literacy (§ 2.4).

Given that currently English is largely the LoLT at most schools (approximately 80 per cent according to Kamwangamalu, 2007:272) and universities in South Africa (with increasing pressure to change to English as MOI at traditionally Afrikaans universities in present times),

and that it is an AL for the majority of students, the logical expectation would be that it is also afforded the necessary attention by all educators as the Language Across the Curriculum. In this regard, van Dyk and Coetzee-van Rooy (2012) provide indicators derived from the Bullock Report (1975) on the challenges to the LAC initiative in the UK in the 1970s that may inform higher education practice in South Africa. First of all, any attempt to improve education by means of a language focus is complex: "there is no single, simple magic solution to any aspect of language education" (Marland, 1977, cited in van Dyk & Coetzee-van Rooy, 2012:14). Secondly, when attention to language occurs in content subjects, language development is powerfully assisted by the context and purpose of those subjects, and importantly, is validated by the content teacher or discipline specialist. This is why when the LoLT is indeed the LAC, this has implications for the teacher's use of language in the sense that teacher talk should exemplify the CALP referred to previously (§ 2.2 Multilingualism in South African education). This has implications for teacher training where all pre-service teachers do a LoLT course. Professional development is provided for existing teachers in LoLT, and awareness of the role of language in learning and their contribution to language development is created among university discipline specialists who, generally, neither have teaching qualifications, nor see language development as their responsibility. A third point is building on multilingualism as a resource for teaching and learning in higher education besides the current focus on simply implementing multilingualism for general communication. As was mentioned earlier (§ 2.2 Multilingualism in South African education), however, is that for a multilingual approach to benefit learning, learners/ students should possess academic literacy skills in the home language, for this to support AL learning, especially when this is the LoLT.

In their discussion of English as LoLT and the issues impacting on the implementation of English as LAC, van Dyk and Coetzee-van Rooy (2012) consider the two main approaches to providing English support at universities in South Africa, namely what Scott (2009, cited in van Dyk & Coetzee-van Rooy, 2012) refers to as disseminated approaches (generally called collaborative or content-based approaches), and specialised or generic approaches, such as English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP). These approaches will be dealt with in a later section in the literature review but what is relevant here is that in collaborative approaches involving language practitioners and subject specialists, face validity and transfer of skills issues are addressed: students have first-hand experience of

language at work in their subjects. The main advantage of generic courses is that under-resourced EAP/ESP units can develop fewer courses, in less time. The main disadvantage, though, is that such courses are often experienced as frustrating, irrelevant add-ons, with little or no transfer of skills to content subjects.

In order to achieve LAC practice and thereby support academic development in higher education in SA will necessitate "integrating student, staff, curriculum, institutional and research development" according to Volbrecht and Boughey (2004:58). Scott (2009, cited in van Dyk & Coetzee-van Rooy, 2012) refers to this as articulation between various education systems (such as teacher training and higher education curricula) to provide support for all incoming university students who "are nowadays considered to be at risk and in need of some kind of support (van Dyk, 2010, cited in van Dyk & Coetzee-van Rooy, 2012:24).

2.4 ACADEMIC LITERACY AND MULTILITERACIES

Boughey (2000:281) defines academic literacy as knowing how to act and speak in academic discourse, and emphasises that academic literacy should be the end-goal of a degree programme, and not what it generally is in higher education in South Africa, a stand-alone course or module. The skills that are considered central to academic literacy are: "good writing, effective reading, careful listening and note taking, and sound critical thinking" (Ann Johns, 1997:34).

Since the resumé by Snow and Uccelli (2009, cited in Patterson & Weideman, 2013:130-131) provides an efficient overview of the primary linguistic features and core domains of cognitive outcomes involved in academic language performance and how these are distinguished from more colloquial uses, the list, slightly modified for the purposes of the current study, has been reproduced in Table 2.1 below. This characterisation of academic discourse will be elaborated on further in subsequent sections that relate specifically to academic/student writing and writing pedagogy.

Table 2.1: Linguistic features and core domains of cognitive outcomes in academic language performance (based on Snow & Ucceli, 2009, cited in Patterson & Weideman, 2013)

More colloquial	More academic
1. **Interpersonal stance** (expressive, involved)	**Detached** (distanced & authoritative)
2. **Information load** • Redundancy • Wordiness • Sparsity	• Conciseness • Density (proportion of content words per total words)
3. **Organisation of information** • Dependency (one element is bound or linked to another but is not part of it) • Minimal awareness of unfolding text as discourse (marginal role of metadiscourse markers) • Loosely connected dialogic structure	• Constituency & subordination (embedding, one element is a structural part of another) • Explicit awareness of organised discourse (central role of textual metadiscourse markers) • Autonomous text (endophoric reference) • Stepwise logical argumentation/unfolding, tightly constructed)
4. **Lexical choices** • Low lexical density • Colloquial expressions • Fuzziness (examples are: *sort of, something, like, thing*) • Concrete / common-sense concepts (*money*)	• High lexical diversity • Formal, prestigious expressions (*state* for *say*; *for instance* for *like*) • Precision (lexical choices and connectives) • Abstract/technical concepts (*finance*)
5. **Representational congruence** • Simple/congruent grammar (simple sentences) • Animated entities as agents	• Complex/incongruent grammar (complex sentences) • Complex/incongruent grammar (clause embedding and nominalisation) • Abstract concepts as agents
6. **Genre mastery** • **Generic values (narration, description, explanation) (Bhatia, 2002)** →	• School-based genres (laboratory reports, persuasive essay) → discipline specific specialised genres
7. **Reasoning strategies** (basic ways of argumentation and persuasion) → 8. **Disciplinary knowledge taxonomies** (common sense understanding) → 9. **Epistemological assumptions** knowledge as fact →	Specific reasoning (moves valued at school) → discipline specific reasoning moves Abstract groupings and relations → disciplinary taxonomies and salient relations Knowledge as constructed

In terms of this framework as being a reflection of what is generally understood to constitute academic literacy, or stated differently, what the cognitive manifestations are in respect of

academic language performance, the under-preparedness of entry-level students, and postgraduate students' not possessing requisite levels of academic literacy to engage in postgraduate research and concomitant reading and writing, continues to be a major concern at South Africa universities. In this regard, Vic Webb (2002:56) states:

> … [considering] the fundamental role of language in educational development, that linguistic behaviour is critical in professional occupations, and that proficiency in the standard language [of LoLT] is non-negotiable for competitiveness in the national and international marketplace, then the need to take the language issue in academic development and assessment across all disciplines very seriously, is self-evident.

Webb (2002:56-57) provides a fairly detailed list of language-related problems experienced by the University of Pretoria. These are:

- An inadequate language proficiency (grammatical, textual, functional and sociolinguistic) among both many students and staff
- Inadequate academic literacy (a broader concept than language proficiency but for which language proficiency is integral)
- Learning materials design without a consideration of students' language problems
- Inadequate guidance to staff on the role of language in academic development
- The absence of an effective plan of implementation of the university's language policy in terms of resources and participation of language planning expertise
- The absence of information on the best classroom practice, linguistically seen

Despite the concerns expressed above, studies reveal that students, overall, do not regard academic literacy to be a threat to their academic success, and in self-assessment surveys, are inclined to over-report their proficiency levels, when their scores for objective measures of English proficiency indicate substantially lower levels (Coetzee-van Rooy, 2002) (cf. Butler, 2006 in § 2.6.3.2). Three possible explanations are provided for this phenomenon, namely that people generally, do not distinguish between language and education in the sense that language development is not seen as a separate issue that influences academic development. Another is that students would not have insight into the nature of language and proficiency types such as Basic Interpersonal Skills (BICS), which they possess and believe to be the proficiency referred to, as opposed to CALP which they have difficulty with. A third relates to the discrepancy in the status of the students in their communities; many are first generation university students, and

compared to others in the community, they are more proficient in English. A fourth could be the fact that the students cannot actually read and write in their home languages (reported by Black parents), and because they know this, they claim to be very proficient in English (Coetzee-van Rooy, 2002:15). The consequence of students' perceptions of their English proficiency is that they would most probably not see the value in language support, especially if this is presented as an add-on, such as an EAP course. In this regard, Coetzee-van Rooy (2002) cautions that unless a bottom-up approach is adopted in establishing workable solutions to the academic problems of these students, support initiatives may not have the desired effect. In a similar vein, Posel and Zeller (2011) who analysed the data on language ability collected in a household survey, namely the National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS), found that approximately 65% of all South African adults and 61% of all African adults claim to be able to read and write very well in their home language. Forty-seven per cent of all South African adults and 41% of African adults claim to read and write well in English. Overall, the South African adults were inclined to report lower ability in writing than in reading, which is understandable given that it is "generally easier to understand written text in a language in which one is not fully proficient than to produce writing in that language" (Posel & Zeller, 2011:119). The NIDS findings, however, contrast significantly with the findings of many studies (such as the Pan South African Language Board's sociolinguistic survey in 2000 (cited in Posel & Zeller, 2011:117) and the PIRLS findings of 2011, which suggest that language proficiency and literacy skills, particularly in English, are low among South African learners, thereby casting some doubt on the language proficiency claims made by the participants in the NIDS survey.

Postma and Postma (2011) describe the devastation of what may occur (alienation referred to at the end of this paragraph) when the learner is not adequately socialised in the linguistic and cultural practices of her home language (HL). Coetzee-van Rooy (2006:445) similarly emphasises the importance of developing and validating the learner's home language and sense of her natural and social environment (embodied by linguistic and cultural practices). By being exposed to the indigenous knowledge structures and discourse practices of their HLs (Hibbert, 2011:37), learners learn to understand the home language perspective on reality (world view held by the HL community), and can become full participants in the transformation of reality (involving both knowledge telling and knowledge creating). Makalela (2013) uses the phrase Bantu logic to describe the African way of making sense of reality and communicating this.

However, as Postma and Postma (2011) point out, if the learner has a weak sense of the HL and the logic that is expressed through her HL, which may be the case given the early transition to English as LoLT in most South African schools, the learner's ability to articulate her understanding of reality is weakened. (This is further compounded by the lack of the intellectualisation of African languages in South Africa. The consequence of this is that without abstract concepts in the home language, learners are unable to start and complete their formal learning in the HL. This lack has implications for implementing and ensuring successful multilingual education within the South African context.). Furthermore, if the socialisation within the dominant language, here English, has short falls, the learner is again compromised: "the absence in the school of cultural resources and concepts that would enable pupils to live within their own ontics [their experience of the world] in school leads to a sense of alienation and disconnectedness" (Postma & Postma, 2011:50). Neeta's (2010:33) extensive work on sociocultural argument writing by students at the University of Venda (Univen) in the Vhembe District, Limpopo Province, gets to the crux of the matter:

> … a student's full linguistic potential can be developed only if teachers and policy makers have knowledge of the ways of speaking in the community of which the students are part. It is this knowledge that should be given full recognition so that support for training and research into such language ability are obtained. … It is essential to know not just a language, but a community's way of writing (speaking) and patterns of the use of language, that is, how language comes to be organized for use in the community from which the students come to the university.

What is re-echoed by Neeta (2013) above, is the need to validate the learner's home language, a precious resource, and then to develop and build on this to provide a steady scaffold for entry into a new language (English, or the AL) with new ways.

The situation regarding literacy levels of South African children is best described in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) Summary Report (2011) on South African children's Reading Literacy Achievement (Howie, Venter, van Staden, Zimmerman, Long, du Toit, Scherman & Archer, 2012). Since it is believed that the pervasive lack of an adequate literacy foundation among South African learners may be, to some extent, responsible for the under-preparedness of entry-level university students, this matter will be considered in some detail.

Insights into South African learners' reading and literacy levels in grades 4 and 5 point to the fact that unless children are "fully functional in the language of teaching and learning, they are at

considerable risk of failure or repeated failure in primary school, and of dropping out of school at secondary level" (PIRLS 2011, Summary Report, p.116).

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study 2011 (PIRLS 2011) is an international comparative evaluation of reading literacy of grade 4 (9 year-old) learners and was conducted in 49 countries with 325 000 learners in 2011. It is one of the largest, most complex and influential assessments of reading literacy internationally, and in South Africa, almost 20 000 learners from 433 schools in grade 4 (341 grade 4 cohorts) and grade 5 (92 grade 5 cohorts) participated. South Africa also participated in PIRLS 2006, and the results released in 2007, indicated a very low level of achievement, where both grades 4 and 5 learners' average performance was almost 200 points below the international average of 500 points at both grades.

Based on these low achievement results, changes were made in the national design, where at the grade 4 level, an easier assessment (called prePIRLS) was designed by the International Study Centre with the assistance of national centres. This was an easier, shorter test and at a lower cognitive level than that of PIRLS2011. This formed a new baseline measure for South Africa for grade 4 and was administered in all eleven languages.

The key findings listed below (for the grade 4 prePIRLS and the grade 5 PIRLS) were reported in the summary (2011) of the main national report (2013).

Grade 4 prePIRLS learner achievement:

- Grade 4 learners, particularly those tested in African languages, performed well below the International Centre point in spite of writing an easier assessment.
- There is a significant gender gap in achievement, with grade 4 girls outperforming boys overall.
- Learners tested in English and Afrikaans performed relatively well and above the International Centre point.
- Learners tested in all the indigenous South African languages, achieved very low scores with none reaching the International Centre point in spite of most writing in their home language.
- Learners tested in Sepedi and Tshivenda represented the poorest performing African language groups, with average scores more than 100 points below the International

Centre point of 500 points. What is concerning is that more than half of these learners could not read at a fundamental level and failed to reach even the Low International benchmark. This indicates an inability to locate and retrieve explicitly stated detail when reading literary (informational) texts.

- Most learners (71%) could reach a rudimentary level of reading and attain the Lowest International benchmark. However, few (only 6%) were able to read at an advanced level.

Grade 5 PIRLS

There was no significant difference in the overall achievement for learners in 2011 compared to 2006 (which is concerning in the sense that there was no improvement in literacy development, in spite of recommendations made in the PIRLS2006 Summary Report for supporting literacy).

- Grade 5 learners tested in English and Afrikaans were still performing below the International Centre point of 500 fixed for the reading literacy of grade 4 learners internationally, by approximately 80 points. However, 58% did not write in their home language.
- Grade 5 learners' (tested in English or Afrikaans) achievements were similar to grade 4 learners in Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Qatar, and Botswana (grade 6), and well above grade 4 learners in Oman and Morocco, keeping in mind that these countries' samples tested their entire populations whereas South Africa only tested part of its population.
- Again, there was a significant gender gap in achievement, with grade 5 girls outperforming boys overall.
- Of learners tested in English or Afrikaans, 43% were unable to reach the Lowest International benchmark, and only 4% reached the Advanced International benchmark, in comparison with 8% internationally.
- More learners tested in Afrikaans were able to attain the Lowest International benchmark than those writing in English.

Several compounding factors were identified as contributing towards the generally low literacy levels of South African children. These are:

- Poorly resourced home environments (but which, nevertheless, have considerably more than the poorest countries which participated);

- Instructional time is spent on basic reading skills and strategies rather inferential types of skills (cf. Pretorius, 2014 below);

- Teaching complex reading skills occurs at a much later stage for South African learners than internationally, especially for learners tested in Xitsonga and isiNdebele;

- Learners' lack of prerequisite skills and knowledge negatively affects instruction to some extent in most schools, but especially in schools where English and Afrikaans were tested (this refers to learners not being sufficiently grounded in home language literacy, but having to learn in an AL – here, either English or Afrikaans);

- Limited and lack of resources at schools (in terms of reading materials) and the virtual non-existence of public libraries in both township and rural areas: "South Africa had one of the lowest levels of library provision amongst all the countries participating, including systems which are economically more impoverished" (PIRLS2011, Summary Report, p.116).

In line with the PIRLS2011 findings, Pretorius (2014:53) underlines that fact that oral proficiency is not adequate for coping with school demands. She emphasises that:

> Children need to become competent in accessing and making meaning from written language with its vast range of vocabulary. The syntactic structures used in written language tend to be more complex than oral speech, with higher use of passives, subordination and nominalisation. … In other words, learners must start learning the registers needed to understand and produce the language and discourse of their academic content subjects.

Therefore, reading to learn forms the basis of academic literacy, but reading does not just happen (in any language, including the home language), "it needs to be explicitly taught and nurtured" (Pretorius, 2014:55). McCabe (2008) who did research on materials development design for EAP courses at university reiterates the importance of explicitly teaching reading skills and aligning reading and writing tasks, where writing is informed by reading, and acts as the medium of consolidating learning. Pretorius's (ibid.) study on reading practices in the Foundation Phase, however, found that the teaching of reading (at the schools in question) occurred in an *ad hoc* fashion, with little attention to literate practices. Also, very few written exercises were included to reinforce newly acquired reading knowledge. Children were also not afforded opportunities to go beyond the immediate, literal meaning of information or shown how to do this when they read

(an important meaning making skill). Besides investigating literacy practices at schools, the study embraced an intervention programme to provide support for enabling learners to "catch up". And, although Pretorius (2014:71) believes that a "catch up" approach is hardly desirable given the human cost involved (literacy backlog and academic failure), the interventions (not detailed here) proved beneficial, in that the "children made gains in both English language and literacy when reading and writing activities became the focus of classroom teaching".

University students finding essay-type writing challenging (or having to generate any kind of extended text, or simply a paragraph, in the researcher's experience) in an AL, should, therefore, perhaps not be surprising in view of the above. In Thamaga-Chitja and Mbatha's (2012) view, students' dislike of essay writing is an indicator of poor academic literacy since university essay tasks generally require of them to elaborate on an argument and display critical thinking, which they find difficulty with since they do not have a sufficiently well-developed linguistic basis to draw on, and, therefore, tend to compensate by copying chunks of text from sources, sometimes without understanding the information in the text/s. This common observation is further evidence of our students lacking the underlying cognitive-academic proficiency that allows for positive transfer of shared linguistic and cultural features from the home language to writing in English as an AL. In other words, literacy development, concept formation (requiring sufficient terminology), subject knowledge (based on concept formation), and learning strategies, - the scaffolding blocks – must be acquired in the home language, to enable transfer to the AL without interruption in the learner's cognitive development (Neeta, 2010:76-77).

The literature surveyed indicates that there are two distinct practices of academic literacy development at universities in South Africa. The common one is a skills-neutral practice which is aimed at developing what are believed to be neutral academic skills that can be transferred to mainstream subjects, usually offered in a generic first-year module or first-year course. The other, less frequent multiliteracies practice is that of engaging the students' literacies they bring with them, and incorporating these alongside not only developing and but also challenging the existing dominant literacy of the university. In the latter, university or academic literacy is not seen as being neutral, as each discipline is regarded as being the product of a particular way of understanding and doing. In other words, the latter comprises multiliteracies or discourses, whereas the former comprises a singular academic discourse. Both practices tend to be defended

quite vigorously. What follows describes the argument for a multiliteracies approach in line with the concerns expressed in this section, and how these should be addressed within the formal education system (school and university).

In her critical overview of approaches to developing academic literacy in South African higher education, Chrissie Boughey (2013) is of the view that practitioners are far removed from theory in the field of New Literacy Studies and holds forth that this is an imperative. Here, the concept of literacy as envisioned by an "ideological" model of literacy is seen to encompass multiple literacies which are socially embedded within individuals' social and cultural backgrounds, for example home-based literacies, school-based literacies, and higher education literacies, which further comprise a range of literacies, or Gee's (2008, cited in Boughey, 2013: 30) notion of Discourses (distinctive ways of doing, and linked to values, beliefs, and identity (Boughey, 2014:29).

Gee (2008, cited in Boughey, 2013:30) distinguishes two Discourses: primary and secondary, where the former gives the individual her initial and often enduring sense of self, which is established from being socialised into the group in which she was born, and largely established through the home language. Multiple secondary Discourses are acquired later, over time, through interactions with other institutions other than the home, and again, by means of language. According to Boughey (2013:30), when we understand literacy practices as being embedded in Discourses as ways of being, our approach to developing students' secondary Discourses will be more realistic and empowering of students since their conceptions of knowledge arising from their primary Discourse are also acknowledged, and are used as a basis for examining other ways of being; students are afforded realistic time to make a shift of being into the new Discourse, or academic literacy in the case of higher education. And, because *being* is inseparable from identity, it behoves the university to be understanding of the impact of new Discourses on the *sense of self*. For most students, the transition is daunting. In direct contrast to the above "ideological" model of literacy espoused in New Literacy Studies, Boughey (2013) in her overview of 2012 the Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of Southern African (HELTASA) papers identified three broad approaches to academic literacy development in South African higher education, namely: the skills discourse (also referred to as skills-neutral); the discourse of the workplace; and searching for theory. In the skills discourse approach

students are supported to master what are believed to be basic academic and generic skills, and integrate these with the academic content of the mainstream subjects. Jacobs (2013:128) states that the skills Discourse approach continues to dominate the way academic literacies work is enacted in South African higher education, and thereby limits its transformative potential. Sometimes this comprises a semester module, or at best, a year course. In the case of extended degree programmes, this support may span over a two year period. In rare cases, collaborative teaching occurs involving language practitioners and discipline specialists. Jacobs (2013) refers to this as the academic socialisation model which sees literacy as acculturating students into disciplinary discourses by focusing on disciplinary genres. Boughey (2013:35) describes the discourse of the workplace as providing vocational skills practice for particular qualification programmes.

The third approach is searching for theory to explain observations and experiences of attempts to develop literacy. While Boughey (2013) does not elaborate on the "searching for theory" approach, she appears sceptical about whether existing South African standardised academic literacy test designers have, in fact, taken note of the theory (New Literacy Studies) from which the term academic literacy (or rather literacies) emerges. Jacobs (2013:129-130) appears to share Boughey's (2013) concern in the sense that the range of conceptual frameworks and analytical tools that are in current use may be problematic, and that there is a need to find some commonality among universities. Jacobs (2013), like Boughey (2013), observes that there are few instances of academic literacies approaches at South African universities. This model is concerned with "meaning making, identity, power and authority and foregrounds the institutional nature of what 'counts' as knowledge in any particular academic context" (Lea & Street, 2006:227-228). The slightly different interpretation of academic literacies by Lillis and Scott (2007, cited in Jacobs, 2013:129) is, perhaps, more helpful in understanding the concept. Here, two stances are identified, namely the epistemological stance as referring to literacy-as-social practice, where practice replaces texts, and the ideological stance as transformative in the sense that both the students and "knowledge" are transformed, the ideal outcome of learning, as opposed to inducting students into disciplinary discourses and genres uncritically. However, as Jacobs (2013:131) indicates, privileging practice over text makes our practices more ethnographic than linguistic, and attaching importance to text over practice ignores practices surrounding text. (A more balanced approach may well be treating text as discourse.) Another is

how student cohorts are treated – are they considered homogeneous or diverse? Diverse student populations bring with them hybrid discourses, which need to be acknowledged. A third concerns treating literacy as a singular entity with an emphasis on language, or as a plural where the latter recognises modes of meaning broader than language (textual, visual, spatial, audio), including socio-cultural practices that take into account students' different world views and how these are embodied. The latter conceptualisation allows for the contestation of privileged or dominant practices and conventions (largely Western intellectualisation) within the current university domain.

In line with an academic literacies approach, Hibbert's (2011) proposal for an inclusive curriculum model for maximising student language development at universities in South Africa merits consideration. According to Hibbert (2011:31), making the model inclusive requires:

> … linking institutional literacies to social change, conceiving of curriculum design as a means for creative opportunity, subscribing to critical approaches to literacy, linking student language development to the institutional diversity management strategy, and affirming linguistic hybridity within the institution.

For the above to succeed institutional support and involvement of all stakeholders is necessary, but implementation may be thwarted in the light of the current lack of academic and scientific terminology in African languages, students' inadequate levels of academic proficiency in home languages, and resistance from both students and discipline specialists to what Hibbert terms linguistic style fusions (Hibbert, 2011:36) for academic purposes

A strong proponent for the neutral skills-based practice is Weideman (2013:11) who questions what he terms "the uncritical acceptance that academic writing is what should be taught, and institutionalised", and the tendency to regard discipline specific academic literacy as superior to generic literacy. An additional query relates to applied linguistics application to language testing, course design and language policy. Before presenting Weideman's (2013) concerns regarding current-day academic literacy matters, it is important to point out that he, too, concurs with others that there have been no significant improvements regarding the low status of indigenous languages among home language users; the virtual lack of reading materials in African languages for first language learners; the premature transition to English as additional language; the low levels of home language reading proficiency and, therefore, the lack of an adequate cognitive-linguistic template to transfer to the AL. In the light of this, Weideman (2013) argues that the right practice in developing academic literacy is to develop learners' ability to do things with

language – the emphasis is therefore on the functional dimension of language, to facilitate effective academic reading and writing. Being able to do things with language encompasses (Weideman & van Dyk. 2013, cited in Weideman, 2013:14) (emphasis is Weideman's):

- The ability to *gather* academic information (based on listening; reading; discussions with others; writing notes);
- The ability to *process* that information by means of analysis;
- The ability to *produce* new information (often in writing) that distinctly characterises the writer's voice even though it has been produced alongside those of others.

Based, then, on the above functional conceptualisation of academic literacy as being more than grammar (where the emphasis is on form as opposed to function), and in terms of the more recent standardised tests of academic literacy, for example, TALL and the National Benchmark Test (NBT) (generally high stakes tests which are used in South Africa) which assess whether students can handle academic discourse, Weideman (2013:14) questions whether these have had any impact on course design, and his response is that that this has not occurred. In this regard, he argues that the tendency to isolate writing as the problem and treat it as such is uninformed; the solution, he believes, is to "bring everything that we need into play, and even before the 'writing' problem is addressed".

In conclusion to this section, there is no doubt that a student's academic language is the mediator through which her cognitive and metacognitive abilities are demonstrated: "academic language is the vehicle for verbalising the logically qualified process, in articulating the analyses and thoughts we organise in order to interact analytically with others" (Weideman & Patterson, 2013:146).

Next, a discussion of how errors in AL learning are understood is provided as this is considered to be necessary in order to understand learners' difficulties regarding the AL and how to treat them.

2.5 ERRORS IN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE LEARNING

In this section, how errors are understood in terms of second language acquisition/additional language learning will be discussed. However, related matters such as how students respond to

feedback on language errors, and whether grammar instruction is beneficial or not, will be dealt with in § 2.6.3.9.

In order to understand errors in English Additional Language use, insight into what constitutes language standards is necessary. De Klerk (2003:478) defines standards as:

> … generally accepted or approved ways of doing things, measuring things or judging things, as opposed to other, less valued ways of doing so. They are closely associated with prestige and power, and this is particularly so in the case of language, which is commonly used as a symbol of nationhood, common purpose and identity, serving as an institutionalised norm.

Amidst the growing evidence of BSAE establishing itself as a variety (or rather varieties since differences may exist between indigenous languages), several uses that previously would have been rejected on the basis of not being standard English forms, now warrant a new appraisal. However, as de Klerk (2003:478) points out, this will not be uniform, consistent practice among language practitioners teaching English as an AL till official norm-setting or standardisation by educational authorities occurs, which is unlikely in the near future. Only after the process of natural language shift and hopefully, research documenting language innovations, is it likely that codification will take place officially. Until such time, language practitioners in the classroom will depend on traditional standards to teach English either as an AL at school or for EAP purposes. In the light of a lack of adequate codification referred to by de Klerk, Hamid and Baldauf (2013) undertook a study to determine teachers' perspectives on error versus innovation in Bangladeshi English (BE). A questionnaire was administered requiring the teachers to rate L2 constructions in terms of levels of acceptability, and to label uses as: Standard English, Bangladesh English globally intelligible, Bangladesh English locally intelligible, errors, and finally indicate their own description as "other". Overall, the findings reveal that on the acceptability judgement task, the majority of teachers were informed by a Second Language Acquisition perspective (relating to errors and interlanguage development). However, in terms of the categorisation task (type of English), the dominance of a World Englishes perspective was apparent. What appeared important for teachers in deciding on acceptability (error versus variant) was grammaticality. Here, two items stood out: syntax and tense markers (Hamid & Baldauf, 2013:486); in comparison, lexical creativity was appreciated by the majority of teachers. Of note, is the point that grammaticality judgement tasks as opposed to the categorisation task most likely triggered the concomitant error Second Language Acquisition

(SLA) perspective, whereas the latter in providing multiple categories, may have engendered a more inclusive perspective.

With the above in mind, and changes in language learning theory, attitudes towards additional language learning errors have been modified. This, Hamid and Baldauf (2013:487) argue is achievable when teachers of English are helped to see L2 errors (the grammatical judgement component) and variations (the categorisation component) in relation to each other, as was evidenced in their study:

> … it gives an opportunity to teachers to view varietal features in relation to errors as well as features of exocentric norms, not in isolation. The task also approximates the sociolinguistic reality of English in the contemporary world by an implicit indication that features of L2 varieties exist in their own right and are not to be seen as deviations from SE [Standard English] and be considered errors by default. Including errors and features of L2 varieties and SE in the same task can be one way of bringing the SLA and WE together.

Understanding students' language use in formal, academic writing with the above in mind was foremost in the current study. At no point, is it believed that "acquiring a second or additional language means being able to use it in the same way as its monolingual native speakers" (Kachru, 1994d, cited in Bolton, 2015:41). Besides this being unrealistic and unfair, this would also be undesirable in the sense that appropriate role modelling by native speakers of English is not guaranteed.

From the 1940s to 1960s the behaviourist theory, which viewed learning as involving habit formation through stimulus-response reinforcement, influenced language teaching methods in which errors were to be avoided and corrected immediately to prevent them from developing into incorrect habits. Here, errors were primarily thought of as outcomes of first language (L1) interference, which led to Contrastive Analysis (CA) where comparisons were made between the AL and L1. The focus of CA was on form, and did not explain actual cognitive processes underlying language learning. Today, however, CA studies both differences and similarities between the source and target languages, identifying possible problem areas and pedagogical solutions to these problems (Brown, 1994).

Because the behaviourist approach could not account for the fact that learners go through typical development milestones during language acquisition, there was a change in focus, now on innate cognitive factors and the creative aspects of learning a language. This new approach recognised

the underlying systematicity in the learner's progress and in making errors. Corder (1967, cited in Brown, 1994) ascribed this to the learner's unconsciously inducing rules according to certain strategies, and Selinker (1967, also cited in Brown, 1994) who hypothesised the existence of a separate yet dynamic linguistic system based on the observable output of the learner, referred to as the interlanguage – which reflects the learner's understanding of the AL and the eventual approximation of AL norms.

Today, error analysis is concerned with both inter- (between languages) and intralingual (in terms of the internal complexity of the AL) errors, including the learning and communication strategies used consciously and unconsciously by learners. Interlanguage studies focus on the learner's emergent linguistic system. Since the insights gained from knowledge of the well-known taxonomy of errors, and the stages of interlanguage were seen to constitute relevant background to the current study, these aspects will subsequently be described in some detail.

First of all, with respect to error identification, errors are distinguished from mistakes. While basically, errors and mistakes are both incorrect, the difference lies in the frequency with which they occur and the learner's ability to monitor and repair (correct) her incorrect use. Mistakes occur when a learner actually knows how to use the particular word or construction correctly; however, these occur due to inattention, fatigue, anxiety or some other such factor. When learners are unaware of their mistakes, they can usually repair them when these are pointed out. However, in the case of errors, the learner has not yet mastered that particular aspect of the AL; she is unaware she has made a mistake, and when this is indicated, will most likely not be able to correct it. However, although frequency of occurrence and ability to monitor and repair performance are useful criteria in distinguishing between mistakes and errors, the distinction in practice is not always so clear (Brown, 1994). One remedy in this regard is to try to provide a plausible reconstruction of the incorrect use, which is generally straightforward. In some cases, though, the error is so severe that we do not know what the learner intended, and the only remedy would be to ask the learner to explain the intended meaning. Another feature of error identification involves recognising both overt (noticeable in faulty form or construction) and covert (which need to be inferred from co-text, since on their own, use may at first glance appear correct) errors.

The second step in error treatment or analysis is the description of errors, which assists in understanding the patterns underlying the errors. The description provided here is according to the mental operations that gave rise to the error, such as: omission, insertion, substitution and ordering. (It should be noted that while the classification system of errors described here was not directly employed in the current study for the analysis of connecting expressions and verb phrases, this framework was, nevertheless, helpful to the researcher in formulating a classification framework of inappropriate uses of connectors and verb phrases in the student writing). These operations can occur at any level of the linguistic system, for example at phonological, morphological, syntactic, lexical, or discourse level. Each of these operations will be presented briefly; however, examples are not provided.

- **Omission** involves leaving out some aspect of the AL and involves some form of simplification of the AL.
- **Insertion** involves adding something to the AL where it does not belong. This is often a sign that the learner is aware of a grammatical rule but is not certain where or when to implement it correctly.
- **Substitution** involves replacing a letter/sound, morpheme, syntactic structure, word or lexical phrase with an incorrect one. Phonological substitution errors occur when the learner does not distinguish certain vowel sounds in the case of English as the AL. Lexical substitution is a common phenomenon in learner errors, and may, in part explain instances of inappropriate choices in academic discourse or register.
- **Word order** involves the incorrect ordering of words in a sentence or clause.

The third and especially important stage of error analysis relates to explaining errors, which remains controversial and problematic since it is not easy to claim with certainty why an error has arisen. Nevertheless, it is generally acknowledged that there are four main causes of errors, namely: interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, the context of learning, and communication strategies. Each of these is presented briefly.

Regarding interlingual transfer, it is widely recognised that prior language learning, whether the L1 or any other language, can influence present learning. Positive transfer occurs when similarities exist between the L1 and AL and the learner can use this knowledge to learn the AL. Negative transfer or interference occurs when the two languages differ quite substantially, and

the learner imposes the L1 patterns onto the AL, such as phonological transfer, at the syntactic level, in the case of an incorrect verb phrase, or at the sociopragmatic level. This commonly occurs among adult AL learners, and in situations where children learning an AL are taught by persons who themselves are AL learners of the target language, which in South Africa, is the case generally.

Intralingual transfer relates to complexities within the AL causing difficulties, and the learner may apply a rule to cases in the AL where it does not apply. This process is also referred to as overgeneralisation because the learner overgeneralises a rule and applies it where it does not apply.

Both interlingual and intralingual transfer are considered as playing an important role in AL learning. In the early stages of learning, the former is common and gradually diminishes as the learner becomes more proficient in the AL, especially if the learner is exposed to an AL environment that provides rich AL input. Similarly, intralingual transfer may be likely to occur in the early and intermediate stages of learning, especially in those areas of the AL that are complex and where there are several exceptions to a rule.

Context of learning encompasses all those external factors in the learner's environment that can affect the learning process, namely the broader sociolinguistic context of learning, including the teaching methods and materials adopted in the AL classroom. Relevant sociolinguistic factors would incorporate those aspects discussed in § 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4, and implications for teaching will be considered under academic writing pedagogy in § 2.6.3.9.

Communication strategies refer to the use of verbal and non-verbal mechanisms for productive communication of information (Brown, 1994:118). These are plans learners adopt consciously or unconsciously to express something in the AL but lack the appropriate AL knowledge to do so. Examples are coining a word; circumlocution (describing something when the relevant word is unknown); providing a literal translation; switching to the L1, or simply abandoning the topic when the learner finds herself unable to continue. In spite of their usefulness in continuing the discourse, these strategies can sometimes be a source of error in the AL.

In conclusion, the question of how to deal with the problem of error correction remains a fairly controversial and misunderstood issue in AL learning (largely relating to notions of language

learning and concomitant teaching methods). This matter will be discussed in the subsequent section on language and academic writing research.

Part Two of chapter 2 follows, providing information on language and academic writing research. Sections 2.6.1 and 2.6.2 provide a detailed review of research on English verbs and connectors, both of which are directly relevant to the current study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW: PART TWO

2.6 LANGUAGE AND ACADEMIC WRITING RESEARCH

This section is sub-divided into three sections, in this order, namely: studies on English verbs; studies on connectors or connective devices (also referred to as connecting expressions for the purposes of the current study); and language use in academic discourse, with an emphasis on student writing. It is important, however, to point out that while various analytical frameworks and terms will be used in the relation to the literature on English verbs and connectors, the framework and terminology adopted for use in the current study was that of Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan (1999). Since this framework informed the text analysis in the present study, this is described in chapter 3 on methodology.

2.6.1 STUDIES ON ENGLISH VERBS

2.6.1.1 Introduction

The importance of the role verbs perform in English writing has already been referred to in chapter 1 (§ 1.2.2).

The first four studies that will be described are those of Housen (2002), Asante (2012), Scheepers (2014) and Deroey (2012) as they provide insight into the difficulties that AL students generally have concerning verb use in their academic writing.

- *Learner difficulties with inflectional verb categories*

Housen's (2002) study aimed at determining learners' formal and functional development of the verb system in English as a foreign language (EFL), with a focus on the underuse and overuse of inflectional verb categories ($V\emptyset, Ving, Ved, Ven, Vs$) in target-like and non-target-like contexts. The data comprised oral interlanguage taken from the Corpus of Young Learners Interlanguage (CYLIL) which represents European school children at different stages of development and from different L1 backgrounds (Dutch, French, Greek and Italian). Four proficiency levels among the learner groups were identified: a low (L), low intermediate (LI), higher intermediate (HI), and high (H). These were seen as corresponding to the various stages of interlanguage development.

Verb uses in these groups were compared to those of native speakers from the English Language section of the European School in Brussels. The L and LI groups were mainly comprised of the Francophone languages, while the H and HI groups were mainly Dutch. The learners' uses were compared to native speaker (NS) use.

The oral data contained various features of the English verb system, including tense, aspect, modality, agreement and verb phrase syntax (Housen, 2002:83). The analysis was based on identifying verb uses within clausal units (generally corresponding to a predicate consisting of a copula or main verb – finite or non-finite). Verbless clausal units also occur due to ellipsis or errors of omission.

Prior to the actual study, what is of particular interest in Housen's (2002) literature review, is that in terms of L2 acquisition of the English verb system, the use of –*ing* was found to be the earliest grammatical morpheme, and not the simple present –*s* form, as is common belief. In addition, the widespread belief, that function precedes the acquisition of form, and therefore that the acquisition of form implies the acquisition of function, may not be entirely accurate in terms of findings by recent studies (Housen, 2002:79). Housen (2002) explains the complexity of the mapping of form to function process in terms of what is referred to as the Aspect Hypothesis, which holds that the development of verb morphology is influenced by the inherent semantic properties of the lexical verb which the learner selects to refer to a specific event. Here, four verb types are distinguished: states, activities, accomplishments and achievements, and how these further denote events as either stative or dynamic, punctual or durative, and telic or atelic (which, stated simply, is whether or not it has an inherent goal or endpoint). The learners are understood as proceeding through stages of verb formations (commencing with –*ing* uses with prototypical dynamic-durative verbs; followed by –*ed/-en* uses with telic-punctual verbs (or achievements); further followed by the tense marker –*s* used with stative verbs (or states), and only in the last stage, "when they are no longer bound to the inherent semantics of the verb of each stage, can the respective morphemes be put to their full functional use as markers of tense, aspect or agreement (Housen, 2002:81).

Overall, the findings revealed that the vast majority (more than 80%) of lexical verbs in the L and LI corpora appeared as uninflected base forms ($V\emptyset$), whether in finite position (as main or

auxiliary verb) or non-finite position (as participles), in contrast to the H and HI corpora, where there was a steady decrease in this use, as other morphological categories appeared.

In the learner corpora as a whole, the first inflected form that emerged was the present participle *–ing*. It was still randomly used in both finite and non-finite contexts and both with and without an auxiliary element. This use was not only underextended in the early and intermediate stages of acquisition, but also often overextended to semantic contexts that do not readily allow for an imperfective reading or to grammatical contexts that would require another verb form (Housen, 2002:98-99). At the L level, the use of *–ing* was restricted to inherently atelic-dynamic-durative verbs (activities) like *dancing* and *fighting* (Housen, 2002:100). But from LI onwards, its use was gradually freed from the constraints of the inherent semantics of the verb, and became more functional as a marker of imperfective aspect. Generally, the H group used *–ing* verbs more economically than the LI and HI groups and its pattern was closer to that of native use. Nevertheless, what is noteworthy is that the bias of *–ing* towards dynamic-durative verbs (activities, accomplishments) did not completely disappear in any of the data (including NS). In the L and LI corpora, this *–ing* use and that of the uninflected $V\emptyset$ were the only forms that occurred.

The third inflected form to be used in this learners' verb system was the irregular Ven form. Here, the first form that appeared was *Be*, which was regularly used by the LI group. This was followed by Ven forms of other high frequency verbs such as *have (had)*, and *do (did)*. On the whole, Ven forms occurred first primarily as simple verbs in the L and L1 data, but from the HI group onwards they also appeared as participles in the formation of Perfect tenses (Housen 2002:94). Initially, Ven forms were also overextended ocassionally to non-past or non-perfect contexts, but less frequently than was the case with $Ving$.

Regular Ved forms appeared later than its irregular counterpart and did not become a regular feature of the learners' speech until the HI level. This tendency is in line with the general trend in native English (Housen, 2002:94), and is the basis for the common error of overgeneralisation of the *–ed* form to irregular verbs, for example, *he eated*. While Ved forms were virtually absent from the L data, overgeneralisations occurred in levels LI, H and HI – which is indicative of the learners' growing morphological capacity.

The last major inflectional category of the verb Vs, was also a late occurrence, with most learners. This use was either greatly overextended or underextended (omitted) at the L and LI levels of development. Here, the inappropriate uses are explained in terms of –s being a primary marker of grammatical agreement rather than grammatical present (or non-past) tense (cf. Scheepers, 2014).

The general tendency by ESL users to either overextend or omit the –s as a concord marker between subject and verb, according to Asante (2012), should be viewed as evidence of a variety feature of English. Subject-verb concord in English refers to concord of third person number between subject and verb (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech & Svartvik, 1985). Except for *be*, only the present tense form of lexical verbs and the primary verbs, *do* and *have*, occurs in the agreement relationship (Asante, 2012:212), where the general rule holds that a singular subject agrees with a singular verb, and a plural subject agrees with a plural verb. However, several exceptions occur, depending on the form of the subject, the meaning of the subject, and the distance between the head noun of the subject and the verb phrase (Asante, 2012:212). Two important exceptions are notional and proximity concord, which produce uses of varying degrees of acceptability. Notional concord means the verb agrees with the notion of number of the subject and not the actual use of morphological number, for example, in English *government* is a collective noun and is therefore notionally plural; this means that the accompanying verb may be either singular (in terms of a collective entity) or plural. Proximity concord occurs when a verb agrees with an adjacent noun and not with the head of the subject noun phrase; this poses difficulty for many writers since a noun phrase or clause which is not the subject intervenes between a subject and its verb.

- *Subject-verb concord features in Ghanaian English*

Asante (2012) examined subject-verb concord (SVC) features in educated Ghanaian English by analysing texts written by graduate Ghanaians, and freshman enrolled in a language and study skills course. Additional data comprised texts by final year nursing students. Besides the text analysis, a questionnaire was administered to students in different levels of study and degree programmes asking them to indicate whether sentences (taken from the text analysis) reflected their use.

Asante's (2012) data analysis indicated that, for educated Ghanaian English, grammatical concord, in general, conforms to the principles of subject-verb concord in Standard English (which she refers to as 'putative' Standard British written English described in reference grammars). She noted that standard use far exceeded that of non-standard use. Nevertheless, there were instances of variable use in all the groups for which six types could be distinguished. And since these, as Asante (2012) points out, are found to systematically characterise several ESL varieties, including South African varieties, such as BSAE and SA Afrikaans English (based on the researcher's observations of Afrikaans students' writing in English), these merit some attention. They are presented in the order of highest to lowest frequency of occurrence, namely:

- Zero marking of third person singular verbal –*s*
  *The pulp cavity is the sensitive part and **consist** of blood vessels nerves and lymphatics.*
- Verbal –*s* with plural noun phrase (NP) subjects. In this regard, Asante (2012:218) points out that no particular linguistic environment appears to favour the form.
  *These researches **adds** to the stock of knowledge any one comes into contact with. They also **aids** policy makers to implement good decisions.*
- Notional concord
  *If no vomiting **persist** fluid diet **are** given, then semi-solid till the patient is able to tolerate solid diet.*
- Verbal -*s* with co-ordinated NP subjects
  *The temperature, pulse, respiration and blood pressure **is** recorded quarter hourly.*
- Auxiliary *have* with singular subjects (which Asante mentions is very common in Ghanaian speech among secondary through to university levels of education, 2012:219)
  *Not only this, university training is such that one **have** to do independent work, read a lot and acquire the needed skill of reading and finding out answers to questions.*
- Proximity concord
  *Food rich in nutrients **are** given.*

Based on her findings, Asante (2012) concludes that since the above variations occur systematically and across educational backgrounds in her data, these uses should be viewed as features of Ghanaian English. She, however, adds that in her data, both standard and non-

standard uses occurred in a single text, and sometimes in a single sentence. Asante (ibid.) attributes the non-standard uses of subject-verb concord (SVC) to the inevitable linguistic processes of simplification, language transfer and early input influence (§ 2.5).

- *Undergraduate students' use of delexical multiword units (have; take; make)*

Scheepers' (2014) investigation into undergraduate students' vocabulary and written production of delexical multiword units (MWU) included an error analysis of light or delexical verbs (*have; take; make*), which are high-frequency verbs in combinations, also referred to as stretched verb constructions by Nesselhauf (2005, cited in Scheepers, 2014:177).

Since the use of idiomatic phrases involving expressions such as *have, make* and *take*, are found to be common in the written registers, more especially news reportage and academic prose (Biber, et al., 1999), the uses of these three verbs are summarised in some detail in Table 2.2 below:

Table 2.2: Summary of uses of *have, take* and *make* (based on Scheepers, 2014:124-132)

HAVE	Examples taken from Scheepers (2014)
Have as a <u>primary auxiliary verb</u> = specifies the way in which a lexical verb, or the whole clause, is to be interpreted. It is used to form the perfect aspect	*The deceased did not report that he **had recovered** his vehicle.*
Have as <u>operator</u> = is generally found in finite clauses only, and is used in special structures such as independent interrogative clauses and clauses negated by *not*.	
Have as <u>semi-modal</u> = is called a semi-modal in that it occurs as part of a multiword verb as in *have (got) to, had better*. These are fixed idiomatic expressions. As modals, *have* uses express obligation or necessity.	*… **have to** overcome it …*
Have as <u>lexical verb</u> = as a transitive lexical verb occurs commonly as the most frequent lexical verb in English, but is the least common in academic prose; however, within academic writing, *have* is more common than any of the other lexical verbs (Biber, et al., 1999). The main verb *have* can be used in several meaning combinations (as signalling logical relations) such as: physical possession, states of existence, linking a person to some abstract quality, marking causation.	*… his eyes **have** no light …*
Have as a <u>core delexical verb</u> = often occurs with a noun phrase forming a relatively idiomatic expression	*… **have a love** for reading …*
Have as <u>pseudo delexical verb</u> = occurs when the noun or predicate and the corresponding verb are not identical, or where the definite article is used instead of the indefinite, or when the article is absent. (The same holds for *make* and *take*). What should be noted is that this use poses difficulties for student writers.	*… you may not **have much respect** for a character …*
MAKE	
Make as <u>lexical verb</u> = *make* is a lexical verb only, never acting as an auxiliary and never used intransitively (without an object). *Make* can be classified as an activity verb according to its core meaning, which is to create something, <u>but it may also be causative in meaning – to make something happen, or force someone to do something</u>. Of note, it occurs commonly across all registers, and often combines with the progressive (as for the other light verbs:	*… **makes** them angry …*

get, go, give) (Biber, et al., 1999).	
Make as <u>phrasal verb</u> = a phrasal verb consists of a verb with an adverbial particle (*make up*). The core meaning of the adverbial particle indicates location or direction.	*... rules and regulations that **make up** the apartheid regime ...*
Make as <u>prepositional verb</u> = consists of a verb followed by a preposition (*made for*)	*... allowances are **made for** others based on ...*
Make as <u>phrasal prepositional verb</u> = contains an adverbial particle and a preposition (*made up of*)	*... the body of an essay should be **made up of** ...*
Make as <u>single-word lexical verb</u> = *make* belongs to the group of activity verbs that occurs with transitive patterns only	*... she did not want to **make** her father angry ...*
Make as <u>core delexical verb</u> = refers to idiomatic combinations with *make* which could be replaced by a single-word verb with no loss of meaning	*... **make a statement** (state)*
Make as <u>pseudo delexical verb</u> = as for *have* above	***make a decision** (mistake; a point; a difference)*
TAKE	
Take as <u>activity verb</u> = activity verbs primarily "denote actions and events that could be associated with choice, and so take a subject with the semantic role of agent" (Biber, et al., 1999:361, cited in Scheepers, 2014:130). *Take* is least common in academic prose, and when it occurs (as for *make* uses), this is usually with an inanimate subject that is in some way instrumental to the meaning of the verb (ibid.). *Take* uses occur with transitive patterns only (but exceptions are found in speech).	*... [Testing] usually **takes** the following three steps ...*
Take as <u>phrasal verb</u> = phrasal transitive verbs include uses such as *take up* and *take on*, which are common in academic registers	
Take as <u>prepositional verb</u> = occurs when it takes a prepositional object	*... **takes us to a point** ...*
Take as <u>phrasal prepositional verb</u> = like *make, take* occurs as a prepositional verb, combined with an adverbial particle and a preposition	*... has plans **of taking her mother out of** ...*
Take as <u>single-word lexical verb</u> – as for *make* above	*... bigoted people who **had taken** power ...*
Take as <u>core delexical</u> = like *make* and *have*, is called a semantically light verb by Biber, et al. (1999:428, cited in Scheepers, 2014:131), which means that it can combine with noun phrases to form a set verbal expression. Many uses are clear idiomatic expressions (*take time; take place; take part; take advantage of; take the form of*)	*... **take a look** ...*
Take as <u>pseudo delexical</u> = as for *have* and *make* (relative idiomatic uses)	*... he declined to **take the fall** for the accident ...*

Scheepers (2014:184-185) conceptualises errors in terms of levels of acceptability (Marginally Acceptable; Largely Unacceptable; and Clearly Unacceptable) based on judgements by three mother-tongue independent raters. Examples of errors are (taken from Scheepers, 2014) are:

Poverty takes part [plays a part];

... has an aggressive behaviour [is aggressive/behaves aggressively];

The neighbours are having differences [have differences];

Former president of Justice was making a serious corruption [was corrupt];

Make an assurance [give the assurance] ;

Makes his voice to be heard [makes his voice heard].

Scheepers (2014) compared two student corpora, namely Literature (Lit) and Law texts, against the backdrop provided by a reference or expert corpus, which comprised writing by academics from several language backgrounds. The corpus analysis revealed that the largest group of errors in both student corpora fell in the verb category, with a higher occurrence in the Lit texts than the Law texts. The differences between the two discourse types were significant for *make*, and very significant for *take*. In her study, four categories of verb error were identified, namely: collocation, concord, tense, and wrong choice of verb. The majority of errors occurred in the collocation category, which, according to Scheepers (2014:179), "[underlines] the impression that these writers lacked awareness of collocational restrictions governing these three verbs". Here, the Law students made significantly more errors than their Lit counterparts. There was only one error of wrong choice of verb in the corpora.

Errors of verb tense and concord constituted the remaining bulk of verb errors in the two text types. For these, there were no significant differences in the numbers of errors. Scheepers (2014:179) points out that the concord errors were further evidence of students' lacking awareness of agreement in general (in the sense that the students also made errors in noun and article use – two additional features that were considered in her text analysis). Regarding tense, Scheepers (2014) indicates that her framework included aspect. She briefly distinguishes tense and aspect as follows: while both relate mainly to time distinctions in the verb phrase, tense refers to the time an action occurs, either in the past or in the present, whereas aspect denotes whether the activity or state is ongoing or completed. Aspect was found to be particularly relevant to Scheepers' (2014) analysis when dealing with the notion of stative verbs such as *have* that refer to unchanging conditions and are not usually in the progressive aspect. Here, tense errors mainly involved inappropriate uses of the progressive aspect in the present tense. The

correct use of the progressive aspect is to describe actions which are currently in progress or which are about to take place in the near future (Minow, 2010, cited in Scheepers, 2014:129). The (inappropriate) use of progressives in South African student writing is not unexpected given its frequency in Black South African English (cf. studies by de Klerk, 2006; van Rooy, 2006; 2014). In this respect, Minow (2010, cited in Scheepers, 2014:129) found that in her Xhosa data, the frequency of the progressive decreases as proficiency increases. However, van Rooy (2014) argues that BSAE use of the progressive with stative verbs is not simply a matter of learner interlanguage, but that this innovative use is characteristic of a new variety, where most of the uses emanated from what van Rooy (2008:347) calls durative, persistitive meanings, by which events are denoted as bound to continue happening for a longer period of time, rather than a sense of the dynamic or temporariness, the more traditional (standard) meaning. With this awareness, however, Scheepers (2014:181-182) points out that while errors pertaining to progressive use in the student writing can:

> rightly be regarded as aspects of an acceptable language variety, [she does, however, view] them as problematic because, although several examples occur with activity verbs, in the particular context the construction can be regarded as non-standard, and not perhaps what is required in academic writing, and where the simple present or simple past tense would be used instead.

Scheepers (ibid.) adds that given the high incidence of concord and progressive use errors as shown by her study and this being a common observation in the marking of student assignments and examination scripts, attending to these features in writing instruction is important.

What also posed difficulty in verb uses for the students was their apparent lack of awareness of inflections and derivations (cf. Housen, 2012). In Scheepers' (2014) study, the Law students, particularly, had difficulty in this regard, for example, not distinguishing between the semantics of *consider* and *consideration*. What Scheepers (2014) additionally points out regarding her text analyses, is that many of the errors appear to have become habitual among learners, in the sense that article and tense marker omissions, including overuse of the progressive, and interchangeable use of pronouns, is a general characteristic of student writing (cf. studies by Butler, 2006; Hattingh, 2005; Ward-Cox, 2012 in § 2.6.3.2).

Deroey's (2012) corpus study of the discourse functions of basic *wh*-clefts in academic lectures similarly sheds light on the use of informationally light verbs (*do, happen, be, have, want, say, mean*) in such constructions, whose primary function serves "to signal to the audience that an

important elucidation follows" (Deroey, 2012:122) and is, therefore in itself, low in communicative significance, illustrated in the following example by Deroey (2012:114):

*… **what that does** is to squeeze blood towards the heart …*

Regarding verb construction choices in basic *wh*-cleft constructions, a strong preference is shown for the present tense, simple aspect, and active voice. Deroey (2012:116) explains that this is in line with verb phrases generally in conversation and academic genres concerned with the here and now, and presenting facts. Past tenses, mainly in the simple past, are mostly limited to historical recounts. Further examples by Deroey (2012: 117; 119) are:

*… **what we have** is a chain going sugar phosphate sugar phosphate …*

*… **what they actually did** was design a new product…*

Deroey's (2012) analysis also revealed that there was disciplinary variation in the use of basic *wh*-clefts. She concludes that teaching of these constructions in EAP should be based on the most frequently attested subjects and verb phrases and on the main discourse functions of the highlighted points in lectures generally and disciplines specifically.

What follows is an account of research into English modals in some detail.

2.6.1.2 Modals

- *Modal auxiliary use in non-native and native English*

The centrality of the modal auxiliaries in English, and their role in argument, is described by Aijmer (2002:65) as that of influencing reader beliefs and attitudes by providing arguments that would be taken seriously. Academic writing research demonstrates that L2 writers from different cultures have difficulty mastering the appropriate degree of qualifying claims and expressing these confidently, which is a function of epistemic modals (Aijmer, 2002:66-67):

> Epistemic modality is a fuzzy area which includes a number of ways of expressing doubt and certainty. Epistemic modals have many grammatical and functional equivalents. Some meanings and forms are more prototypical and frequent than others. … [Equivalents] are not simply stylistic variants but represent alternative patterns of modality.

Aijmer (2002) compared modal forms, meanings and uses in compositions produced by advanced non-native speakers (NNSs) and native speakers (NSs). The NNS corpus taken from

(the International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE) constituted three sub-corpora, the Swedish component (SWICLE) – the main focus of the study, and the German and French components. The NS corpus comprised material from LOCNESS (Louvain Corpus of Native English essays). This corpus formed the backdrop against which to evaluate the uses by NNSs. When NNS uses exceeded those of NS uses, Aijmer (2002:60) referred to this as 'overuse'(also indicated in Paul Rayson's Log Likelihood calculator).

The following findings emerged. The category of modal auxiliaries as a whole was overused by the NNS cohorts. In this category, *will, might* and *should, have (got) to* and *must* have highly significant differences. Regarding the overuse of *will*, the question posed is whether this is transferred from informal spoken registers to formal, written registers. A possible source, according to Aijmer (2002:62), is the learners' uncertainty in arguing in English. Another explanation is that "different cultural groups have different preconceptions about the degree of directness and certainty required in academic writing". A third source is suggested as being a spill over from speech. Here, Aijmer (2002:63) points out that Holmes (1988, cited in Aijmer, 2002) observed that *might* is more common in speech than in writing. A fourth explanation is that other epistemic modal devices expressing possibility were dispreferred by the learners.

Aijmer (2002:63-64) further indicates that modal choice relates directly to the type of meaning created, or expressed. Both the epistemic and root meanings of the modals: *must, may, should* and *might* are important in argumentative writing, but are associated with different argumentative styles.

Epistemic modals express degrees of likelihood, while root modals express degrees of obligation, necessity, permission, and volition. *Will, would, may, might*, and *could* are the principal epistemic auxiliaries. *Will* is employed to predict what will occur in the future with some certainty (predictive persuasion). *May* conveys a lower degree of certainty (what may or may not occur).

Must is commonly used to convey logical necessity as opposed to its use in academic writing where it tends to mark personal obligation (Aijmer, 2002:64). In Aijmer's (2002) study, neither the NNSs nor the NSs used a large number of epistemic *must*; however, this form was overused in the SNNSs' (Swedish) compositions.

In contrast, *may* was epistemic throughout in the learner corpus, and was almost twice as frequent in the NNSs compared to the NSs. The general overuse of the root modals (*must*, including *should* and *have to*) Aijmer (2002:65) believes may be topic-related, in the sense that topics such as Swedish immigrant policy and on the environment and pollution may have evoked strong opinions and concomitant proposals for action. *May* in its root meaning was generally underused among the learners. Overall, the learners' modal choices reflected a preponderantly speech-like style compared to the native users. This style naturally influenced tone, in the sense that the rhetorical effect of the text and the mixed use of contradictory strategies (that is, combining tentativeness with absolute certainty in disharmonic uses – inappropriate modal expression combinations) contributes to the impression that the text has not been written by native speakers, or is a product of novice writers who also tend towards a speech-like style.

Aijmer's (2002:71) findings have clear pedagogical pointers. The one is that a wide definition of modality should be adopted that takes into account to range of structural categories for expressing modality. The second is to present modals within a discourse perspective, which considers tone, register and semantics, and in relation to this, create awareness of different worldviews and how presenting opinions may vary cross-linguistically within different systems (cf. Holmes & Nesi, 2009 in § 2.6.1.6).

- ***Modals and quasi-modals in Inner and Outer Circles***

Collins' (2009) study, which embraced an examination of modals and quasi-modals in nine matching corpora (British; American/AmE; New Zealand and Australia representing Inner Circle uses, and the Philippines; Singapore; Hong Kong; Indian and Kenyan English/KenE representing Outer Circle uses), indicates a rise in preference for quasi-modals, with a decline in modals. Here, quasi-modals were particularly associated with speech and modals with written registers. There was further a strong tendency for American English to be leading this shift in the IC varieties, with the South East Asian set leading the way for OC varieties.

As has already been mentioned, understanding uses of the modal auxiliaries is important since these forms are the principal means by which modality is expressed in English. Semantically, modality is concerned with non-factuality, which includes possibility; necessity; ability; obligation; permission, and hypotheticality. Collins (2009) accepts the general validity of the

epistemic versus root distinction, where the latter is understood as conveying both deontic and dynamic root modality (Palmer's distinction, 2001, cited in Collins, 2009:282). With respect to deontic root modality, "the conditions for actualisation arise from an external source, whereas for dynamic root modality, they typically derive from and affect an internal source (namely, the subject referent)" (Collins, 2009:282). Epistemic modality, however, is concerned with the speaker's truth judgement of the proposition, and there is, therefore, debate over the epistemic status of *will; shall; be going to* when they convey futurity (cf. Bergs, 2010; Celle & Smith, 2010; Salkie, 2010; Declerck, 2010; Wada, 2013).

As Collins (2009:281) points out, the periphrastic expressions, namely: *have (got) to; be going to; want to; need to*, are becoming increasingly common as a means to convey modality, and since they are associated with modal counterparts, namely: *must; should; need; will; shall*, Collins (ibid.) examined their uses to see whether they were replacing their counterparts. In this respect, it was found that the IC varieties have a stronger preference for the quasi-modals, more especially in AmE speech, than the OC varieties, with the exception of *have to* which characterised the latter. Compared to the other Englishes investigated here, AmE had the smallest number of modal tokens. Unsurprisingly, *will* had a vast number of tokens, with the highest occurrence in KenE (an African variety).

The second most popular of the quasi-modals in the IC varieties and the most popular in the OC was *have to*, which was more common in speech than the written registers. Comparative *must* uses were approximately half that of *have to*. Collins (2009:287) explains the primary meaning of both *have to* and *must* in contemporary English as being that of deontic necessity with *have to* having a more objective nuance, in that the source of obligation is seen as external to the speaker, whereas *must* is more subjective, where the speaker is typically seen as the source of obligation. *Have to* seldom assumes an epistemic meaning, and as indicated by Collins (2009:288) that while in some instances it could be substituted for epistemic *must*, many would most likely find its informality and perhaps objectivity inappropriate.

Should had a similar frequency to *have to*, and was twice as popular as *must*, and similarly to *have to*, its use is most probably explained by its milder subjectivity and consequently less forceful and overbearing tone. *Should* uses were found to be in slow decline, notably more in the IC than the OC. *Have got to* was the least preferred of the quasi-modals, which is explained in

terms of its grammatical and stylistic differences from *have to* (which are not detailed here). Even though both forms are similar in that they serve primarily as a marker of strong deontic necessity, *have got to* is viewed as being less objective than *have to*, which may partly explain the strong aversion to this form in the written genres by the IC users compared to OC users, which Collins (2009) suggests may be due to the former being more aware of traditional proscriptions of the verb *get* in writing. The corpora analysis also showed that *need to* was taking over *need* in both the IC and OC varieties, and for which the distribution was similar in both speech and writing. Both forms are associated mainly with dynamic necessity, with the quasi-modal (*need to*) expressing a need that is either intrinsic to the subject-referent, or located in external circumstances, where only the latter is applicable to the modal (*need*). According to Collins (2009:289), it is the deontic use of *need to*, which is considered a pragmatic extension of its dynamic use, in the sense that the proposition acquires the illocutionary force of a recommendation, that allows it to compete with *have to; have got to*; and *must*.

Although *be going to* appears to be moving into the semantic territory of *will*, this is occurring selectively (Collins, 2009:290) (cf. Bergs, 2010). While *be going to* was the most frequently occurring quasi-modal in the IC , more particularly in speech than in writing, its occurrence in the OC was significantly lower. In the OC, *will* demonstrated a stronger preference for speech over writing.

The primary meanings of *be going to* are epistemic futurity and dynamic intention. The limitations on use are: epistemic *be going to* can only be used in relation to future situations, not present or past, as is the case of central epistemic *will*; in such instances *be going to* cannot be substituted for *will*. Also, *be going to* seldom expresses the dynamic meaning of willingness, typically conveying the speaker's intention. Finally, *be going to* often suggests a greater degree of immediacy than *will*, which Collins (2009:290) explains as being "derivable from the motional sense of the originally progressive construction, the modal idiom suggesting that events leading up to the actualisation of a situation are in train" (cf. Bergs, 2010; Wada, 2013).

Collins (2009:290) maintains that *want to* could be viewed as a quasi-modal. Its dominant meaning is volitional, involving both deontic and epistemic meaning, where the preterite *wanted to* is seen as being deferential. *Want to* had a similar frequency in both the IC and OC corpora, with greater affinity for speech than writing.

Overall, Collins' (2009) comparative corpus study on the use of modals and quasi-modals shows that AmE is leading the way in the rise of quasi-modals and the decline of modals, and that the South East Asian OC varieties are more advanced than IndianE and KenE, and that while quasi-modals are abundant in speech, the more conservative registers, writing, are characterised by modals.

- *Can/could and may/might in Inner and Outer Circles*

Collins (2007) also compared the uses of the modal auxiliaries *can/could* and *may/might* in three IC varieties of English, namely: British (BrE), American (AmE) and Australian (AusE), and while these forms can express the same meanings (relating to epistemic possibility), the data analysis showed little semantic overlap between them. In his analysis of these modals of possibility, Collins (2007) employs the tripartite classification of modal meanings based on Palmer's (1990, cited in Collins, 2007:476) distinction between:

- Epistemic modality – concerned with the speaker's commitment to the truth of the proposition
- Deontic modality – concerned with conditions relating to the completion of an action deriving from an external source
- Dynamic modality – concerned typically with an individual's ability or volition

Table 2.3 below provides an overview of the main markers of the three types of modality and concomitant functions.

Table 2.3: Types of modality: main markers and functions (taken from Collins, 2007).

Epistemic modality	Primary meaning of *may/might* in contemporary English	Epistemic *may* and *can* are usually subjective expressing the speaker's lack of knowledge of whether or not the proposition is true, and therefore the assessment of it is merely a possibility. However, in some cases, the judgement is more generally entertained than purely subjective (Collins, 2007:478). *May* can also signal concession in the sense that the speaker concedes the truth of the proposition, rather than a lack of confidence in its truth, which Collins views as a type of pragmatic strengthening (Collins, 2007:479). *May* uses of epistemic possibility can be in the present (including the general present), past or future, and whereas *may* can occur readily with future time situations, *can* is rare. *May* use with a general present time situation (paraphrased as 'it is possible that') and *may* use with deontic possibility meaning (paraphrased as 'it is possible for') is often viewed as a merger rather than two distinct meanings

		(Collins, 2007:479). In both their past time and hypothetical uses, *might* and *could* may convey epistemic meaning with reference to any time situation (past, present, future). Also, in the case of *could*, the restriction to non-affirmative contexts as is the case with *can*, does not apply (Collins, 2007:480).
Dynamic modality	Primary meaning of *can/could* in Modern English	Although the same merger notion (mentioned above) may hold for *can* (in the sense that the interpretation could lean towards epistemic meaning), Collins (2007:480) believes that rather than two meanings that have merged, "it is preferable to say that we have two meanings – epistemic and dynamic – and that in certain contexts it doesn't make any difference which one we choose". Refer to Collins' (ibid.) identification of the six aspects of dynamic meaning discussed below.
Deontic modality	Least common meaning for all (*can/could & may/ might*)	Deontic possibility is prototypically (but not more frequently) subjective, with the speaker as the deontic source, or addressee in questions, or conditionals (Collins, 2007:486).

The data analysis revealed that while *may* is still the primary conveyer of epistemic possibility, its use has declined notably in AmE and AusE than it has in BrE. It was also observed that the semantics of *can* is beginning to change in the sense that *can* is likewise being used as a marker of epistemic possibility in affirmative contexts, despite its characteristic association with non-affirmative contexts. *Might* is starting to supersede *may* as a stylistic neutral marker of epistemic possibility, once again more in AusE and AmE rather than BrE. In this regard, *might*, as is the usual case with *may,* is being used in backshift and unreal conditions (referring to unactualised possibility). Similarly, *could* is taking on the function of marking present epistemic possibility, but interestingly, more so in BrE than AusE and AmE.

The preterite forms of *can* (*could*) and *may* (*might*), besides having the temporal function of signalling past time, also mark hypotheticality. In all three corpora, the latter use was more popular than the former, but relatively more so with *might* than with *could*. Temporal *might* uses were rare and generally limited to formal genres (Collins, 2007:477). Hypothetical uses of both *could* and *might* related to unreal (to mean unactualised possibility) conditions and weak, or tentative uses, where the modal "has come to provide an element of tentativeness or diffidence additional to the meaning expressed by its present tense counterpart" (Collins, 2007:478).

The most frequent use of *might* was that of a diffident marker of epistemic possibility, and while the general view that epistemic *might* and *may* convey different degrees of likelihood, with *might* being lower on the scale, this distinction did not apply to Collins' (2007) data, where numerous instances of *may* and *might* were being used alternately without any noticeable variation in

diffidence (Collins, 2007:481). What is further noteworthy is that *might* occurred more frequently in speech, with *may* being more common in writing, as markers of epistemic possibility, which Collins (ibid.) attributes to the more salient difference between present epistemic *may* and *might* in formality rather than in diffidence (Collins, 2007:482).

With respect to *could* and *might* uses as markers of epistemic meaning, *might* was notably more established than *could* in Collins' (2007) data.

Collins (2007:482-486) provides a detailed treatment of dynamic possibility which will not be considered here since this is beyond the scope of the present study; what is, however, useful is his identification of the six aspects of dynamic possibility, namely:

- Theoretical possibility – where the potentiality for action lies in the external situation (Collins, 2007:483);
- Existential possibility – a type of theoretical possibility – existential modality lies on the borderline between modality and aspectuality; it involves an implicit existential quantifier involving either set membership, or characteristic behaviour (Collins, 2007:483-484);
- Rational possibility – a type of theoretical possibility – is not very removed from objective deontic possibility, with actualisation being approved by general societal or cultural considerations (Collins, 2007:484) ;
- Potential ability – relates to the ability meaning of *can* which normally requires an animate subject with agentive function; however, inanimate subjects also occur (Collins, 2007:484);
- Actualised ability – the potential ability meaning is close to actualisation insofar as the evidence for potential is actualisation, even though it is not necessarily realised (Collins, 2007:484);
- Making commands, suggestions, offers (dynamic implication) – here, the interpretation of tokens requires extending the semantic framework towards pragmatics (that is, referring to the illocutionary force of the proposition).

Can primarily conveys dynamic possibility, with very similar frequencies in all three varieties.

In contrast to the widespread perception that deontic possibility (or permission) is popular, the opposite was true for Collins' (2007) data, where deontic possibility was not only a relatively minor meaning, but was also a more objective, rather than prototypically subjective meaning. In his corpora, *can* and *may* uses were semantically parallel, in spite of frequency and formality differences. However, all *might* uses were subjective where the addressee was the deontic source, whereas *could* yielded both subjective and objective tokens (Collins, 2007:486-487).

Must in Black South African English requests

The following study by Kasanga (2006) considered the use of the modal auxiliary *must* in a Black South African English variety in requests. Given the observed tendency by student writers to use *must* instead of more suitable expressions for epistemic obligation and necessity, Kasanga's (ibid.) explanation for *must* uses among this group proves informative.

Kasanga (2006) compared requests in Black South African English and Sesotho sa Leboa (SeL, Northern Sotho, an indigenous South African language) by means of eliciting requests in both languages by means of a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) and establishing acceptability judgements (politeness ratings) of these. The findings revealed that in some cases, there was awareness of speech act formulae in the native form of English, but that participants chose to transfer pragmatic strategies from the donor language (SeL) to the host language (English). For the DCT, the following constituted the types of strategies employed in both BSAE and SeL. Explicit performatives are used pervasively in both groups, which is further reinforced by similar patterns of locution derivables and *want* statements, and the non-use of suggestory formulae in both language data, which Kasanga (2006:71) claims to be support of the hypothesis that there is transfer of preferred formulae from SeL into BSAE. This finding is in line with the general finding that in African languages, direct requests are viewed as expressions of positive politeness or deference (Gough, 1995, cited in Kasanga, 2006:75).

Although the BSAE data showed some instances of mild hints, not found in the SeL data, he views the low occurrence of this strategy as being evidence of the rarity of the use in SeL (Kasanga, 2006:71). Kasanga (ibid.) further relates the disparate use of hedged performatives between the two data sets (0.7% for BSAE) and (2.7% for SeL) to the low politeness rating of SeL requests, in which case transfer to BSAE is unlikely. Regarding strong hints and query

preparatories, while there were higher frequencies for SeL, there were substantially lower incidences for BSAE, most probably also due to the low politeness ratings of these strategies in SeL. Kasanga (2006) offers insights into these uses, which will not be recounted here since they are beyond the scope of the present study. Overall, BSAE exhibited similar patterns of politeness markers in requests to SeL where indirectness is unimportant, as opposed to standard English, which values indirectness.

In relation to requests and what may be perceived of as miscommunication, Kasanga (2006:80-81) refers to the use of *must* in South African English (SAE): "*must* is used by many speakers of English in South Africa as the 'unmarked' form for several modals to express compulsion, possibility, advice, or suggestion." He adds that "this pervasive and indiscriminate use is attested in professional and administrative writing". This is in contrast to standard English practice where meaning nuances would be expressed by the range of modals for specific purposes (various levels of obligation and necessity, and certainty, probability and possibility). Therefore, to be able to mitigate negative face, it is important that learners have knowledge of the host language's cultural politeness values, and how these are expressed linguistically; for example, why *must* would be considered a dispreferred use in academic writing.

- ***Must and to-clauses in directives in student writing***

Hyland's (2009) study on directives in student writing also considers *must* uses, alongside *to*-clauses, both of which are relevant to the current study in several ways. First, he was investigating academic engagement in argument, which is expressed by way of several features. One of these is directives, which can be signalled by the two verb phrase uses (obligation modals and the *to*-clause). While engagement per sé was not the focus of the current study, what is relevant is the text type, namely argument, and the two verb uses as regular features in argumentative discourse. Also relevant to the current study is the matter of cultural differences with respect to argument and how directives are employed or avoided. Hyland (2009:114) points out that his Hong Kong students may have difficulty in adopting the communicative practices of another culture since Chinese culture places a certain emphasis on respect for authority and the importance of face. How cultural differences between the home language and target language can pose difficulties for the AL learner have been referred to (§ 2.1 & 2.2).

Hyland (2009) describes *academic engagement* as writers' explicitly establishing the presence of their readers in their writing, and views it as an important element in most types of argument. Among other engagement devices, Hyland (ibid.) examines directives, which were the most frequent devices employed by student writers in the corpus. He classifies directives according to three main forms of activity: textual acts where the reader is referred to another part of the text/another text; physical acts where the reader is instructed to perform a real world action, and cognitive acts which direct readers to specific interpretations. Whereas the primary use in research articles comprised cognitive acts, student writing was characterised by physical acts, which were expressed by means of obligation modals (*must, ought, should, have to, need to*) referring to actions of the reader, and an adjectival predicate controlling a *to*-clause directing readers to a particular action.

- The following are examples of the above uses taken from research articles (Hyland, 2009:112). Hyland (2009) does not provide specifications for his research articles corpus:

*The temperature of the transistor **must be** accurately **determined** and **maintained** during the duration of the measurement*. (Physics)

*However, it is important **to note** that our discussion is not intended to reflect how strongly these feelings are held*. (Business Studies)

- The following are examples of project reports by final (third) year students (Hong Kong):

*It is important **to note** that the process of getting meaning is not so simple*. (TESOL)

In Hyland's (2009) study, ***must*** was used infrequently by students, and when it did occur, it was always expressed in the passive form, and almost always restricted to procedural explanations in the science and engineering reports. One, therefore, assumes that these students had insight into the general understanding of *must* as carrying the strongest sense of obligation based on a writer's authority.

*After the regeneration, the column **must be rinsed** for excess regenerant*. (Biology)

2.6.1.3 Tense and aspect

Since tense and aspect pose substantial difficulties for student writers, and the fact that these sub-systems of the English verb system need to be well understood to be able to teach them, and to interpret their uses, this area is dealt with in some depth. First of all, several studies concerned with how futurity is expressed in contemporary English will be described.

- *Expressions of futurity in contemporary English: shall/will; be going to; be to, and the simple present and present progressive*

Bergs (2010) undertook a study on expressions of futurity in contemporary English from a Construction Grammar Perspective. According to Bergs (2010), instead of deliberating on whether English has a future tense or not based on the traditional approach that defines tense as the "grammaticalised [referring to morphological inflection] expression of location in time" (Comrie, 1985, cited in Bergs, 2010:218), he suggests that a workable alternative is to:

> … ignore Tense for a moment and take a fresh look at Time as a concept, and analyse and classify the different ways and constructions a given language has to locate events in time, without necessarily invoking traditional tense [the problem being that in contemporary English there is no single 'future' morpheme] as such.

In terms of the current study, while Biber, et al.'s (1999) work served as the main framework for the verb phrase analysis of the student texts, this approach was especially helpful in understanding the notion of time as a concept and informing the analysis of the students' uses.

Bergs (2010) indicates that English has five ways of expressing futurity:

Shall/will:

- In traditional grammars, *shall* is indicated for 1st P and *will* for all other uses (both Bergs, 2010 and Biber, et al., 1999 point out that this use is outdated);
- Is associated with more formal styles;
- Is understood as expressing mild or more general prediction;
- Bergs (2010:222) points out that *will* is often considered one of the most contentious markers of futurity based on the difficulty in making the distinction between modal and tense uses (based on the argument that frequently volitional *will* cannot always be differentiated from neutral futurity *will*; or that *will* as a modal auxiliary may possess the

connotation of futurity in some cases, but not the denotation (actual meaning) (cf. Celle & Smith, 2010; Wada, 2013).

Be going to:

- Can usually combine with almost all subject types and is relatively free in its co-occurrence with time adverbials; in this respect, it appears to be the most independent marker of futurity compared to the others;
- Is more frequent in informal styles;
- In terms of meaning, it is commonly associated with intentionality and (objective) prediction deriving from present circumstances (Bergs, 2010:224) (cf. Collins, 2009).

Be to:

- Does not appear to be equally common in all styles and registers (cf. Declerck, 2010);
- Generally conveys strong prediction in more formal contexts;
- Like *will*, borders on both deontic and epistemic reality in that it can indicate both a simple statement about the future, and signify commands, orders, expectations (Bergs, 2010:225);
- According to Bergs (2010:226), *be to* and *will* are almost identical in meaning, where only intra-genre (such as headlines; text body) factors differentiate function.

Use of the simple present & present progressive:

- Both usually combine with future time adverbials (either in the same sentence or previous paragraph) to signal futurity; sometimes extralinguistic factors are sufficient;
- With specific reference to the present tense, Bergs (2010:224) points out that a future adverbial use is sometimes incompatible here, and therefore, there must be some complex interplay between the verb and adverbial that allows this combination and a future time interpretation;
- The simple present is available for all types of subjects and predicators;
- The simple present expresses fixed, scheduled events, and usually signals a fairly high degree of certainty regarding future events (Bergs, 2010:225);

- The progressive is incompatible with many inanimate subjects and non-agentive verbs/stative (Bergs, 2010:232: *will have; will be*) verbs;
- The progressive regularly combines with verbs expressing current, concrete action rather than verbs expressing states, feelings, possession; however, certain uses would be appropriate depending on context (Bergs, 2010:221);
- The simple progressive is one of the strongest forms of prediction which also involves an element of planning.

In practice, then, expressions of futurity are signalled by complex combinations (constructions) of different elements and extralinguistic (pragmatic, co- and contextual) factors. Bergs (2010:219) defines these constructions as "conventionalised form-meaning pairings at various levels of abstraction and complexity". Bergs (2010:227) describes three major advantages of analysing expressions of futurity in constructional terms; one of which was found to be particularly useful in the verb phrase analysis pertaining to the current study, namely that "Their specific co- and context dependence can be recognised and described on their form side in a non-technical way, based on actual language use."

- ***Be -ing and shall be -ing meanings in present-day English***

In a similar vein to Bergs (2010), Celle and Smith (2010) argue that the interpretation of *be –ing* and *shall be -ing* in present-day English and the related concepts: volition-neutrality; predetermination; and matter-of-courseness, should be broadened (Celle & Smith, 2010:248).

Two types of aspects are distinguished: Type 1 to signal progressivity and Type 2 which does not imply progressivity. According to Celle and Smith (2010:248), the latter function is more frequent in modern English discourse today. Type 1 is compatible with progressivity if a temporal adverbial or the context provides a frame for the ongoingness interpretation. Examples of each type are (these are the researcher's own examples):

Type 1 example: ***When the procession is over**, the guests **will** still probably **be ululating***.

Type 2 example: ***Will** the students **be writing** the English paper **this afternoon***?

Celle and Smith's (2010) analysis of several corpora (the ARCHER corpus, version 3.1; the Brown family of corpora: LOB and Brown; the British National Corpus or BNC) revealed that in

many cases (20-40%), uses of *will / shall be -ing* could not be neatly categorised according to aspectual meaning, and that context was necessary for interpretation of meaning. They provide the following explanations for modifications in meaning:

- Volition-neutrality and non-agentivity:

The emergence of *will/shall be -ing* allows the speaker to avoid volitional overtones when referring to the future; here the modals assume a seemingly pure predictive meaning which, in the view of Celle and Smith (2010:254), means the relation between the speaker and the predication as a whole takes precedence over the relation between the grammatical subject and the verb. They also argue that *be -ing* combined with *will/shall* affects agentivity: with *be -ing*, the subject is presented as an agent involved in an activity, for example:

*He **can't drive***. (Here, the subject's ability or volition is negated.)

*He **can't be driving***. (Here, the speaker's judgement takes precedence over the subject's agentivity role.)

- Predetermination and matter-of-course:

Celle and Smith (2010:253) indicate that the use of *will be -ing* is experienced as being more tactful than *will/shall* + bare infinitive, since it implies that future events will happen as a matter of course – in the natural course of events, rather than due to the speaker's, or anyone else's, involvement. However, the notion of predetermination may also be construed more abstractly, when the use of the expression is to convey the speaker's judgement (modal attitude) based on her knowledge, rather than some plan, for example:

*We regret to inform you that as of end May 2016 we **will** no longer **be offering** our services at ...*

In the above, the *will/shall be -ing* is not only a volition disclaimer, but also a responsibility disclaimer (Celle & Smith, 2010:254) in the sense that the speaker aims to both construct a future referential situation, and sounds neutral in that she does not present herself as directly involved.

- Epistemic use of *will be -ing*

Coates (1983, cited in Celle & Smith, 2010:256) states that aspectual marking requires modals to be interpreted epistemically, where the prevailing meaning is that of prediction about a situation (an evidential function) that may be both present and future. In this regard, Celle and Smith (2010:262) propose that:

> Therefore, the epistemic and the 'future as matter of course' meanings should not be regarded as entirely distinct, but rather as equally available options provided by the predictive judgement. The combination of *will* with *be –ing* extends the possibilities of temporal reference beyond the frame of the future by allowing the speaker to form an epistemic judgement about present situations. The selection of meaning then depends on the discourse type, … on the context, and on temporal adverbials. Crucially, the sense of 'pure future' seems to be an illusion created by evidentiality.

- ***Will as a marker of tense, or a modal, or both***

Salkie's study (2010), as is the case with several studies on tense and/or modal expressions in present-day English, such as those reviewed here, attests to the fact that there is some disagreement regarding whether *will* is a marker of tense, or is a modal, or both. Since the current study described in this thesis has neither a theoretical linguistic nor a grammatical orientation, strictly grammar-based arguments, while interesting and informative, are not entirely relevant. Nevertheless, Salkie's (2010) investigation and findings shed valuable insights into *will* uses.

Salkie (2010), who undertook a review of several well-known corpora to examine the uses of *will*, argues that although *will* has the same grammar as other modals, its meaning is not necessarily the same. Rather, his review reveals that "the future time use of *will* is overwhelmingly the most frequent in naturally occurring speech and writing" (Salkie, 2010:196). He also observed that *will* is far more frequent than the core English modals, as is shown in the breakdown of modal frequency in the Longman corpus by Biber, et al. (1999) reproduced below:

Modal	Frequency per million words
Will	3,500
Would	2,700
Can	2,400
Could	1,500

May	800
Should	800
Must	700
Might	500
Shall	200

_____

Like Declerck (2010), Salkie (2010) considers the use of *will* in conditionals, but given the very technical nature of his discussion, the details are not presented here. What is noteworthy, however, is Salkie's (ibid.) perspective on the matter of modality; while Huddleston (1995, cited in Salkie, 2010:207-208) asserts that *will* has a lower degree of modality compared to *can, may, must*, et cetera, Salkie (2010) maintains that this can be taken as "an admission that *will* has little modality as part of its meaning, and in fact is more like … a tense".

Another argument regarding *will* is that its use is largely motivated by volitional propositions in the right context. However, here too, Salkie (2010) cautions that while this interpretation is essentially correct, this cannot be the whole truth, since not all cases of future tenses acquire a volitional interpretation, as is illustrated below by the example he provides (Salkie, 2010:211):

***Will** you chair this afternoon's session, or don't you know yet?* (The meaning here is purely simple futurity, and not volitional.)

Salkie (2010:212) concludes that "There is no need to treat *will* as a modality marker to account for its other non-temporal uses: all of them can be derived from its basic future time sense." In addition, he advocates that more discussion is necessary on the differences between *will* and *be going to* for the purposes of tense analysis (cf. Bergs, 2010; Wada, 2013).

- ***Be to a marker of future time reference***

Declerck (2010) also conducted a study of future time reference expressed by *be to* in present-day English. Based on a corpus analysis of about two thousand authentic examples, mainly taken from the Cobuild corpus (University of Birmingham), Declerck (2010) argues that *be to* is primarily a modal auxiliary expressing the necessity of future actualisation of what she terms the 'residue-situation' as meaning the situation referred to by the clause minus *be to*. In order to

determine whether her interpretation is accurate, she identifies eight possible 'M-origins' (that is, origins of the necessity) (which, while interesting, are not discussed here since this is beyond the scope of the present study), and bases her conclusion on the idea of the 'futurish' use of *be to* in present-day English as being closely related to these modal uses, more particularly to use in which the M-origin is an official arrangement.

In the light of her corpus-based evidence, Declerck (2010:273-4) differs from mainstream linguistics by stating that the future tense in English is 'genuine' while conceding that there is an aspect of modal meaning whenever the reference is to the post-present (that is, not-yet-factual at a given time) since this is an epistemic modal notion. However, besides locating a situation time in the post-present with a single time reference (or future time reference only), she points out that there are verbal expressions which signal a 'dual time reference' (that is, a combination of post-present time and present time reference). Declerck (2010) terms these 'futurish tense forms' in the sense that these forms link the future actualisation of a situation to a particular kind of present state (Declerck, 2010:274), for which she gives the following example:

*The queen **is to** leave for Canada tomorrow. (= 'There is an official arrangement for the Queen to leave for Canada tomorrow.')*

In relation to the above, Declerck (2010) distinguishes futurish tense forms from pure future forms. Where pure future forms make a mere prediction and refer to the post-present without relating it to present circumstances, the futurish tense forms imply a link with the present. Declerk (ibid.) provides an in-depth treatment of how *be to* forms are employed in her corpus as expressions of futurish and pure future references, and in several types of conditional clauses (closed; open; tentative; counterfactual); however, while interesting and relevant to the current study in part, these details will not be reported on here.

Future-progressive construction in English

Wada's studies (2013; 2014) examined the so-called future-progressive construction in English.

Wada's (2013) aim was to provide a theoretical explanation of the *will + be –ing* (WBI) construction in terms of a general theory of tense (cf. Celle & Smith, 2010; Salkie, 2010). However, her detailed and insightful theoretical exposition will not be presented here since this

is beyond the scope of the current study. What is helpful, though, for purposes of analysis and interpretation of the WBI construction, is her description of its three uses, more specifically, Wada's (2014) elucidation of what she calls USE B (described in some depth below).The WBI construction is generally understood as having three uses, which she calls A, B and C, as in:

- USE A refers to ongoing situations in the future, and involves progressive aspect.

USE A usually provides a framing effect, which means that the situation referred to by the WBI construction occupies a time span encompassing a time in the future, which may be specified by a time adverb, or it simply describes an ongoing situation in the future, for example (all the subsequent examples are those of the researcher):

*The whole Examinations Department **will be working** overtime **next week**.*

- USE B refers to a future situation that occurs as a matter of course, such as in:

  *The social worker **will be giving another lecture** on life skills **at the same time next week**.*

However, with respect to USE B which is not viewed as reflecting the progressive (imperfective) aspect and is seen as constituting a special use of the WBI construction, Wada (2014) makes six points, which she considers important in understanding this use. This is based on what she refers to as the distinctive feature of USE B, which is that a prerequisite for the future situation has already been fulfilled by speech time. With this in mind, the six points are:

i. Rather than describing a future situation signalling volition at the time of speaking, USE B indicates that some prerequisites for the occurrence of a future situation have already been set up, for example:

    *The first-year students **will be staying** in the **hostels on campus**.*

ii. Also, in terms of actual time reference, it is necessary to consider both context and use of time adverbs to determine whether reference is to the usual near but not too-immediate future, or immediate or somewhat distant future, as in:

*The university buses **will be leaving in five minutes**.* (near future)

*The students **will be doing** pathology in their **fourth year of study**.* (distant future)

iii.   USE B is furthermore incompatible with situations that are not normal or occur suddenly. In such instances, the content of the preliminary stage is not retrievable from our knowledge of the world, or when the WBI construction is used without further contextual information, as is the case in:

Margot **will be poisoning her husband **when he gets home***. (Wada, 2014:411)

iv.   USE B is (usually) incompatible with stative verbs (depending on how the situation is viewed), which are not normally progressivised because stative verbs "themselves refer to unbounded situation, they do not require the help of the progressive form, a grammatical means of expressing unboundedness" (Wada, 2014:412) (cf. van Rooy, 2008; 2014 in § 2.6.1.4 for a counter-argument). An example is:

He **will be owning his own car next week.*

v.   USE B can indicate that the participial situation will occur as a daily routine or regular activity, such as in:

*The surgeon **will be performing** the gynaecological procedure on Monday, since this is her **theatre time slot**.*

vi.   USE B is occasionally employed to describe natural and physiological phenomena, for instance:

*The farmers **will be expecting winter rain soon in the Western Cape**.*

Wada (2014:393) also points out that a WBI construction can be ambiguous between USES A and B when it co-occurs with a future time adverbial, illustrated in the two examples below:

*When the rugby season ends, the players **will be recovering** from the strenuous physical and mental activity*. (USE A)

*She **will be submitting** her thesis at **midday***. (USE B)

USE C comprises an epistemic use referring to a current, ongoing situation, and like USE A, involves progressive aspect. Here, the framing effect is always in operation. Also, because the time of orientation in the present coexists with speech time, which is foregrounded by a present time adverb, the time span of the present participle situation always encompasses speech time (Wada, 2014:410), for example:

> *Most lecturers **will now be marking** tests and examination papers since the semester marks have to be in by mid-June.* [The epistemic sense relates to <u>the writer's assumption</u> that …]

What follows, is a description of tense and aspect use in Black South African English.

2.6.1.4 Black South African English uses of tense and aspect

Van Rooy (2008) proposes an alternative approach to understanding and classifying Black South African English (BSAE) uses of tense and aspect based on a syntagmatic perspective which considers uses of tense and aspect beyond the sentence and in terms of the text unfolding as it were. In this regard, van Rooy (2008:341) states that many studies of these features in varieties (such as BSAE) have, in fact, been from an *a priori* grammar perspective, meaning "as existing independently of the use of language as a kind of condition for language to be used" (here, he refers to researchers like de Klerk, 2003 and Makalela, 2004. In this regard, refer to Makalela, 2013, in § 2.1). According to van Rooy (2008), the description of BSAE use of progressive aspect as being an extension of the progressive to stative verbs arises from an aprioristic grammar perspective, without an effort to understand the meaning of the use in terms of co-text, and how lexical choices combine with verb use to create meaning. What van Rooy (2008) did was to first review the quantitative findings regarding tense and aspect uses in BSAE, and thereafter, conducted an in-depth qualitative analysis of three full texts in different registers to gain insight into what the uses within their context, or rather in the light of co-text, revealed with respect to meaning.

The quantitative analysis comprised examining a corpus specially compiled for the research. This represented six different registers in BSAE, namely: student writing; published academic writing; newspaper reporting; fiction; spoken classroom lectures, and informal spoken conversation. Since it was already established that the progressive is used slightly more often in

all of the BSAE registers considered, van Rooy (2008:343) was interested in establishing frequencies for the past tense and use of the perfect aspect. What his analysis showed, was that BSAE uses the past tense less often than native varieties of English (sourced from Biber, et al., 1999), but that the differences were in respect of conversation and academic writing. There were no differences between fiction and factual news reportage, where the past tense has a very specific function, meaning that, in general, BSAE can draw on the past tense for much the same kind of function. However, when the past tense was generally a low frequency phenomenon in the registers, its drop in frequency was much more severe than in standard English.

The differences between perfect aspect are slight, with relatively low occurrences in both varieties. However, van Rooy (2008) was interested in knowing whether meaning differences occurred.

Van Rooy's (2008) qualitative analysis of three texts (published scholarly writing; student writing; informal spoken conversation) that were characterised by overall low frequencies of marked tense forms, shed light on the meanings of the uses. With regard to progressive uses, stativisation was clearly evident: here, events are not presented as dynamic activities, but as states (p.346). These denoted durative, persistitive meanings, where "events are bound to continue happening for a longer period of time, with no terminal point in sight" (van Rooy, 2008:347). van Rooy (2008:347) points out that:

> The sense of durativity and stativity is supported more forcefully by the occurrence of a typographical sentence without any verb. … Apart from persistitive meaning, they also enhance the timeless, stative nature of the way in [which] events are represented, rather than as historically situated, specific facts.

An example he provides is:

For example, rape within marriage.

Stativisation in van Rooy's (2008) data is achieved lexically by the choice of verbs, and progressives, gerunds, and verbless clauses. The dynamic quality of unfolding events is toned down and ideational content is less important than the interpersonal exchange of arguments between readers and writers.

For reporting, most uses were present forms, with few past forms, with the intention of creating a timeless space, rather than making salient temporal sequence. This notion is particularly characteristic of BSAE: the duration remains more salient than temporal sequencing.

The perfect with aspectual meaning is employed to construct time frames, profiling periods rather than temporal sequences. According to van Rooy (2008:349), the perfect can be interpreted as continuative, meaning that events are likely to continue into the future. Aspectual meanings were encoded both grammatically through the progressive and perfect, and lexically by means of adverbials, nouns and nominal premodifiers, which van Rooy (2008:352) explains is perfectly in harmony with the use of aspect forms.

The following is an example from van Rooy's (2008:348) data illustrating the above uses:

> *Traditional beliefs **play** a role in women abuse in the family context in the sense that **most** rural women **believe** that for the sake of protection and care, they **should adhere** to everything their husbands say. They **are therefore not supposed to ask** about their husbands' whereabouts. ... **But then the ironic part in this belief is that men want to know where their wives have been, whom they were with and what were they doing**. ... The general fear women have is, **they have been socialized not to divorce**, ...*

Of interest to the current study is what van Rooy (2008:349) terms the most salient lexicalisation in the entire BSAE as being "*end up*" to mean result either as a noun or as a verb; such expressions profile the termination of a verbal process.

Van Rooy's (2008:352) text analysis found little evidence of avoidance of standard English forms, or the use of "narrative tense" (that is, commencing with the past tense, and then continuing in the present tense) as is often reported to occur in BSAE.

In a subsequent study, van Rooy (2014) investigated the semantics of the stative progressive in three Outer Circle varieties, namely: Indian English (IndE), Kenyan English (KenE) and Black South African English (BSAE). The corpora for IndE and KenE were obtained from the International Corpus of English (IEC)-corpora, and the BSAE corpus was obtained from what was available, and for which specific registers were specifically compiled for the investigation. The registers examined comprised: conversation; broadcast interviews; lectures; academic writing (to mean scholarly writing); student writing; journalism, and fiction. Only stative progressive constructions were analysed. The two main findings were that progressives occur more frequently in the spoken data than the written data, with the highest number of progressives

in BSAE, followed by KenE, with IndE having the least. Van Rooy (2014:164) accounts for the difference between KenE and IndE as KenE having a much higher frequency of this use in spoken data, compared to a similar distribution of uses in the two varieties' written data. In contrast, is "how much more often BSAE uses progressives, in writing and speech, than any other variety for which data is available" (van Rooy, 2014:164), and that "whatever innovations are used in Outer Circle varieties, BSAE should show it most powerfully".

In terms of the lexical aspect of verbs, activities are by far the most used in the progressive form in all three corpora, and achievements are the most seldom used. These two findings accord with what is known for Inner Circle varieties (van Rooy, 2014:165). In written IndE and KenE, stative verbs are slightly less frequent than accomplishment verbs, but slightly more frequent in the spoken mode in these two varieties. By comparison, statives are already more slightly frequent than accomplishments in the written registers, and in speech are approximately three times more frequent than that of accomplishments. The quantitative findings therefore provide sound support for "the general consensus in the literature that Outer Circle varieties make more frequent use of stative verbs in the progressive form than Inner Circle varieties" (van Rooy, 2014:166).

With respect to the meanings conveyed by the progressive construction when used with stative verbs, van Rooy (2014:166) identified three main meanings, namely: temporary state; on-going state, and unlimited state, with the sense of the ongoing states being the most dominant, followed by considerable uses with senses of temporary states (similar to Inner Circle uses). Based on this, van Rooy (2014:169) argues that in the Outer Circle varieties, "the progressive form is not extended to stative verbs for no particular reason." What follows is a brief description of the three senses. All the examples are taken from van Rooy (2014).

- *Ongoing state*

In this sense, although there is no clear indication that the state will end soon, the state is also not presented as permanent. Van Rooy (2014:166) describes this sense as resembling the characterisation of the Bantu persistitive/progressive (cf. Makalela, 2013, in § 2.1), for example:

*… at that time I **was having** a lot of problems with my husband and this feeling of wanting to be free and I'm not allowed to be free and I **was feeling** it very strongly at that time.*

Another use is the progressive as continuous aspect (where the interpretation is aided by the use of the adverb), as in:

… he **is still depending** on his family …

A third use of extended duration of the ongoing progressive is found with the combination with the perfect aspect (common in Inner Circle varieties), such as:

*I **have been looking forward** to it for a very long time …*

- *Temporary state*

The temporary state lasts for a relatively short time; therefore the termination of the state is profiled by progressive use. This sense is attested in both Inner and Outer Circle varieties. An example is:

*But I honestly want to say ke **you're misunderstanding** my position …*

The temporary state progressive also portrays the situation as denoted by the verb as more dynamic than would be the usual case for a stative verb, for example (van Rooy, 2014:166):

*He didn't mean that. He **was being** nasty.*

Occasionally, the temporary sense provided a time frame use, where "an ongoing state is used as the time-frame within which some other event takes place" (van Rooy, 2014:166), such as in:

*Gachara **was sitting** with the baby on the floor when the father casually moved and sat on the chair next to the two.*

- *Unlimited state*

Although there were few examples pertaining to the unlimited state sense, where there is simply no indication that a state will end, what is noteworthy is that, in all three corpora, *having* was used particularly frequently with the unlimited duration sense. Examples are:

*… you know even the white people the black the green and the yellow people mm they **are having** their ancestors …*

*From pupa adult emerges. Adult is a beetle with rostrum. The adult **is having** clubbed antenna.*

Two additional uses were observed with respect to unlimited state senses. One is a characterising function, involving relative clauses, where a referent is characterised in terms of a typical association, for example:

*… financial aid scheme which is run by the government as they are doing some of them so that black people **who seem to be lacking financial support** can able to access it …*

The second is an extension of the idea of a time frame to a contextual frame. The contextual frame is usually encoded by adverbial clauses, and denotes a state that is not limited in time, for example:

*So **if you are comparing** Kenya and Tanzanian English and Kiswahili then you must have all this in mind because …*

Based on the findings of his study, van Rooy (2014) concludes that the use of progressives with stative verbs is evidence of the innovative sense of ongoing states, and that the sense of extended duration, which he relates to the persistitive aspect of the South African Bantu languages, is central to the meaning of the progressive form in BSAE.

2.6.1.5 Perfect aspect

The following two studies by Yao and Collins (2012) and Conroy and Cupple (2010) examine perfect aspect in English varieties and learner processing of modal perfect compared to lexical-*have* respectively.

Yao and Collins (2012) examined the use of the present perfect in ten English varieties of both Inner and Outer Circles.

The generally agreed on meaning of the present perfect is that it "serves to relate a past situation to a present state in some way" (Yao & Collins, 2012:387). The authors indicate that four uses are distinguished, namely the:

- Continuative perfect – expresses a state that obtains throughout the whole extended-now interval (Yao & Collins, 2012:387);

- Experiential perfect – is concerned with the occurrence of situations within the extended-now (Yao & Collins, 2012:387);

- Resultative perfect – involves a past situation which brings about a specific resultant state (Yao & Collins, 2012:387);

- Hot news perfect – as a variant of the experiential and resultative perfects, is typically used to report recent events (Yao & Collins, 2012:387).

The data were drawn from the International Corpus of English (ICE), from which the Inner Circle varieties were British (BrE), American (AmE), Canadian (CanE), New Zealand (NZE) and Australian (AusE) English, and from which the Outer Circles varieties were Philippine (PhilE), Hong Kong (HKE), Singaporean (SingE), Kenyan (KenE) and Indian (IndE) English. With regard to the use of the present perfect, four text types were investigated, namely: conversation; fiction; news and academic writing.

The overall finding is that the present perfect is being superseded by the preterit in modern English, with a shift being particularly evident in American English, which Yao and Collins (2012:389) believe is largely due to colloquialisation in the sense that this process constitutes "a general evolutionary stylistic drift that operates to narrow the gap between formal registers and informal registers". What, however, is of relevance to the current study, is the use of the present perfect in academic registers. In general, the frequencies for this construction are higher in academic writing than those in conversation, with the exception of British and Indian English, where BrE shows a greater occurrence of present perfect in conversation than in writing – suggesting that the present perfect is a typical feature of spoken BrE, with IndE having a similar distribution for both text types. In the light of the finding that the present perfect occurs more frequently in formal written registers, Yao and Collins (2012:393) explain this as being "in line with the diachronic status of the present perfect, given the well-established trend for linguistic changes to occur and spread rapidly in spoken language before having a significant influence on written language." The generally high ratios for present perfect uses in academic writing are explained as being consistent with Biber, et al.'s (1999, cited in Yao & Collins, 2012:396) findings on variation in tense choices across registers. Here, the present perfect, as opposed to the preterite, performs the following important function (Yao & Collins, 2012:396-397):

> In academic writing the present perfect is used productively to highlight the general relevance of previous research findings and practices to the author's current argument. Past time reference is highly restricted in this genre because the truth conditions of propositions are often not constrained to a particular time frame.

Regarding the above, what is further noteworthy is that compared to BrE, the OC variety, Kenyan English (KenE), had the highest frequency of present perfect uses, which concurs with van Rooy's (2009, cited in Yao & Collins, 2012:393) finding that "the use of the present perfect for referring to previous research, … in academic English, is more prominent in East African English in comparison with BrE", and less frequent in informal registers. Those varieties with the highest overall frequency of present perfect uses (KenE; BrE; IndE) are explained in terms of a wider range of uses of the construction across genres, whereas in those varieties with low frequencies (AmE; CanE; PhilE; SingE) the use is more restricted irrespective of the genre it occurs in. As is the case of KenE (or East African English varieties), IndE is similarly conservative with respect to British norms; for example, both varieties disprefer the use of contractions in written registers. Similarly, where in AmE a rise in the use of the progressive and *get*-passives is being noted, this has not yet made inroads in the more conservative varieties (Yao & Collins, 2012:395).

Although the study described next by Conroy and Cupple (2010) investigated processing ease of modal perfect (MP) constructions compared to lexical-*have* uses among native (NSs) and non-native speakers (NNSs) of English, it is, nevertheless, relevant to the current study in that it sheds some light on students' possible interpretation of the MP, since their understanding of the MP would serve as a basis for their being able to produce this construction in academic writing. It was hypothesised that MP sentences would be easier to read and comprehend than lexical-*have* (LH) sentences for NSs, which is in line with the view that syntax is of primary importance in NS sentence processing. The main difference between MP and LH sentences is the word immediately after *have* (Conroy & Cupple, 2010:528):

- In MP sentences, a past participle verb form follows *have*, as in:

He could have …

He could have worked [past participle verb form] *at the shoe factory.*

- In LH sentences, a noun follows *have*, as in:

He could have work [noun] *at the shoe factory*.

In contrast, it was hypothesised that NNSs would demonstrate a weaker preference for MP over LH sentences, based on the argument that they rely less on specific syntactic information in understanding sentences (Conroy & Cupple, 2010:531).

The participants comprised post- and undergraduate linguistics students at an Australian university. The NNSs were advanced NNSs of English. Four modal verbs were distributed relatively equally across the full item set, which included: *might; could; must; should*. Determiners were absent from the LH sentences at the object noun. Overall, the findings revealed that in many respects, the NNSs performed similarly to the NSs. The Reading Times (RT) data provided strong evidence that MP sentences were easier to process than LH sentences for both NS and NNS cohorts, confirming NSs' preference for MP over LH sentences, but disconfirming NNSs' non-preference for MP sentences.

A second key finding related to the above, is that both groups made errors only on LH sentences, which, in part, is explained by Conroy and Cupples (2010:544-545) as:

> They seem to have expected to see a past participle verb form, and upon seeing a noun instead, they temporarily thought that the sentence was ungrammatical. Thus, both groups must have had a strong processing preference for MP sentences.

> Also, while both groups were influenced by word-category frequency at some point during processing, they were guided primarily by syntactic information.

Next, students' use of verbs in academic/writing is reviewed.

2.6.1.6 Verbs in student/academic writing

This section provides a review of several studies relating to various lexical verb uses in student writing, all of which are relevant to academic writing.

Partridge (2011) sought to compare the use of communication verbs by L1 English students (from English and America) and Tswana English learners. The two corpora containing argumentative essays that were used were the Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays (LOCNESS) and the Tswana Learner English Corpus (TLE) as an example of Tswana English (TE). Both LOCNESS and the TLE form part of the International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE). Here, the focus was on communication verbs with the semantic meaning of telling

someone something in order to elicit a certain response. Additionally, the aim was to investigate what is termed <u>lexical specificity</u> in terms of the three levels categorisation in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which is set out below:

Superordinate (specified in lesser detail) ***MOVE***

Basic level (schema) ***WALK, CRAWL***

Subordinate (specified in greater detail) ***TODDLE, SAUNTER, AMBLE, GROVEL***

The rationale behind this classification is that unless one possesses basic level understanding of a particular lexical verb (*walk*), one would not be able to understand the more specific lexical items in the subordinate category (*saunter*) (see above). In other words, if it can be assumed that when one uses *saunter*, one has the basic level at her disposal (*walk*) but not the other way round; the use of *walk* does not imply knowledge of subordinate forms. Additionally, while these relationships are determined by certain semantic relationships, how these operate for verbs is different from nouns. For nouns, hyponymy (*x* is a kind of *y*) is at work, whereas in verbs troponymy (V1 is to V2 in some particular manner) holds. Furthermore, at the basic level, terms do not share features among themselves, whereas at the subordinate level, terms do. At the superordinate level, terms have few nameable features. Therefore, in terms of prototype theory, basic level terms carry the most information and are cognitively and linguistically more salient than other terms.

Both corpora were tagged with the CLAWS4 parts of speech tagger developed by UCREL at Lancaster using the C7-tagset for the purposes of isolating lexical verbs in both corpora. Due to the very large semantic field of communication verbs, the field was subdivided into five main semantic categories but Partridge (2011:139) limits her discussion to the directive category, whose function is:

- To tell someone something in order to elicit a response (*propose; suggest; mention*)

Basically, the above category covers the directives in Speech Act Theory (SAT).

Overall, Partridge's (2011) study reveals that communication verbs are not only used less frequently by TE learners than L1 English users, but that there is also not always the same level of lexical specificity present in TE as in L1 English. What Partridge's (ibid.) findings also reveal with respect to lexical uses in this category is that an important determiner was topic, and in the TLE corpus, students' experiences relating to the topic, such as the salience of the verb *demand* in the TLE writing, which is in line with Buthelezi's (1995, cited in Partridge, 2011:142) observation that "the overall political experiences of BSAE users influence their language", for example:

*If only people can be given the skills on how to provide for themselves and stop **demanding** jobs from the government*. (TLE)

In terms of cultural politeness values, the verb *question* appears more frequently in the LOCNESS corpus whereas *enquire* is more common in the TLE corpus, for which the following explanation is given. The Tswana group might be avoiding ambiguity since *question* is a verb and noun form, and/or they might view this expression as being too direct, and therefore impolite, which would be culturally unacceptable in Tswana custom (cf. Kasanga's (2006) study on directness in requests in BSAE, § 2.6.1.2).

Another verb that is said to be entrenched in TE is *mention* (instead of alternatives such as *refer to; allude to*). This means that the more a use is activated, the more entrenched it becomes in the language employed by the users. Some of these words then undergo semantic bleaching, which means the word loses its semantic force. An example is *tell* which has medium frequency in LOCNESS and high frequency in TLE.

What can be deduced from the insights gained from Partridge's (2011) study is that AL learners would benefit from instruction on communication verbs and concomitant levels of specificity to enable them to make contextually appropriate lexical choices in their communication, more particularly, in their academic writing.

Granger and Paquot's (2009) study on academic lexical verbs in learner English, in a similar vein to Partridge (2011), revealed that learners generally underuse communication verbs.

Although Granger and Paquot (2009:193) report that lexical verbs are relatively infrequent in academic English compared to conversational and fictional registers, they, nevertheless, perform several major academic functions, such as expressing: personal stance; reviewing the literature; quoting; expressing cause and effect; summarising and contrasting.

Granger and Paqout's (2009:194) study embraced an overview of academic lexical verb uses in learner English based on the rationale that:

> Insufficient knowledge of verbs that are typically used in academic written discourse is a serious handicap for learners as it prevents them from expressing their thoughts in all their nuances and couching them in the expected style.

Learners of English not only have difficulty with tense, aspect, mood and voice, all important aspects of academic verbs that help to modulate the writer's message, but also have to deal with the fact that each verb has its own preferred lexico-grammatical company (the notion of word-units which has been the focus of much corpus study for some time now, cf. Scheepers, 2014), namely:

- Subjects (*this study shows that*);
- Objects (*provide evidence*);
- Adverbs (*differ significantly*);
- Routinised structures (*as discussed in*) (While passive constructions are commonly used to express generalities in academic discourse, there are some academic verbs that do not take the passive.).

Granger and Paquot (2009) maintain that what actually poses difficulty is not so much the verb form on its own, but its phraseology in the wide sense, which includes both highly fixed and much looser routinised sequences. The phraseological difficulties relate, in particular, to pragmatic appropriacy and discourse patterns, and are shown to be problematic for both AL learners and novice (native) writers (home language users of English). What their study compared was AL learners' verb use with novice and expert writers. The learner data came from the second edition of the International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE). Only English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners' short argumentative essays were analysed. The reference corpus consisted of published academic prose taken from the MicroConcord corpus collection and the Baby British National Corpus. These comprised expository texts based on shared

knowledge between professional peers. Therefore, the authors caution in interpreting results since linguistic choices may reflect the different communicative goals and settings (Granger & Paquot, 2009:197). In this regard, they also refer to the frequent opposition to comparing learner and expert writing from the perspective that the practice is unfair and descriptively inadequate, and that a more realistic comparison is between learner and novice (native) language use if the aim is to describe and evaluate interlanguage (stages of AL learning development) as fairly as possible.

Granger and Paquot's (2009) investigation shed light on how three academic word lists, namely: Coxhead's Academic Word List (AWL); the General Service List (GSL) and Paquot's Academic Keyword List (AKL) provided unique insights into verb uses by learner and expert writers (Granger & Paquot, 2009:200-202). In this regard, it was observed that the majority of the underused verbs fall into three categories: <u>communication verbs</u> (*describe; suggest; note; specify*); <u>cognition verbs</u> (*assume; derive; interpret; assess*) and <u>relational verbs</u> (*appear; require; include; involve*). In comparison, the majority of overused verbs belong to the GSL (*think; get; know; like; want*) and verbs identified by Hinkel (2004, cited in Granger & Paquot, 2009:202) (*feel; like; try; want*), including commonly reported verbs such as: *say* and *become*.

While actual use of all verb forms will not be reproduced here, what is relevant is what learners were overusing and underusing. It was found that the infinitive form, more particularly, the expression, *to conclude* was overused in sentence-initial position as a connector. This is apparently rare in academic prose (Granger & Paquot, 2009:205). The following learner and expert examples illustrating this are:

***To conclude**, I think that the government should ban smoking in restaurants as the health of the public can be improved.* (ICLE-CHINESE learner);

*It is reasonable **to conclude** from this that, although there are colliding plane wave space-times ...* (expert writer);

By contrast, *argue* is underused, except in its base form with *people* and *I* as subject, for instance:

*That is why **I argue** in favour of rehabilitation, and against the prison system.* (ICLE-NORWEIGIAN learner);

*Integration, **it is argued**, will only work in areas …* (expert writer).

Three key findings emerged from Granger and Pacquot's (2009) study. The first is that the student writers significantly underuse the majority of "academic verbs" (such as *include; relate*) that convey rhetorical functions integral to this register, and instead use conversational verbs (such as *say; think*) characterising informal speech. Secondly, when learners do employ academic verbs, they are inclined to restrict themselves to a limited range of patterns, a stark contrast with the rich patterning seen in the expert writing. And thirdly, while novice writers and learner writers share several problems in this regard, the latter experience a much wider array of difficulties, many of which are unique to the learner population. Overall, in the learner essays, more high frequency verbs were employed reflecting personal references and subjective attitudes, and the number of lexico-grammatical patterns (for example, uses of the *-ing* supplementive clause and the passive construction) was restricted compared to the expert writers. Additionally, a significant proportion of learner idiosyncrasies were found to be transfer-related (from the home to the target language). In this regard, learners have great difficulty with selecting the appropriate preposition after a verb, and the right delexical verb with several nouns, such as *claim, argument, decision* (cf. Scheepers, 2014). It was also found that novice native writers more closely approximate expert writers in their use of academic verbs and patterns (Granger & Paquot, 2009:208-209).

In spite of learner difficulties with verb uses in academic discourse, Granger and Paquot (2009:207) point out the usefulness of what they term "**the strength of the verb form approach, which is a quick way into learners' phraseology**" (the researcher's emphasis). Instead of viewing under- or overuse as negative terms, they could be taken as prompts for lexical development and used with learners wishing to acquire a sound mastery of academic English.

Kaltenböck's (2004) study of non-extraposition expressions is relevant to the current study in that two syntactic subtypes depending on the form of the non-extraposed clausal subject involving two verb phrases were considered, namely: the *-ing* clause and the *to/for*-infinitive.

Kaltenböck (ibid.) identified the actual communicative functions served by these uses in the text types.

The data were obtained from the ICE-GB corpus, the British component of the International Corpus of English. What is of importance to the present study relates the frequency of use of these structures, and the functions they perform. Overall, it was found that non-extraposition was more common in the writing than in speech, which Kaltenböck (2004) partly attributes to the extra-processing effort required by clausal subjects in non-extraposed or structure-initial position, which contradicts the end-weight principle, which applies more to unplanned speech (where the pressure to extrapose increases with the degree of informality). In terms of the two verb phrase uses, *to/for*-infinitives predominated (69.4%), followed by *-ing* clauses (62.5%). It was also found that text type and concomitant levels of formality-informality influenced use: there were more instances in persuasive writing than creative writing, with *to*-infinitives being more frequent in academic and persuasive writing (and therefore as a feature of formal text), whereas *-ing* clauses showed little variation between written and spoken register (thereby suggesting no link to the formality-informality continuum). Besides the weighting and formality factors, Kaltenböck (2004) concludes that the choice of extra-position lies in how best to achieve one's communicative intention by means of information packaging; in this regard three main functional features of non-extra-position are proposed, where:

- The first applies to all instances of non-extraposition: using the construction to place emphasis on the speaker's comment, in other words, the main focus of the message is contained in the matrix predicate that presents the speaker's comment or evaluation, for example:

To be *innovative in how you handle your accounts can be equally important* (Kaltenböck, 2004:232);

- The second is that it establishes a cohesive tie with the preceding context in that the placement of information accords with the given-before new principle, such as:

We must, therefore, be self-consciously careful about how we allow ourselves to be motivated by this drive. ***To propose*** *such self-control is surely not naïve*. (Kaltenböck, 2004:232);

- Thirdly, such clauses may serve the rhetorical purpose of introducing a topic as new into the discourse, while presenting it as if it were already known. Kaltenböck (2004:238) explains this phenomenon as the writer wanting to:

introduce information which may be known to some readers but not necessarily to all, as a diplomatic way of indicating 'this is something you should know', I am taking this to be general knowledge, or as a rhetorical device for deliberately 'masking' new information as 'given' and presenting it as a generally known fact.

An example of such a use is:

Building *a top class economy a world class economy will take time effort resources and consistency of purpose and policy*. (Kaltenböck, 2004:238).

Given the importance of objectivity and credibility in written argumentation at American colleges and universities, Hinkel's (1999) study examined and compared the use of objectivity conventions in the writing of native (NS) and trained non-native speakers (NNS) of English, based on the common perception that the latter's writing lacks balanced argumentation and tends to be generalisation-prone and subjective. Since similar concerns are often expressed by lecturers at South African universities (cf. Butler, 2006 in § 2.6.3.2), Hinkel's (1999) research is relevant to the current study. Hinkel (ibid.) concedes that the notion of what constitutes good argument is culture-specific and provides insights into how Chinese rhetorical tradition, which is largely influenced by Confuscist, Buddhist and Taoist worldviews, differs from Anglo-American writing rhetoric in the sense that by virtue of writing the text, the author/writer is assumed to have authority, credibility and knowledge; allusions, ambiguity, vagueness, direct personal appeals – features of the Korean, Japanese and Indonesian students' writing (which constituted her NNS data set), are therefore not uncommon in their English writing.

Before commencing with the text analysis, Hinkel (1999) surveyed teaching materials to establish which features were being highlighted and taught for the purposes of achieving objectivity and credibility in argumentative writing. Several rhetorical strategies and structural markers were identified, but since not all of them are directly relevant to the current study, only those four that are, will be elaborated on, namely: the use of concessives (§ 2.6.2 on connectors); personal pronouns (§ 2.6.3) the passive voice and modal verbs. Regarding passive voice, the NNS group employed the passive construction significantly more than the NS cohort. This finding is attributed to the writing instruction materials, and the fact that the passive voice is

often pointed out as an important structural device for creating a detached style, and "front[ing] thematic information or remov[ing] the agent from the prominent sentence position (Hinkel, 1999:102). However, as Hinkel (1999:102) is careful to point out, teaching the passive and using the passive is not a simple matter, since it is constrained by contextual, lexical and semantic considerations, and may therefore, be unacceptable or unidiomatic in certain instances.

Similarly, with respect to modals of possibility and necessity, the NNSs used these forms significantly more frequently than the NSs, to hedge their propositions and claims. Predictive modals also occurred to a greater extent in the NNSs than the NSs, where both groups tended to use *will* and *would* instead of more suitable forms such as *maybe, probably* and *possibly* which were frequently omitted. Hinkel (1999) emphasises that writers, including student writers, should be aware of, and be able to use modals appropriately to be able to "demonstrate good judgement [and] moderate claims and avoid strong predictives and implications of certainty (Hinkel, 1999:106). However, being able to do so, depends on what is culturally viewed as factuality and truth; and if normative and referential relationships differ across cultures (which is more often than not the case), then it is imperative for the student writer to understand the world view of the target language and how modals would be used to communicate notions of factuality and truth (cf. Modals in § 2.6.1.2).

The next, and last study to be reviewed in this section is by Holmes and Nesi (2009) who were interested in establishing which expressions, including verbs, were used in the four main types of academic disciplines (hard, pure, applied, soft).

Holmes and Nesi (2009) compared a collection of student assignments in various disciplines and levels of study that had been awarded high grades with the British Academic Written English (BAWE) corpus to identify which verbal and mental process words were key in the student writing. The notion of verbal and mental processes originates in Systemic Functional Linguistics in which the world of experience has three forms of representation, namely: Outer Experience; Inner Experience and as Generalisation. Only the second, that is Inner Experience, is relevant to the current study. Inner Experience is represented as reaction and reflection, which are realised by mental and verbal processes, which usually have one animate participant. The mental process involves subjective interpretation and writer visibility, and the verbal process involves citing an authority (which may act as self-disguise). These processes are retrievable from what goes on in

the whole clause, or that part of the proposition encoded in the verbal group. Here, Holmes and Nesi (2009:62) explain that they "considered both the Verbal Group and all clausal elements that suggested the Processes of 'saying' and of 'internal cognition'. For purposes of selecting words reflecting 'saying' and 'internal cognition' they further identified words in WordNet (Fellbaum, 1998, cited in Holmes & Nesi, 2009:62), and removed all words that were not epistemologically relevant.

How the above relates to the question of writing in the disciplines, is what lexical choices the writer in the discipline makes to communicate her "inner experience" as it were. This is believed to be different for the four quadrant discipline paradigm, which conceptualises scientific approaches as: hard; soft; pure; applied. Besides considering the uses of single words, Holmes and Nesi (2009:65) found it necessary to examine words in their wider context, "using discourse analysis to make up for the fact that our corpus linguistics techniques did not allow for delicate analysis".

Besides providing useful insights into the lexical verb choices made by student writers (in terms of both positive and negative keywords), the choices point to the salient differences between the four main discipline types, where there was not only a fundamental difference between the pure and applied fields, but also between Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism Management (HLTM) and medicine on the one hand, and engineering (having more in common with physics) on the other, as summarised in Table 2.4 below.

Table 2.4: Disciplinary knowledge and verb use (Holmes & Nesi, 2009)

Discipline	Nature	Expression	Disciplinary knowledge	Examples of positive keywords	Examples of negative keywords
Physics	**Pure**	Referred to causal, logical and evidential relationships between physical phenomena and phenomena and propositions	Identities are commonly suppressed to emphasise that knowledge is derived from experiments rather than interpretation and discussion	*Calculate; detect; find; observe; determine; discover; explain*	*Suggest; support; claim; argue*
History	**Pure**	Referred to identities of authorities and sources to establish validity and relevance of propositions	More likely to have explicit agents	*Argue; assert; support; state; claim*	*Identify; determine; calculate; find;*
Medicine	**Applied /**	Words were used to	Reflect professional	*Confirm;*	*Claim; find*

	hard	determine causal relations, diagnose properties of objects or systems, and assess likely outcomes	practices that use partial evidence to support formation of opinions and decision making	*present; proposed; indicate; support; argue*	
Engineering	**Applied / hard**	As for medicine above	Argumentation and interpretation less important than measurement and observation	*Calculate; determine*	*Suggest; say; claim; present; believe; explain*
Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism (HLTM)	**Applied / soft (social science)**	As for medicine above	As for medicine above	*Criticise; identify*	*Claim*

Holmes and Nesi's (2009) study is relevant to the current study in that it not only reiterates the fact that knowledge is culturally-laden in the sense the it represents a valued and shared (here, epistemological) worldview, and that, in whichever way this knowledge is understood, it is expressed through language, which a student serving an apprenticeship in a study programme would be expected to demonstrate, more particularly, in writing

2.6.1.7 Conclusion to Studies on English Verbs

The literature review on several areas of the research on English verbs has revealed the expanse and complexity of the verb system in English, and therefore it should come as no surprise that many learners/students of English as an additional language (AL) experience difficulty with verb uses, particularly in their academic writing. Because the verb forms a central element in English syntax, mastery of the verb system remains important.

The subsequent section provides a discussion of research into the role of connectors in academic writing. Since this feature constituted a focal point in the current study (an investigation into connecting expressions in student writing) it will be considered at some length. The review spans relatively older literature which provides what is believed to be a necessary foundation to understanding the link between coherence and the use of cohesive devices, and then looks at more recent literature which shows the growing interest in discourse approaches to text analysis, where pragmatic functions of cohesive devices have tended to become the foci of research. Both sets of literature provide invaluable insights for teaching academic writing to AL students of English.

2.6.2 CONNECTORS (CONNECTING EXPRESSIONS)

2.6.2.1 Introduction

In writing research generally, it is agreed that coherence and cohesion contribute significantly to writing quality (Halliday and Hasan, 1976; Hinkel, 1999; Hubbard, 1993; Hyland, 1998; Zamel, 1987). However, learner/student writing is often perceived of as incoherent. While coherence and cohesion are related in the sense that a cohesive text may contribute towards a coherent text, cohesion alone does not guarantee coherence. Each of these concepts therefore requires explanation, which will be provided against the background of three main types of text, namely: descriptions, narratives, and exposition. Just and Carpenter (1987) distinguish these texts from the perspective of the processing functions of both writer and reader, in terms of purposes of writing, structural features, the reader's schemata and patterns of processing different structures, alongside cues and processes used by the writer to accomplish text integration. Within the university context, the prevalent texts would be expository and descriptive, in that order of importance (cf. Humphrey & Donohue, 2015, the Onion Model, in § 2.6.3.9). The overall purpose of the former is to explain and discuss ideas, theses and hypotheses, which may incorporate the latter in that descriptive elements may be necessary in clarifying and developing exposition. Just and Carpenter (1987:249) state that expository texts are derived from logical functioning and rules of reasoning, and therefore play a crucial role in communicating facts or evidence in formal education, and may be used to further an argument. In addition to purpose in exposition, text integration needs to be achieved, which is either by intentionally creating a global relatedness or coherence which leads to the formulation of well-integrated stored patterns in the reader's long-term memory (Cooper, 1988:353), or on the surface level, by means of the use of cohesive devices which helps the reader to "keep relations present in working memory until they can be fully processed by applying related knowledge from long-term memory storage". Just and Carpenter (1987:252-252) indicate that when an expository text provides explicit cues the reader's processing capacity to integrate meaning (recognise interrelationships) is enhanced. They explain that this is particularly helpful when information is unfamiliar: "connectives and an explicit description of the relations in the text may be essential to constructing an accurate and coherent representation of information".

2.6.2.1 (a) Coherence

Coherence is described as the extent to which a text forms a unified whole; it is "a property of intentional global relatedness that readers ascribe to textual meaning" (Cooper, 1988:354). Coherence "exists in a sequence of words, sentences and paragraphs in which the reader can perceive connections and understand the structure and therefore the meaning as he reads" (Brostoff, 1981:279). The connectors that enable the reader to follow the text are thought patterns such as classification, analogy or comparison. These thought patterns are referred to as logical relationships, which Brostoff (1981:279) views as three separate operations that writers must perform to build a coherent text, and where failure in any of them will result in incoherent writing. They are:

- failure to make or sustain logical relationships – to use basic thought patterns effectively in their thinking;
- failure to put together a series of relationships in a consistent way – to form a well-structured sequence or hierarchy of relationships (which, it is conceded, may be culturally foreign for an AL learner of English, since the linear arrangement of presenting information may not be valued in the learner's culture);
- failure to reveal relationships adequately to the reader by means of key words (collocations) and transitional expressions, namely intra- and inter-sentential connecting or cohesive devices.

Cohesive devices and how these create a sense of textual connectedness will be considered next.

2.6.2.1(b) Cohesion

Stotsky (1983:430) describes the cohesive quality of an expository text as a network of semantic relationships (achieved by semantically related words and words related to each other only through their association with the topic) linking together sentences or paragraphs or units of discourse that are structurally independent of each other, helping to create its texture (cf. Stotsky, 1983 in § 2.6.3.9 academic writing pedagogy). In this regard, Halliday and Hasan (1976, cited in Neuner, 1987:101) make the important distinction between what a text means and how it attains that meaning, which Neuner (1987:101) explains as follows:

> … connectedness is at the core of meaning and that complex meaning is never resolved in a single word of phrase but through longer semantic structures that cross or intertwine with others.

Cooper (1988:353) explains the semantic relationships as being the "verbal relatedness of the text as a cueing system which helps the reader keep relations present in working memory until they can be fully processed by applying related knowledge from long term memory storage." More particularly, Halliday and Hasan (1976:4) state:

> Cohesion occurs where the interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another. The one presupposes the other, in the sense that it cannot be effectively decoded except by recourse to it. When this happens, a relation of cohesion is set up, and the two elements, the presupposing and the presupposed, are thereby at least potentially integrated into a text.

Given the fact that many researchers identify incoherence as the main problem with student writing, and various descriptions of incoherent text exist, this merits mention. An incoherent text is experienced as one which does not flow, does not make clear sense, and seems to jump from one idea to the next (Cooper, 1988:352). According to Brostoff (1981:279), an incoherent text is one in which "unrelated ideas seem to be juxtaposed" where there is no apparent set of logical relationships or controlling patterns. Wikborg (1985:133-134) explains the source of breakdown in coherence as being "the failure to make clear to the reader the function of each succeeding unit of text in the development of its overall or global meaning", which is similarly expressed by Fahnestock (1983:401) as poor writers failing "to bridge the gap or synapse between adjacent clauses". Stotsky (1983:430) suggests that the lack of lexical knowledge required for "composing or comprehending academic discourse" is at the centre of student writing problems. This involves first, working at the abstract level of thought, followed by making syntactic and logical relations within the sentence through the deployment of superordinates and subordinates intra-sententially, which Brostoff (1981:284) refers to as being able to cumulatively develop a sentence), and then building a complex hierarchic structure in the paragraph, and throughout, being able to make considered language choices to accurately express thoughts. Cohesive devices are one such category of language choices in that they assist in connecting, supporting and developing ideas. But in order to do this, learners need to understand not only the logic of co-ordination and subordination, which is particularly difficult to handle in the writing of exposition, but also the grammar of these complex concepts and structures (Brostoff, 1981:285-286). Brostoff's (1981:285) research revealed that learners tend to either over co-ordinate or over-rely on "*because*" or an equivalent in subordinate structures, and she therefore emphasises

the urgency of addressing learners' limited repertoire of grammatical and logical choices to enable them to achieve cohesion for coherence in their writing. With this in mind, Stotsky (1983:442) citing David Bartholomae (1978) points out that adult written discourse is a discourse "whose lexicon, grammar, and rhetoric are not learned through speaking and listening but through reading and writing" (cf. McCabe, 2008; Pretorius, 2014 in § 2.3).

With respect to developing students' insight into cohesive devices, Fahnestock (1983:405) advocates working with paired semantic relations, which refers to the notions of continuative or expected connections between sentences, alongside discontinuative or a less expected alternative, which means that statements "can deny rather than be concluded from a previous clause, they can exist as exceptions rather than examples, and as contrasting rather than similar points". Examples of continuative/discontinuative pairs are:

- Restatement-replacement;
- Example-exception;
- Premise-concession;
- Conclusion-denied implication;
- Similarity-contrast;
- Addition-alternation.

The relevance of paired semantic relations regarding reader processing is that discontinuative relations would be less readily comprehended without being signaled by an explicit transition word "to help the reader across an unexpected synapse or turn in the meaning" (Fahnestock, 1983:406). Gebhard (1978, cited in Fahnestock, 1983:408) indicates that professional writers use significantly more of transition words to signal such relations than do inexperienced college writers. However, as Fahnestock (1983:408) points out, "simply sprinkling an essay with transition words is no help; students have to learn to put them in the right places". Another relevant insight is that semantic relations appear to be more important than lexical connectors in comprehension, in the sense that what the reader retains is the gist of the text, the overall meaning. In the respect, Fahnestock (1983:411-412) explains that while semantic relations and lexical connectors "do not appear to be of equal value, they of course usually work together to tie

sentences in a discourse", and when both are absent, the result is "total discontinuity or considerable confusion".

Stotsky (1983:444-445) recommends a programme for developing lexical knowledge for writing (which is essentially product-based) that incorporates three interventions, namely:

- Broad reading and frequent discussion of essays;
- Analysing the categories of word relationships within an author's text;
- Designing a sequence of writing activities which express logical operations

In the same vein, Flower (1981, cited in Cooper, 1988:354) proposes a more process-oriented approach incorporating several steps and strategies. Here, the steps follow (the highlighted comments in square brackets of those of the researcher):

> … a continuum of cognitive concepts through … moving from thought toward print. The continuum begins with nonverbal mental imagery [**ideas round a topic**] and progresses with increasingly linguistic content [**expression**] to abstract knowledge networks, to text-based gists [**overall meaning**] and individual propositions [**student's own claims**] to inscribed text [**written product**].

The above constitutes a cognitive meaning-making process which is both aided by and created by means of language and is finally presented as text. How researchers differ with regard to what the best approach is to develop writing (product; process; a combination) will be further discussed in § 2.6.3.9 on academic writing pedagogy.

What follows next is a consideration of some empirical research on coherence and cohesion.

2.6.2.1(c) Studies on coherence and cohesion

Lieber's (1981) study investigated the ways in which ESL students in a pre-freshman composition course used cohesive ties to connect segments of text for the purposes of identifying problems in this regard. She used the analytical F-unit referred to as the functional unit of discourse. Lieber (1981) modified Halliday and Hasan's (1976) classification of cohesion to include "all devices providing ties between f-units, including items which function intra-sententially"; the latter reference differed from Halliday and Hasan. In terms of cohesive errors, it was observed that students relied most heavily on lexical devices and to a lesser extent on reference items and conjunctions to create cohesion in their essays. Major conjunction errors

related to inappropriate choices in the sense that choices did not signal logical relationships accurately, or when there was, in fact, no relationship to be signaled.

Witte and Faigley's (1981) study examined the internal characteristics which distinguish student essays ranked high and low in overall quality. The focus of the study was on extended discourse, and Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion framework was applied, where the essays were analysed according to categories of error, syntactic features and number and types of cohesive ties. The findings relating to conjunctive uses revealed that the writers of the high-rated essays employed over three times as many conjunctive ties as did the writers of the low-rated essays, and employed all five types of conjunction (according to Halliday & Hasan's 1976 framework: additive; adversative; causal; temporal; continuative) while the less skilled writers employed only three. In comparison with conjunctive ties, though, lexical cohesive ties constituted about two thirds of ties, with the skilled writers using many more lexical collocations to expand and connect their ideas than their counterparts for whom the majority of lexical ties were simply repetitions of the same item (Witte & Faigley, 1981:196-197). Of note, is that Witte and Faigley (1981:197) describe unskilled writers as lacking "the command of invention skills that allow them to elaborate and extend the concepts they introduce", and in this respect point out that "in reading the low-rated essays one [cannot] help noting a good deal of what might be called conceptual and lexical redundancy".

Stotsky's (1986) study which also compared high-rated and low-rated essays of learner writing with respect to lexical cohesion which was measured by analysing semantic relations in the examination essays of grade 10 learners, revealed that the former group's essays displayed longer semantic units, where many were in cohesive relationships, spanning all portions of the text. Whereas the high-rated learner cohort was able to create richly textured texts, the low-rated group simply generated a sparse network of lexical ties, which were mainly repetitive. What was additionally noted was that this group's essays exhibited a limited vocabulary and used vocabulary in a limiting way. Besides the textual richness created by cohesion in the high-rated essays, Stotsky (1986) also observed that this group of writers provided clear introductions, with explicit thesis statements, and explicit concluding statements at the end. Furthermore, propositional statements were expanded and clarified appropriately. These findings are in line

with Witte and Faigley's (1981) comment that quality writing usually displays a convergence of coherence and cohesion.

Neuner's (1987) study similarly compared the writing quality of good and poor freshman essays with respect to cohesive ties and chains based on a strict interpretation of cohesive relations (cf. Neuner, 1987:96, for detail). Neuner (1987:96) describes a cohesive chain as a "series of lexical collocations, reiterations, synonyms, and superordinates and their reference pronouns all semantically related to one another". What distinguishes a chain from a tie is length, where the former must be at least three items long because any two item relationship constitutes a tie. Neuner (1987:96) also calculated cohesive distance as the number of intervening T-units between each coherer/precursor (presupposed and presupposing) pair and between the first and last items in each cohesive chain. Importantly, his findings confirm those of many researchers, that a simple counting of ties does not appear to differentiate better from poor writing at this level, and that, instead, the length of cohesive chains better distinguishes well-written essays from poorly written essays. This means that the chains in quality writing are sustained over greater distances involving greater proportions of whole text, which Halliday and Hasan (1976, cited in Neuner, 1987:99) refer to as "texture" – that is, how a text attains its meaning. In addition, the good writers used significantly more different words in all chains and in each individual chain; in this regard, word choices were "less than one-half as frequent in the language as a whole" suggestive of a broad lexical repertoire to draw on, and the linguistic insight to make appropriate choices. Additional patterns that emerged were:

- Both writing cohorts had a dominant term (key word) that was more or less present throughout either directly (by reiterations) or inferentially (by synonyms, collocations, superordinates, pronoun references);
- Whereas poor essays tended to have a dominant chain that overwhelms the essay with the reiteration of its topic and pronouns for the topic, good essays have a dominant chain constituting a smaller portion of the total items;
- Poor writers tend to have pseudo-chains, which are non-cohesive strands of words that collocate with virtually every word in the language, such as: *thing, way, do, be, know, have* – and therefore carry little semantic meaning or explicitness;

- Good essays had more real chains in comparison to the poor essays with fewer meaningful minor chains, the weakest of which often comprised only three to four items.

In terms of what is relevant to the readers' impressions of coherence was demonstrated by Hubbard's (1993) study, which was designed to provide an explication of the notion of coherence. Hubbard's (ibid.) approach embraced both a formal and functional perspective. His functional framework comprises two broad categories: Interpretation Achievable and Interpretation Not Achievable.

Hubbard (1993) analysed the effect of the densities of the categories of reference and conjunctive cohesion on the coherence of students' examination answers in Linguistics and English literature. The essays were first of all assessed holistically for coherence, and were then divided into three student cohorts for coherence ratings (High, Mid and Low), and subsequently analysed for reference and conjunctive uses. The unit of analysis comprised the F-unit or functional unit of discourse, which is a clause-like structure, rather than the orthographical sentence (T-unit). In Hubbard's (ibid.) analysis, cohesion is defined in terms of connections holding across F-units, or between adjacent F-units, and density of cohesion expressions is defined in terms of occurrence per 100 F-units. Text length is calculated in F-units.

Reference cohesion was analysed according to Halliday and Hasan's (1976) categories of personal (personal and possessive pronouns); demonstrative (demonstratives and the determiner *the*) and comparative cohesion (*same; differently; larger*). In addition, all instances of reference cohesion were categorised in terms of what Hubbard (1993:61) terms direct (when the reference expression is a pronoun normally, but is not restricted to pronouns) and indirect reference

(where a coreferential exists but not equivalent to). The conjunctive cohesion analysis involved first the analysis of syntactic categories of conjunctives (co-ordinating, subordinating and adverbial). Secondly, a semantic analysis was undertaken of the following eight categories, (most of which can be further sub-divided as indicated by Hubbard, 1993:141):

- Temporal (*before*);
- Matching (*just as*);
- Cause-Effect (*therefore*);
- Truth/Validity (comments made in one F-init about the truth or validity of another) (*but*);

- Alternation (*or*);

- Paraphrase (*i.e.*);

- Amplification (*for example*);

- Coupling (a weak, associative relation between F-units – not qualifying as one of the other seven relations) (*and*).

A noteworthy observation relating to genre concerns (although this was not the research focus) is that in expository writing (Linguistics writing), the need for adequately signalling conjunctives becomes greater than in text types with a combined purpose, such as exposé and narration (English literature writing) (Hubbard, 1993:67).

A key finding in Hubbard's (ibid) study was that, in general, "the density of conjunctive expressions in student academic writing is more relevant to the reader's impression of coherence than is the density of reference expressions" (Hubbard, 1993:67). Additional main findings were that across the two disciplines (Linguistics and English literature), the use of conjunctives in the functional relations units Truth/Validity and Amplification indicated a strong positive correlation with coherence ratings. In discontinuative functional relations (those which are unexpected to the reader), the use of conjunctives related to Truth/Validity (particulary Concession-Contraexpection, for example: *but; although; however; nevertheless; despite this*); and Amplification were most closely associated with high coherence ratings. A reasonable explanation for high coherence ratings for texts containing discontinuative relations signals is that when they are not signaled, more processing effort is required by the reader, thereby lowering efficiency. Hubbard (1993), therefore, asserts that discontinuative relations are vital to expository writing, and cites Fahnestock (1983, in Hubbard, 1993:71) who points out the importance of discontinuatives as "signalling cognitive acts that make discriminations, and disentangle and tease apart meanings … by which thought and prose travel somewhere". Amplification in terms of coherence ratings is understood as being important to the clear organising of large chunks of text, whereas coupling would not be as important, given this constitutes the weakest functional relation. Adverbial conjunctives were also found to be associated with coherence ratings in the Linguistics group which Hubbard (1993:69) suggests might "reflect more variety in the way functional relations in texts are signalled, a larger active vocabulary and better expository writing".

In terms of conjunctive errors made by the students, the highest frequencies related to the Interpretation Achievable category, namely: Omission (meaning that in spite of a missing conjunctive, the omission could be compensated for the adding a cohesive item in accordance with textual clues), and the Interpretation Not Achievable category, Zero-relation (meaning that a conjunctive had been inserted when there was, in fact, no such logical relation within the semantic unit).

As an outflow of his research, Hubbard (1993:73) argues that since a number of cohesion features correlate significantly with readers' impressionistic judgements of coherence of texts, these, and more particularly, the conjunctives that signal discontinuative relations should be taught for the development of topics and arguments in writing.

Given the general consensus among researchers for possible reasons for overuse of conjunctive ties by learners of English as a Foreign Language and English for Academic Purposes as being: limited understanding of logical relationships; as an outflow of teaching that focuses on syntax rather than semantics; or interference from the mother tongue, the study undertaken by Gardezi and Nesi (2009) sought, instead, to determine whether local discourse communities influence the use of conjunctive ties when other factors are relatively constant, namely L1 and discipline. They explain conjunctive ties as being part of the metadiscoursal repertoire and therefore an explicit means "by which a writer can comment on a text and influence a reader's interpretation of it" (Gardezi & Nesi, 2009:236). In this regard, they refer to contrastive rhetorical research that reveals that variations in use may rather be a matter of cultural choice, than level of language proficiency. Here, cultural choices encompass being influenced by local conventions; discourse community differences; and socio-historic and socio-political factors.

Additionally, rhetorical choices may well be dictated by the professional and disciplinary context; for example, medicine, has been shown to have a low overall incidence of metatext in the sense that writers tend to refer to their research rather than to the text, using the "research act verbs" instead of "text act verbs" (Bunton, 1999, cited in Gardezi & Nesi, 2009:237) (cf. Holmes & Nezi, 2009, in § 2.6.1.6). By contrast, Hyland (2005, cited in Gardezi & Nesi, 2009:238) found that the high incidence of transition markers in the humanities and social sciences is explained by the "greater role that explicit interpretation plays … where interpretations are

typically more explicit and the conditions for establishing proof less reliable than in the hard fields" (cf. Holmes & Nezi, 2009, in § 2.6.1.6).

Gardezi and Nesi (2009) therefore examined the essays of undergraduate students from Britain and Pakistan, who share the same L1 and who study in the same broad field (economics), but who belong to different local discourse communities. A small corpus comprising ten assignments each from the British student cohort and the Pakistani student cohort was created. Thereafter, various types of conjunctive adjuncts were identified and compared in the two subcorpora, and examined individually from a discourse perspective. The reference corpus, a British subcorpus, a subset of the British Academic Written English (BAWE) corpus, was composed of an equal number of native speaker undergraduates studying social science subjects at British universities. All the essays of the three subcorpora had been highly rated, and all participants had formal English medium education for approximately 14 years. The assignments were prepared at home and not under time constraints. The study focused on conjunctive adjuncts in the four major categories described by Halliday and Hasan (1976): additive; adversative; causal and temporal, and only intersentential links were considered. Importantly, Gardezi and Nesi (2009:240) point out that while various terms are used to refer to such items, including logical connectives; logical connectors; linking adverbials, there is, nevertheless, consensus that "their role is to help the reader interpret links between ideas internal to the discourse, thus excluding … any markers … relating to the outside world. Overall, the British essays had instances of three conjunctive tie categories with the Pakistani essays having examples of all four categories; also the Pakistani cohort was found to use a significantly greater number of conjunctive ties overall. While the frequencies for adversatives and temporals were similar for the two cohorts, there were significant differences for additives and causals. The British students used adversatives much more than the other types of tie, whereas the Pakistani students used adversatives, causals and additives to a similar extent.

The most frequent expression in both corpora was *however*, which was also overused by both groups (cf. Shaw, 2009). Similarly, *but* occurred in both groups frequently, but was significantly higher in the Pakistani corpus. The high frequencies of these adversative uses compared to a much lower occurrence in the BAWE corpus as a whole, were ascribed to the effect of the genre and possibly the discipline (economics). In both groups, *however* occurred in sentence initial

position to a great extent, a tendency which Shaw (2009, cited in Gardezi & Nesi, 2009:244) views as "a marker of less skill" based on the rationale that sometimes "delayed placement allows for initial hedging, and by enabling other thematic elements to take up initial position, "[thereby creating] more scope for manipulation of the thematic structure of the text according to the perspective the writer wishes to take". Research indicates that *but* in sentence initial position is frequent in published academic writing and that professional literary critics make greater use of *but* than British undergraduates, which is usually attributed to sentence initial uses of conjunctives being discouraged by prescriptivist schooling (Shaw, 2009, cited in Gardezi & Nesi, 2009:244).

Similarly, the number of occurrences for causal conjunctive ties in both the student subcorpora was much higher than in the BAWE corpus as a whole. In the BAWE corpus, *hence* and *consequently* are comparatively rare, *thus* is only slightly more frequent, and *therefore* is relatively common. This pattern was more or less the same in the British subcorpus, whereas in the Pakistani subcorpus *hence* and *consequently* were more common, and *therefore* and *thus* were used equally. In certain instances, *thus* appeared to have a wider scope than *therefore*, where a conclusion arrived at rather than simply a logical consequence of the preceding proposition was being signalled. In this regard, Shaw (2009, cited in Gardezi & Nesi, 2009:245) suggests that *thus* may indicate a "less directive connection and a more summative function", a difference also acknowledged by Halliday and Hasan (1976, cited in Gardezi & Nesi, 2009:245) who classify *thus* as an additive and *therefore* as a causal marker of conjunction.

With respect to additives, the British subcorpus made greater use of these signalling an exemplifying role for subsequent information, particularly *for example*, and *for instance*. The Pakistani cohort made significantly greater use of markers indicating a sequence of propositions of equal status, such as *furthermore*, and especially sentence-initial *and*, which did not occur at all in the British cohort, and is comparatively rare in the BAWE corpus as a whole (again, most probably due to prescriptivist schooling). In both corpora, the least preferred conjunctive ties were temporals, which were sometimes used to enumerate the stages of an argument. When British writers signalled sequential relations, they did so alongside causal clause relations. In this regard, Martin (1992, cited in Gardezi & Nesi, 2009:247) points out that expressions, such as

consequential enable connections between events "to be 'modulated', so that one event is seen as *enabling* or *determining* the other rather than simply preceding it".

Based on their findings, Gardezi and Nesi (2009:247) conclude that the preponderance of causal and adversative as opposed to temporal adjuncts in both groups is an indication of the "relative sophistication of university-level writing, and the requirements of the argumentative essay which focuses on contributing factors and conflicting views".

Gardezi and Nesi (2009:248) describe the appropriate use of conjunctive ties in these subcorpora as demonstrating "positively polite consideration of the reader by explicitly marking clause relations". They add that differences between the two cohorts most likely reflect local practice and teaching, for example, the British cohort may have been exposed to alternative initial thematic elements while the Pakistani cohort may have been encouraged to use sentence-initial conjunctive adjuncts. In pedagogical terms, what is important, is that learners, both AL and novice writers (whose home language is English), should be made aware of the signalling choices available to writers of argumentative text to enable them to broaden their own repertoire, and that local style may not serve them when "they move on to study or publish outside their local discourse community" (Gardezi & Nesi, 2009:248).

In a similar type study, Carrió-Pastor (2013) undertook an analysis to determine whether native English speakers (NSs) and non-native speakers of English (Spanish) (NNSs) differed in their use of connectors in research papers in engineering, based on the hypothesis that variation may exist in academic (scientific) English since the interpersonal style of writers could be different when their linguistic background is different. This, in spite of the claim by Widdowson (1979, cited in Carrió-Pastor, 2013:192) that scientific exposition comprises universal expression that "imposes a conformity on members of the scientific community no matter what language they happen to use". Importantly, Carrió-Pastor (2013:193) points out that the linguistic process followed by a writer:

> when combining ideas … to guide the reader through the text is a complex one, even in an L1. … The creation of a fluent flow of discourse is not an automatic process: it is an act of personal choice, where the influence of the mother tongue, social constructs, the community-specific context and the creation of an authorial persona are also at play.

Carrió-Pastor (2013:193) understands variation as "a different way of conveying the same reality and it arises when writers differ in their choice of language structures or text features to express

the same or similar ideas", and is of the view that the rules by which language functions are not as general, fixed or evident as initially thought. To analyse her data, Carrió-Pastor (2013) employed the classification of connectors by Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1985), namely: listing, summative, appositional, resultive, inferential, contrastive and transitional. Only connectors occurring intersententially were considered, and only sequence markers were selected. The study reports on the most frequent connectors, but what was observed in terms of overall use is that the NNSs used fewer listing, inferential and contrastive connectors than the NSs. With respect to summative, appositional, resultive and transitional connectors, the overall results for both corpora were quite similar. There was also less variety in the NNS group and overuse of particular connectors.

Regarding variation in the use of individual connectors, the most frequent connectors in both corpora were the appositional connector, *for example*, and the contrastive connector, *however*. Other frequently occurring connectors for the NSs were, in this order: listing: *finally; furthermore; in addition*. Frequently used connectors by the NNSs were, in this order: listing: *likewise*, and the inferential connector: *therefore*. Connectors that did not appear in the data were those common in informal styles, or non-academic environments, such as: *after all; anyway; by the way; that is to say; all in all; in brief; (even) though; for one thing; above all; last but not least; in short.* Rather, preferred uses were: *in any case; on the contrary; meanwhile; furthermore; for example; in summary.* Of note, the NNSs used the summative connector *then* quite repeatedly, compared to the NSs who tended not to use summative connectors as frequently, preferring listing and contrastive categories. And while the latter showed a particular preference for *meanwhile*, the NNSs tended to underuse transitional connectors.

Carrió-Pastor (2013:195-196) considers the variation between the English (who preferred to use connectors to guide the reader through the discourse) and Spanish writers (who did not seem to judge it necessary to always explicitly signal relationships) to be a consequence of writer perception and interpersonal style, which Hyland and Tse (2004) explain as writers "creat[ing] individual authorial identity when choosing or rejecting certain rhetorical devices", such as explicitly signalling relationships among sentences by means of connectors.

What was additionally important in Carrió-Pastor's (2013) study was determining the use of connectors in particular sections of the research paper given that the rhetorical demands of each

section differ. As expected, contrastive connectors were abundant in the introduction section (with *however* having the highest frequency). This finding relates to the fact that here scientists work at establishing their niche in the research community. In the methodology section, the use of transitional, inferential and appositional connectors was preferred. Their use is explained by their function to establish internal relations, "connecting steps in an exposition and organising the discourse as an argument (Carrió-Pastor, 2013:199). In both corpora, *for example*, was the most common appositional connector. In the results section, writers in both corpora preferred linking their ideas with resultive or appositional connectors as a way of providing examples from their experiments or emphasising the results obtained. With respect to reporting results, Carrió-Pastor (2013:199) is of the view that the use of these connectors were reflections of the "research acts" (designating acts performed in a laboratory) of writers as opposed to "writer acts" (to mean decisions of the writer). The most frequent expressions in both corpora were *for example* (appositional) and *therefore* (inferential). In the discussion section of the corpora, the researchers preferred inferential and contrastive connectors, but due to writer acts as opposed to research acts. Here, the writers link their thoughts and discuss the results, contrasting their data with previous studies in order to validate their results. The most frequent connectors for both corpora were *therefore* and *however*, followed by the NSs using *otherwise* quite frequently. In the conclusion section, resultive and summative connectors were preferred. The significance of the results is based on the methodology employed, and arising from the results, valid and important conclusions can be shown. Here, the NNSs primarily used *therefore* and *then*, while the NSs more frequently used *as a result* and *altogether*.

What Carrió-Pastor's (2013) study has revealed is that scientists (here, research engineers) may not necessarily use the same connectors, although they may use the same categories, to link ideas, and that choices are informed by several factors, such as text-rhetoric and perceptions regarding appropriate interpersonal style (where, the Spanish writers seemed to believe that the context was sometimes sufficient for the reader to be able to infer meaning relationships among sentences).

The study by Zareva (2009) sheds light on how L1 and L2 undergraduate students use circumstance adverbials in oral presentations (which she considers to be an integral part of the network of academic genres, but which, she argues has remained under-investigated from a

linguistic perspective) to package informational content and to achieve desired levels of formality with their audience. Zareva (2009:57) bases her classification on that of Biber, et al. (1999), which distinguishes between three major classes of adverbials, namely circumstance; stance; and linking. Circumstance adverbials, Zareva's (2009:57) focus,

> give information regarding the circumstances surrounding a process or an action with respect to place, time, manner, cause, intensity of action, etc. They are the most commonly used class of adverbials by English NSs, the most semantically varied class of adverbials, as well as the best integrated into the sentence structure category.

Zareva's (2009:58) corpus comprised NSs of American English and NNSs belonging to six language groups (Chinese; Japanese; Korean; Portuguese; Spanish; German). The majority of were undergraduates. The fields of study were in the Humanities and Social and Behavioural Sciences. Generally, the NNSs had learned English through formal instruction in their native countries and had spent, on average, 1.1 year in the United.States. The presentations were theoretical (except for one) and based on library research. All of them were graded highly.

With respect to the analysis of the adverbials, Zareva (2009) is careful to indicate that the automatised study of adverbials is difficult, a fact agreed on by corpus linguists, "since they can take diverse forms, and the same forms can serve other than adverbial functions (Conrad, 1998, cited in Zareva, 2009:59); Zareva's (ibid.) data were therefore manually annotated, and the analysis showed that all the adverbial structures were well-structured grammatically.

Zareva's (2009:60) analysis, first of all, revealed that circumstance adverbials were more often used than stance and linking adverbials, although the latter two did not form part of the analysis. In this regard, findings show that the two most frequently used sub-categories of circumstance adverbials in the NS corpus were those of place and time, followed by contingency types. By comparison, contingency and time adverbials were the most frequent in the NNS corpus, followed by place adverbials. Zareva (2009:60) explains the overwhelming use of time and place adverbials by the NSs as being indicative of their desire for a more conversational, interactive presentational style. Place adverbials, particularly, helped the students to "situate their research in a larger context by not only informing their audience about the location of events, but also creating opportunities to interact with it by guiding their peers through the information". In contrast, although the L2 presenters also used place adverbials frequently, their uses were limited solely to the issue discussed without reference to place itself. Alongside this, the greater use of

contingency adverbials by the NNSs compared to the NSs, Zareva (2009) interprets as meaning that they were ascribing more weight to the informative function of this class. Here, the most frequently used sub-categories were reason/cause and condition adverbials, which aid in building arguments. Through their adverbial choices, the NNSs therefore engaged their audience differently from their L1 counterparts. The L2 group tried to "walk their audience through the logic … of their arguments" at a more distant and formal level, whereas their counterparts were comfortable with the notion of shared knowledge and negotiation in arriving at conclusions. Reason adverbials were employed by the L2 corpus to provide self-justification, and to point out reasons associated with people and institutions, or reasons associated with events or facts. Condition adverbials were used to mark conditions on the truth value of the argument; both the L1 and L2 groups tended to refer to conditions related to a particular individual or people in general than to conditions linked to other events. The L1 presenters frequently referred either to themselves, or the audience as the main agent of a condition, which according to Zareva (2009:62, 63), "contributed to developing a sense of interactive involvement in the speech event." In contrast, the L2 group tended to use conditionals most often with a refocusing function where the spotlight was directed at the interpretative speculation of the claims they were making in the presentational content.

Time adverbials (the second most preferred adverbial) were generally employed to refer to a specific point in time, followed by some reference to the present and past. In line with the L2 group's preoccupation with content, their use of time adverbials to refer to specifics regarding events was twice as high for the L1 group. What is further noteworthy is the limited range of expressions employed by the L2 group to refer to the present, which was the second most frequent function attributed to time adverbials for both groups. Here, the L2 group used just three expressions: *now; nowadays; recently*.

Process adverbials (manner, means, instrument and agent) were in fourth/fifth place in the L2 and L1 corpora respectively, in spite of the fact that Biber, et al. (1999) indicate that process adverbials dominate written academic prose. Zareva (2009:65) suggests that this might be due to the difference in modes of delivery. This sub-category was dominated by manner adverbials compared to adverbial references to agents, instruments and means which were relatively infrequent. The common function in both corpora was reference to the manner in which other

people influenced a certain course of action. In the light of her findings, besides the importance of attending to L2 students' limited repertoire of these structures, and what she describes as their "unnecessary use of clusters of same categories of adverbials," Zareva (2009:65) proposes that in their EAP/ESP language training, L2 students should be exposed to the other side of circumstance adverbials – that is those functions typical of the spoken mode of delivery – and not so much place of delivery (academic setting). Finally, Zareva (2009:65) emphasises the importance of explicit instruction based on the fact that "L2 students will [not] simply 'pick up' the features associated with this oral genre on their own after having had some exposure to it." Furthermore, since language choices in speech acts may be influenced by written genres being viewed as more relevant in the academe than speech, or how in their native language, speech acts are culturally framed, these aspects would also require attention. Students should understand "what actually make[s] a student academic presentation a good presentation, over and above content" (Zareva, 2009:66).

Whereas Zareva (2009) views the use of contingency adverbials (notably reason/cause and condition) in academic oral presentations by L2 students forming her L2 corpus data as a means to unpack the logic of their arguments, Warchal (2010) investigates the role of conditional clauses in linguistics research articles to identify those that assist in shaping interpersonal relations in discourse rather than to the specification of subject matter. Her key findings are that these structures are content-oriented, but that there are several types of *if*-clauses whose role is essentially interpersonal. Conditional clauses are linguistic structures that enable "the dynamic negotiation of meanings rather than a unidirectional transfer of propositions", which characterises the dialogic view of communication (Warchal, 2010:141). Among the well-known elements of interpersonal features (examples are: hedges – most frequently realised by modal auxiliary verbs; attitude markers; inclusive *we*-constructions; questions; passivisation) that typically aid in establishing consensus, is the *if*-clause. For the purposes of the study, Warchal (2010) compiled a subcorpus of 40 journal articles taken from five journals internationally recognised in the field of linguistics. Sweetser's functional categories framework (1990, cited in Warchal, 2010:143) informed the analysis, namely content, epistemic, and speech act conditionals. This was further modified to include a more detailed sub-division of speech act conditionals according to Quirk, et al. (1985).

The analysis revealed that eight conditionals were represented in the data, of which seven could be considered to have an interpersonal function. Content conditionals clearly had an ideational function. These typically convey a condition which, if fulfilled, ensures the truth of the proposition in the main clause. However, when combined with hypotheticals, both ideational and interpersonal functions co-occurred. Epistemic conditionals serve an interpersonal function in that they "present the proposition in the main clause as a logical and necessary consequence of the already negotiated or unquestioned premise" (Warchal, 2010:144). The next category comprises speech act conditionals which express an indirect condition where the performance of the speech act represented in the apodosis (main or matrix clause) is conditional on the fulfilment of the state described in the protasis (conditional clause). Speech act conditionals serve four functions: to express politeness (referred to as politeness *if*-clauses); to specify the condition which makes the statement in the apodosis relevant to the situation (referred to as relevance *if*-clauses); to make a metalinguistic comment which qualifies the authorial commitment to a statement made in the main clause (referred to as metalinguistic conditionals) and to express a reservation restricting the validity of the proposition in the apodosis because the author believes she lacks adequate knowledge to interpret the situation correctly (referred to as reservation conditionals) (Quirk, et al., 1985, cited in Warchal, 2010:144). Warchal (2010:144) modifies the speech act conditionals category by maintaining the first two as speech act conditionals, and by treating the last two as separate categories. Concessive conditionals represent a "relation between segments of text which present incompatible situations in such a way as to claim the one is true without claiming that the other does not hold" (Mann & Thompson, 1988, cited in Warchal, 2010:148). According to Sweetser (1985, cited in Warchal, 2010:146), such clauses go beyond the simple concessive relation because:

> … they express not only opposition between the two clauses, but the further idea that the protasis represents a relatively extreme possibility from among the possible conditions which can be expected to occur in opposition to the truth or the fulfilment of the apodosis.

However, Warchal (2010:146) points out that she is not sure that her data had examples of the above. The last category comprised rhetorical conditionals which are different from prototypical conditionals in that they represent strong assertions. This use was not attested in Warchal's (2010) data.

In terms of the above uses, Warchal's (2010) findings show that content conditionals are the most frequent functional category (57%) among *if*-clauses found in the data, which is in line with the primary goal of academic texts, "which is that of establishing the relationship between states which have the status of facts, drawing conclusions from these relationships and promoting these conclusions to the status of facts" (Warchal, 2010:146). The remaining 43% of *if*-clauses were found to have an interpersonal component. Here, the most frequent were epistemic conditionals (23%). Among the remaining 20% of the data, with respect to the sub-category speech act conditionals, reservation conditionals were most frequent (8%), followed by speech act conditionals (relevance, 4%; metalinguistic conditionals, 4%; concessive conditionals, 3%; politeness, 1%). The fact that non-content conditionals, non-prototypical uses, accounted for 43% of the data, illustrates the interpersonal value of *if*-clauses in academic discourse (Warchal, 2010).

Somewhat similarly to Warchal (2010), Wiechmann and Kerz's (2013) study examined the conditional clause, but the focus was on concessive clauses and their position to better understand how discourse-pragmatic and processing-based constraints may have influenced choice. As Wiechmann and Kerz (2013:1) point out, when writers in English produce a complex sentence with an adverbial subordinate clause, they have a choice regarding where to place the dependent clause relative to the main clause, which for their study, could be either before or after the main clause. Research reveals that the preferred positioning of a subordinate clause depends on its semantics. Conditional clauses are primarily sentence-initial, and concessive clauses mainly follow the associated main clause (Biber, et al., 1999). (Causal clauses are mainly sentence-final, with temporal clauses being fairly distributed between the two). Concessive clauses are common in argumentative text types because they serve two important functions, which are to "highlight information which supports the position of the speaker/writer on the topic at hand and, simultaneously to extenuate the importance of conflicting information which may not support his/her position" (Wiechmann & Kerz, 2013:3). Given this functional role, and its characteristic position, Wiechmann and Kerz (ibid.) were interested in establishing why writers would choose to place a concessive adverbial clause in the initial slot. Two considerations were processing-based constraints in terms of parsing effort, since sentence-initial subordinate clauses introduce longer dependencies, and information structuring, where placing adverbial clauses in initial position may act as a bridging function and as setting the stage function (Wiechmann &

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Kerz, 2013:5). Wiechmann and Kerz's (2013:6) investigation was limited to this bridging role, and the specific lexical choices made to encode the concessive meaning, since these, too, are considered as further predictors that affect positioning of the adverbial clause. Their analysis was further limited to just two expressions: *although* and *whereas*, which were examined to "determine differences in preferred positioning between adverbial clauses headed by the semantically most dissimilar subordinators" (Wiechmann & Kerz, 2013:6). The corpus was compiled using the written part of the British National Corpus (BNC) based on the findings by Biber, et al. (1999, cited in Wiechmann & Kerz, 2013:7) that "concessive clauses are notably more common in the written registers (especially news and academic prose)". In terms of position, five variables were investigated, namely: deranking; complexity; length; bridging, and subordinator.

The analysis showed that a considerable number (44%) of concessive adverbial clauses are in non-final positions, and that the majority are balanced (which means that it is tensed) as opposed to deranked (which means that it is not tensed but reduced in some way by either comprising a non-finite verb form or is expressed as a verbless construction) (Wiechmann & Kerz, 2013:4; 5). The majority also contain no anaphoric device that would signal a bridging context, and are simple (do not contain any additional subordinate clause). However, with respect to the remaining uses of this structure (46%) in sentence-initial position, Wiechmann and Kerz (2013:14) argue that bridging is the most important predictor of position (when the writer chooses to ignore the default position by placing the concessive adverbial clause in sentence-initial to serve as an anaphoric device or bridge), and that lexical choice of subordinator (*whereas* was placed in sentence-final, explained below) and length are more important than complexity and deranking. In this study, complexity refers to counting as complex only those adverbial clauses that contained another subordinate clause of any type. Complexity correlates with length in the sense that "a more complex clause is likely to be longer than a less complex one, and a balanced subordinate clause is likely to be longer than a deranked one" (Wiechmann & Kerz, 2013:4; 5). The usage conditions imposed by subordinator choice are clear from the sentence-final position of *whereas* clauses which "are employed to express contrasts between propositions and when they are preposed, they need to introduce all the information shared by the contrasted propositions" (Wiechmann & Kerz, 2013:18). Based on their findings, Wiechmann and Kerz (2013:19; 20) therefore conclude that the two strongest predictors of the

positioning of English concessive clauses are semantic and discourse organisational in nature. Processing considerations (in terms of length and complexity, and deranking), in comparison to the functional variables, play only subsidiary roles.

The study by Bondi (2004), which like Warchal (2010), examines a research-related written genre, namely the journal article research abstract, investigated the discourse function of contrastive connectors. Since the research abstract is generally understood as being a promotional genre, Bondi's (2004) study focused on the meta-discursive dimension of abstracts, based on her understanding that often scientific procedures are represented in terms of argument, and in this regard, her study explores "the relationship between metadiscourse and specific disciplinary cultures in the use of connectors" (Bondi, 2004:140). Bondi (ibid.) further clarifies the relationship between argument, metadiscourse and connectors. Connectors are "features which organize the sharing of meaning, as well as features which create the meaning" (Sinclair, 1993, cited in Bondi, 2004:140), and therefore cohesion is an "interpersonal as well as a textual phenomenon (Thompson & Zhou, 2000, cited in Bondi, 2004:140). And in terms of argument, contrastive connectors can be viewed as:

> … signals of the dialogic argumentative structures underlying texts and foregrounded in abstracts. … they do not only enable monologic discourse to be interactive, but they also imply evaluation by assuming a common ground between reader and writer in terms of what is expected or unexpected at any given point in the discourse.

The argumentative dimension of the journal article abstract relates to both the anticipation of scientific claims to be established by the paper itself, and that of establishing reader interest in the study and approval of claims based on results.

What Bondi (2004:141) examines is the role of the expression *however* in a corpus of abstracts to determine whether this use has both the semantic (textual) meaning of contrastiveness and the pragmatic meaning of speaker-return, which has an expressive function of point-making. The special function of contrastive connectors is "to signal the need to disagree with a (hypo)thesis or to establish restrictions on it" (Bondi, 2004:142). Research also shows that contrastive connectors appear "to be the preferred form of connective expression in claims and that the vast majority is realized in a two-part structure, with the presentation of a claim and an oppositional counter-claim" (Barton, 1995 & Bondi, 1998, cited in Bondi, 2004:142).

Bondi (2004:142) compiled a small corpus of abstracts in economics, history and sociology, with history forming the focus of the analysis. Abstracts were drawn from journal articles and abstract databases. The BNC Sampler (representative of general English) and British National Corpus (BNC) (Written - representative of general written English) corpus were also consulted for frequency lists. The history corpus was subjected to detailed analysis to identify the core-meanings of *however*, and the textual patterns in which these meanings were found. With respect to her data analysis, Bondi (2004:144) points out needing to integrate a consideration of frequency data (word lists and key words) with "a closer study of contextual data by means of concordances". Overall, her analysis revealed that the abstracts tended to use a limited number of connectors in general, and that some show much higher frequencies, such as the typical contrastive connectors, *although* and *however*, with several instances of *while* (shown to be contrastive when considering concordances). Another relevant finding relates to the cross-disciplinary variation regarding lexical choice of contrastive connector. For example, *if* and *when* are frequent in economics where *if* uses were conditional, and *when* uses were predominantly conditional, not temporal. This is explained as being in line with the hypothetical reasoning based on mathematical models in economics. By contrast, history has a high frequency of *however* and *while*, where the use of *while* is mainly contrastive rather than temporal. Regarding the uses of *however*, *while* and *but*, Bondi (2004:146) reports that, in general, *however* is dominant for sentence connection (connection above the clause-complex) and therefore signals patterns of macro-connectivity, partly similar to the bridging function referred to by Wiechmann and Kerz (2013) for concessive conditionals in sentence initial position, whereas *but* and *while* dominate in intrasentential connection (within the clause-complex). Based then on her concordance study of *however*, Bondi (2004:146) concludes that *however* conforms to both the notions of contrastiveness (semantic meaning) and speaker-return, or point-making function (pragmatic function), which according to Bondi (2004:147), "accompanies what is argumentatively a shift from a Concession to a (Counter)-Claim". While the historical abstracts corpus served as a reference corpus (providing insights into core meanings), the analyses of the additional two subcorpora, economics and sociology, overall, illuminate the link between language choice and epistemology in academic discourse. Writers of economics texts prefer to "establish argumentative dialogue on the basis of the interpretation of their results rather than on the novelty of the issue dealt with" whereas sociology "highlights the novelty and credibility of

the results by mainly pointing out their significance and only more rarely by constructing dialogue within the discourse community" (Bondi, 2004:152).

In conclusion to her study, Bondi (2004:152) makes the proposal of considering multiple dimensions of language variation in the analysis of discourse patterns and their markers, by looking at discourse, "defined as the general field of social activity in which the speech act takes place", and genre, "defined as the class of communicative events to which the specific set of communicative events being examined belongs", and the meta-argumentative dimension of contrastive connectors that "can be seen as constitutive in the definition of both academic discourse in general and academic abstracts in particular".

The study by Shaw (2009) was on the use of linking adverbials between a learner genre (student writing) and a research genre (expert writers) in the same field, literary studies. The choice of discipline was based on the fact that "both researchers and learners are expected to express an original response to the work of art in a form that is not openly stereotyped" (Shaw, 2009:229). In order to create a basis for text analysis, a comparison of two corpora of articles in literary studies was undertaken first to establish how uniform the literary-critical register can be, after which these results were compared to a hard science and general academic English corpora to compile a profile of the literary studies register. The student corpus (STULIT) comprised essays by first-year students from two universities while the article corpus (PROLIT) was compiled from two literature databases. Two other corpora were also referred to, namely OLDLIT to determine whether findings were generalisable to other samples of literary-criticism writing, and MATH (representative of mathematics writing) to highlight differences in usage between two distinctive disciplinary discourses.

Shaw (2009:221) explains that textual linking functions can be performed by members of several grammatical classes, such as co-ordinating conjunctions (*and, but, so, yet*) and subordinators (*because, since, although*). Linking adverbials also connect sentences, clauses and phrases to previous ones. Prototypical linking adverbials like *therefore* can occur in all these roles and in various positions in the clause: initial, medial of various types, and sometimes final. For the purposes of his study, Shaw (2009:221) restricts his count to items functioning to link sentences as initial or non-initial based on the notion that placement in subordinate or co-ordinate clauses seemed to be governed by different factors. All items were hand-checked and those which were

non-metadiscoursal and non-adverbial were excluded. Then the metadiscoursal linkers were classified as marking intersentential or intrasentential links. Shaw's (2009:225) findings, overall, revealed that the density of linking adverbials in the STULIT is much higher than in the PROLIT and OLDLIT. High frequencies of a typical academic writing profile of linking adverbials, namely *however; thus; therefore; for example* and *then* were counted in the STULIT. In comparison with PROLIT, the expressions *therefore, again* and *though* occurred considerably more in the STULIT than the PROLIT, but the use of *and* and *but* in sentence-initial was considerably less. However, all three corpora, STULIT, PROLIT and OLDLIT revealed a similar pattern in terms of adverbial placement, namely initial position (Shaw, 2009:227). Notable differences in use related to *and* and *but* (underused by the students) and *again*, *though* and *therefore* (overused by the students). Shaw (2009:228) attributes the underuse of the co-ordinators to being taught to be cautious in using co-ordinating conjunctions as adverbials, and makes the comment that "literary critics celebrate their freedom from conventions by ignoring this advice". The overuse of *though*, by the students in medial position (which Biber, et al., 1999 have found to be largely confined to spoken style), is seen as "a marker of less mature or less 'written' style" (Shaw, 2009:228). Shaw (2009:228; 229) explains the uses of *again* and *therefore* in terms of the generic requirements of the task: "In student essays the writer is often required to state a position at the beginning – often in response to a prompt, and then to provide evidence for it". This could therefore explain the use of *again* – as signalling to the reader that the writer is developing a consistent argument. The use of *again*, notably, is very rare in the professional writing. The expression *however* occurs in all corpora, but much more frequently in the student corpus. In the professional writing, *therefore* was often used synonymously with *thus*, to connect a claim to an interpretive recount (Shaw, 2009:229). The expression that seems to be strongly associated with the literary-critical register is *yet*, which Shaw (2009:230) indicates as being twice as frequent in all three literary-critical corpora, STULIT, PROLIT and OLDLIT compared with Biber, et al.'s (1999) sample. Its main function in both the student and professional writing is within interpretive recounts.

With respect to linking adverbial uses, what stood out in sharp contrast between the student and professional writing, is that the students tended to "make more immediate connections between shorter units", whereas the professionals had "longer, more complex propositions between the markers and made more daring and significant claims" (Shaw, 2009:230; 231). This, of course, is

not surprising given the fact that the professionals would possess what Shaw (2009:231) terms discipline maturity (breadth and depth of knowledge). Based on this study, Shaw (2009:231) indicates that a dual approach embracing discourse-analytic techniques and frequency studies generates relevant information that may be used in educational settings, in the sense that overuse and underuse can be interpreted, and thereby, intervention can be designed to address difficulties with the use of specific register features and functions, such as those of linking adverbials.

In a similar vein, Lei (2012) was interested in the use of linking adverbials in the applied linguistics doctoral writing of Chinese students. Lei (2012:267) concurs with Shaw (2009) that "a sound description of the use of [linking] adverbials in EFL learners' academic writing will … provide invaluable information to second language writing research". Lei (2012:268) reiterates the general observation that students tend to use linking adverbials "for surface logicality and to disguise their poor writing". Several possible explanations for overuse or misuse, according to Lei (2012:268) are: students' lack of writing experience, students not understanding the semantic properties of certain adverbials, or being unaware of the stylistic and syntactic restriction of the adverbials. Lei (2012) compiled a corpus of doctoral writing in applied linguistics by native Chinese EFL students. All theses were submitted to key universities in mainland China, and a control corpus of published international English language journal articles was compiled to serve as the norm. The taxonomy comprised the following categories and sub-categories, tabulated below (Table 2.5).

Table 2.5: Linking adverbials (Lei, 2012:270)

Category	Sub-categories & examples
Additive	Emphatic; appositional/reformulation; similarity; comparative (*besides; alternatively; similarly*)
Adversative	Proper adversative/concessive; contrastive; correction; dismissal (*nonetheless; in comparison; rather*)
Causal/Resultative	General causal; conditional causal (*accordingly; hence*)
Sequential	Enumerative/listing; simultaneous; summative; transitional to another topic (*at the same time; in short*)

The three main findings that emerged from Lei's (2012) analysis were that both the Chinese students and the professional writers employed similar proportions of additive linking adverbials, and used this category most frequently. Whereas the Chinese students used adversative linking adverbials less frequently than the professionals, they used more causal/resultative adverbials

than the latter group. The top ten most preferred linking adverbials in each of the corpora are indicated in Table 2.6 below.

Table 2.6: Top ten linking adverbials in Chinese doctoral student and professional writing (Lei, 2012:271; 272)

Student corpus Linking adverbial	%	Control corpus Linking adverbial	%
Also	16	*Also*	17
However	9	*However*	12
Thus	6	*Thus*	7
Therefore	5	*For example*	6
For example	5	*i.e.*	5
i.e.	5	*Therefore*	4
So	4	*In addition (to)*	3
Then	3	*That is*	2
In addition (to)	3	*Again*	2
That is	3	*So*	2

The above uses accounted for over half (59%) of all the linking adverbials in both the student and control corpora, which indicates that both groups relied heavily on a small set of such linking devices in their writing (Lei, 2012:271; 272). Regarding overuse by students, Lei (2012:273) acknowledges the difficulty in defining overuse but for the purposes of his study, the frequency of the misused linking adverbials had to be 10 times more per million words in the student corpus than in the control corpus. Based on this cut-off, he found that 33 linking adverbials were overused by the Chinese students. The most overused item was *therefore*, followed by *so* and *then* (in that order). The extent to which categories of linking adverbials was overused is presented in Table 2.7 below:

Table 2.7: Overused linking adverbials by Chinese doctoral students (Lei, 2012)

Overused category of linking adverbials	Items
Additive (13)	*Besides; in other words; that is to say; in addition (to); that is; what's (is) more;* *too; i.e.; namely; also; to put it another way; furthermore; as a matter of fact* (emphatic)
Sequential (10)	*Then; second/secondly; third/thirdly; first/firstly; meanwhile; to sum up; first of all;* *in a word; fourth/fourthly; in summary/sum*
Causal/resultative (5)	*Therefore; so; accordingly; otherwise; hence*

Lei (2012:272) also mentions that although the students used fewer adversative linking adverbials than the professionals, they had, in fact, overused particular items, namely: *actually; on the other hand; on the contrary; though*, and *in spite of*. He further indicates that if the overused counts were removed from the calculation of the frequency, the number of occurrences of linking adverbial use by the students would be substantially less than that of the professionals. Underused linking adverbials in the student writing belonged mainly to the category of adversative adverbials, which Lei (2012:274) believes students have difficulty with in their writing since they indicate a much more complicated relationship between discourse units by either marking incompatible information between units, or by signalling concessive relationships, which unskilled writers may find difficult to manipulate (cf. Hubbard, 1993). Examples of underused items in the Chinese doctoral writing are shown in Table 2.8.

Table 2.8: Underused adverbial expressions in Chinese doctoral writing (Lei, 2012)

Adversative	Additive	Cause/resultative	Sequential
However	*Again*	*For example*	*Eventually*
Despite	*Additionally*	*Thus*	*Finally*
In fact	*Of course*	*Consequently*	*Next*
Yet	*For instance*		
In/by contrast	*Further*		
Nonetheless	*As well*		
Rather	*Similarly*		
Of course	*alternatively*		
At the same time			
Nevertheless			
Conversely			

Lei (2012) concludes his investigation by offering insights into students' difficultly with register features such as linking adverbials, and by so doing largely echoes the consensus that exists among language practitioners and researchers on this phenomenon. One is that learners tend to clutter texts with linking adverbials to create a sense of surface logicality, whereas often, a closer examination reveals that the sentences are loosely connected and thus lack coherence (cf. Brostoff, 1981). Another common reason is instruction materials which offer lists of non-equivalent devices as equivalent alternatives. Besides the misguidedness of this, learners are not taught how to use linking devices in relation to register and context, more particularly academic registers and their contexts since authentic examples are often absent. Here, Lei (2012:274)

proposes model text work to show students how accomplished writers achieve cohesion and to discover for themselves the patterns of occurrence of logical connectors in authentic text.

In the light of Lei's (2012) finding that the Chinese doctoral students used more causal/resultative linking adverbials than the professionals, it would be interesting to compare this with the findings by Charles (2011). Charles' (2011) study examined the use of adverbials of result (her preferred term for the linking adverbial group of Result and Inference adverbials) in the thesis writing of two corpora of native speakers (NSs) of English in the fields of politics and materials science. She first of all investigated the phraseology and functions of particular items, namely: *thus; therefore; then; hence; so* and *consequently*. This was followed by using a discourse approach to establish how the co-occurrence of an adverbial of result, *thus*, and an adverbial of contrast, *however*, are used to signal the Problem-Solution pattern. However, since this component of her research is beyond the scope of the present study, these findings will not be reported on here. Charles' (ibid.) choice to examine adverbials of result is based on the findings by Biber, et al. (1999, cited in Charles, 2011:49) which is that they "are the most frequent semantic group in academic writing and are used to carry out the key roles of indicating the writer's conclusions and linking claims to supporting data". The two corpora were compiled from NS theses in politics (8 MPhil theses) and materials science (8 doctoral theses) to reflect two discipline orientations for comparison of uses between a soft pure discipline (politics) and a hard applied discipline (materials science). The following items were examined: *thus; therefore; then; hence; so; consequently; as a result; accordingly; thereby*, and *in consequence/as a consequence*. The study considered both inter- and intrasentential connection, and therefore *so* instances were included both as a linking adverbial and as a subordinator. Charles (2011:50) uses the term intersentential connection to refer to the use of the adverbial to link across a sentence break, marked by a full stop, whereas intrasentential connection refers to a link within an orthographic sentence. What is important to note here, as explained by Charles (2011:50), is that intersententially, the adverbials "have scope over at least two sentences and sometimes more, while intrasententially, they are restricted to a single sentence." This has implications for interpretation, since the result may be viewed as 'logical' or 'practical' according to Biber, et al. (1999, cited in Charles, 2011:50

Charles (2011:50) provides examples to illustrate this:

*However, there are instances of religious persecution targeted particularly at women. In such cases, the persecution ground is **thus** a hybrid of religion and gender, where both are necessary factors and neither is sufficient.* (Politics, intersentential, result)

*The effect of these sites on migrating boundaries is to inhibit the movement of boundary ledges, and **thus** limit the boundary mobilities.* (Materials, intrasentential, practical)

Overall, the findings revealed that the material science corpus had a slightly higher frequency of result adverbials than the politics corpus, but within each group there are large differences in the frequencies of individual adverbials. The uses of *then* and *consequently* were roughly similar in the two corpora. Of importance, was the great difference between the two corpora regarding the use of four adverbials, namely: *thus; hence; so* and *therefore*, as can be seen in Table 2.9 below.

Table 2.9: Differences in use of result adverbials in politics and materials science (Charles, 2011:50)

Politics	Materials science
Thus (123.2%)	*Thus* (92.3%)
Hence (19%	*Hence* (51%)
So (15.8%)	*So* (34.7%)
Therefore (56.2%)	*Therefore* (81%)

Both groups seemed to prefer *then* as an intra-sentential connector, and the predominant phraseology includes an *if*-clause followed by the adverbial which introduces the main clause. This use, as pointed out by Charles (2011:51), allows the discussion of hypothesis-testing and is more likely to characterise natural science and empirical social science writing. An example from politics is:

***If** these hypotheses are verified, **then** it may be concluded that the attitudinal model is less universal than it seems …*

Then was also more frequently used intersententially in politics than in materials.

So, which was used almost twice of often in materials than in politics, also occurred mainly as an intrasentential connector, in contrast to politics, which mainly used *so* sentence initially, and thus

connects two sentences, which seems to have both a summative and resultative meaning, demonstrated in the example below:

Nations are not defined by their possession of a mission to world history and they can constitute legitimate polities without dedicating themselves to a mission to further world progress. **So** *Mazzini does not submit ordinary people to the tyranny of a revolutionary elite.* (politics)

As an intrasentential connector in materials, *so* uses are prevalent with *and so* + finite clause; *so* + finite clause, for example:

As the field pulse starts the applied field is low **and so** *the critical current is large ...*

Since the use of *consequently* was generally low for both corpora, this will not be reported on here. Regarding the use of *thus, therefore* and *hence*, Charles (2011) first considers their use intra-sententially. What was notable regarding *thus*, was the tendency for *thus* to be followed by the *-ing* form. Examples from politics and materials are:

... British troops in West Germany met their costs in D-Marks, **thus worsening** *the current account balance with the FRG.* (politics)

Bi-2212 material is heated above its peritectic melting temperature, **thus causing** *a molten phase to form.* (materials)

As Charles (2011:53) explains, the *-ing* verbs used "characteristically deal with material processes concerned with change or creation", and in combination with *thus*, which can be parsed as '*thereby*', the result is practical rather than logical. In politics, the result would usually be the result of political action, and in materials, the phraseology is used to describe experimental steps to ultimately provide justification for the researcher's method.

Another striking pattern in both corpora was the use of *and* with *thus* or *therefore* intra-sententially, examples are:

This force inhibits movement from the vortex from this site **and thus** *"pins" the vortex.* (materials)

*Social identities express a state's identity in relation to other states, **and therefore** determine the means by which it pursues its bedrock interests.* (politics)

Charles (2011:53) describes the effect of the above use as that of "add[ing] a direct result to the statement of cause which appears in the previous clause [and to] construct a very close connection which is relatively limited in scope". Based on her intrasentential analysis of adverbials of result, Charles (2011:54) concludes that when results are expressed using intra-sentential connection, they most likely do not play a major role in the writer's argument, and would most likely not be expanded on, and may well be statements that are more readily acceptable in the field.

The following description sheds some light on the phraseology and functions of the same adverbials (*thus; therefore; hence*) in intersentential connection. *Thus* figures were substantially higher for politics than materials, while *therefore* and *hence* were more frequent in Materials. In this regard, what is of particular relevance, are the findings by Biber, et al. (1999, cited in Charles, 2011:54) that "linking adverbials are the most frequent in initial position" even though some research reports this use as being a feature of particularly non-native speaker or apprentice (novice) writing. But as Charles (2011:54) points out, position preferences are most likely determined by factors such as discipline, genre and contextual specifics rather than levels of proficiency (cf. Bondi, 2004; Wiechmann & Kerz, 2013). In both corpora, sentence initial position is preferred for *thus*, and is especially high for *hence*. The function of the adverbial in sentence initial position is explained by Charles (2011:55) below:

> Sentence initial position tends to emphasise the logical sequence of the sentences. Punctuation contributes to this effect in that the reader is forced to pause by the full-stop which occurs directly before the adverbial. This momentarily slows down the reader's pace, enabling them to pay more attention to the linker, an effect which is enhanced by the comma, which often, though not always, follows the adverbial.

However, as Charles (2011:55) is also careful to emphasise, is that salience of the adverbial (to mean its visibility at the beginning of a sentence) "comes at the cost of fluency of the text". The repeated use of sentence initial position within a paragraph, which is found to be common among less skilled writers, produces a text that "proceeds by fits and starts, so that, although it is logically connected, paradoxically, it may appear disjointed or at least clumsy to the reader". Three valuable insights are gained from Charles' (2011) study for writing pedagogy. One is to give emphasis to the most commonly used adverbials within each semantic group. Another is to

attend to the characteristic phraseology that is associated with individual adverbials (here, of result). This is particularly important in the case of an AL where students clearly do not know the specific patterns in which a given adverbial typically occurs. Phraseology should, however, be addressed alongside the semantics of the adverbial and not separately since this will "give the impression that the adverbials are freely interchangeable and thereby obscure the very considerable differences between them (Charles, 2011:59) (cf. Lei, 2012). Thirdly, when semantics and phraseology are more or less in place, the functions that result adverbials perform within disciplines and genres within which they are used should be taught; "this would enable students to understand not just the meaning of the individual adverbial, but also the ways in which it functions in the construction of more extensive textual patterns" (Charles, 2011:59).

Finally, the following review by Jones (2010) provides insights into how contemporary scientists are encoding their research and findings under the indirect influence of new insights from science. Jones (2010:213) describes the modern day science outlook as follows:

> … [besides causation] modern science recognizes at least eight other types of explanation for natural and human phenomena. In the social sciences, too, a focus on process and contingency is widespread: structure has become structuration, that is, a process rather than a state. Researchers on the whole show a preference for more complex models of natural [dis/order], and human psychology and sociality, over simpler ones. Multifactorial analyses and accounts of contextual constraints are the norm.

Given this "change" as it were, Jones (2010:216) emphasises that "the task that confronts second language learners who wish to acquire expertise in writing and reading specialized texts in English is clearly enormous".

According to Jones (2010), the writing of domain experts is generally marked by extensive use of experiential and logical metaphor (cf. Halliday, 2004 and Biber & Gray, 2010, in § 2.6.2.6), which allows writers to package information efficiently and discuss complex topics. Experiential metaphor is the representation of processes, typically realised by verbs, as things and qualities of things, realised by nouns and adjectives. Logical metaphor represents logico-semantic relations as processes, by means of causal verbs (*make; cause; produce; lead to; result in; ensure*), as things, by means of causal nouns (*cause; reason; result*); or as properties of things, realised by adjectives (*resulting*); instead of as logical relations, using conjunctions (like *because*) or logical connectives (like *hence; therefore; consequently*). "Using such causation, theories of causation are often embedded deep within the clause" (Jones, 2010:209). The following Table 2.10 taken

from Jones (2010:209) is helpful in understanding the notion of metaphor described here. The original sentence is in bold, and underneath, the grammatical metaphors are unpacked.

Table 2.10: Difference between experiential and logical metaphor (Jones, 2010)

An increase in temperature	*/ … / decreases*	*the tendency for oxygen to remain bound to haemoglobin.*
Experiential metaphor	Logical metaphor	Experiential metaphor
The temperature increases	*causes to decrease*	*oxygen tends to remain bound to haemoglobin.*

Jones (2010:209) further explains that domain experts tend to use more abstract verbs and more complex verbal groups to represent processes and relations, as well as more abstract nominals to encode participants. By contrast, learner writers or novices tend to represent physical phenomena as concrete material processes, and employ simple verbs of material process (*the electrons move; the electricity flows*). In this respect, the language of sophisticated writing, more particularly explanatory discourse (exposition), is expected to "foreground the inherent complexity of natural, social and mental phenomena which tend to be framed in terms of correlation, dynamic interaction, indirect influence and conditioned processes rather than cause-and-effect" (Jones, 2010:210). While causation does remain a major concern in scientific explanations, current scientific discourse in the hard sciences is no longer seen to embrace a discourse of causation, but rather one of conditioned, interdependent and emergent processes (Jones, 2010:211; cf. Halliday, 2004; Biber & Gray, 2010; in § 2.6.3.6). Encoding is primarily achieved by four main types of verbs, which are summarised in Table 2.11.

Table 2.11: Summary of main verbs used for encoding emergent processes in science (Jones, 2010)

Causal verbs having two sub-categories with the following functions:
1.   Representing enforced causation (*make; cause; ensure; shatter; influence; produce*)   2.   Allowing some autonomy or agentivity (*allow; permit; foster; afford*)
Formative or inchoative verbs: Realise the emergent nature of constraint-based processes (*form; accumulate; separate; develop; arise*)
Verbs encoding relations of signification and most highly valued in the registers of scientific, commercial, political and bureaucratic discourse (Jones, 2010:210): (*signify; realise; mean; symbolise; reflect; suggest*)

The relevance of the last category of verbs above for particularly inter-disciplinary writing today is described as follows by Jones (2010:210):

They encode a kind of semantic relation that is becoming increasingly important across unrelated disciplines. An increasing call for the (re)-construal of information and 'meaning' reflects a concern with the negotiation of meaning while adding a layer of semiotic complexity to much (post)-modern prose. One effect, however, is to enrich textual coherence and thus help make logical connectives less necessary than ever.

Besides, of course, the use of the verb groups described above, writers are also representing causal relations as abstract nouns or as nominalised processes, where the latter places new demands on writers who have to be able to control a wide range of verbs that realise relational identifying processes, for example: *be; become; render; indicate; mean; act as.* Additionally, because in much scientific writing the causing and caused participants are not events but rather states, or agentless, contextually constrained processes (Jones, 2010:212), these tend to be loosely rather than causally linked, in other words, the relationship is one of correlation rather than determination, for which Jones (2010:212) provides the following illustration:

Low nephron number, inherited or acquired, **has been linked to** *increased* **risk** *of* **development** *of hypertension and renal* **failure**.

Besides the verb and noun uses for encoding complex relations involving causation, Jones (2010:213) also considered the use of *therefore* among expert writers. He explains that *therefore* can refer either to internal or external causation, although it is primarily used by expert writers to express internal causation or inference (Jones, 2010:215). Jones (2010:214) indicates that the position of *therefore* influences meaning, where sentence initial often has the effect of "an incongruous triumphant or remonstrative resonance" (very common in learner writing, and noted in novice writing). Expert writers, on the other hand, prefer to use thematized *therefore* to introduce a conclusion; "the reasoning itself is presented as epideictic display rather than available for interpretation" (Jones, 2010:214), for example:

It is, therefore, important *that ethnic categorisations and equal opportunities practices should reflect the changes in immigration patterns of ethnic groups, rather than their visibility in terms of colour.*

In the light of his review findings, Jones (2010:217) argues that modern day expert writers show a preference for what he terms "implicit conjunction" (or at least a more sparing use of logical connectives). This is seen as serving the important rhetorical role in constructing a relationship with the reader who recognises his or her role in the construction of textual coherence. However,

the implications of this are fairly demanding for writing instruction since a more holistic approach to the representation of causal relations in texts needs to be adopted, with attention to the difference between internal and external causation, and the uses of verbs and nouns that effectively denote such relations.

2.6.2.2 Conclusion on coherence and cohesion

Regarding notions of coherence and the use of connective devices to aid meaning-making, Witte and Faigley (1981:201-202) make the important point that while cohesion and coherence interact to a great degree, a cohesive text may be only minimally coherent:

> In addition to cohesive unity, written texts must have a pragmatic unity, a unity of a text and the world of the reader. … Cohesion defines those mechanisms that hold a text together, while coherence defines those underlying semantic relations that allow a text to be understood and used.

Since coherence, as Hubbard (1993:58) states "is recognised intuitively as a crucial determinant of writing quality", it remains an important aspect of writing instruction, and therefore to teach coherence effectively, "we need a better understanding of the linguistic features and rhetorical structures that create coherence as well as greater insight into the problems students experience in trying to use [them]" (Bamberg, 1984, cited in Hubbard, 1993:58). Furthering the above consideration, Zamel (1984:117) specifies the importance of also attending to the writer's purpose, the audience and topic in the composing process. With regard to writing instruction, Vivian Zamel (1984:110) asserts that:

> While English language students need to learn to identify and use the whole variety of linking devices, they particularly need careful instruction in the use of conjuncts – those connectives more specifically referred to in grammars as coordinating conjunctions, subordinating conjunctions, and conjunctive adverbs or transitions. They need to learn not only the words themselves but the relationships they signal within and between sentences and between larger units of discourse.

In addition, Zamel (1984:113) indicates the need to teach students the appropriate punctuation for each type of connective, and cites Shaughnessy (1977:29) who emphasises that this is the only way to introduce punctuation since "the study of punctuation should not begin with the marks themselves, but with the structures that elicit these marks" (cf. Charles, 2011). Reference to vagaries in students' punctuation and how this impacts text analysis, such as calculating sentence length, is similarly pointed out by Gardezi and Nesi (2009:240).

However, besides learning the grammatical and lexical distinctions between connectives, and when to use them, students also need to learn when not to use them since overuse can result in prose that sounds artificial and mechanical (Zamel, 1984:116).

Finally, the insights gained from the review by Jones (2010) on how current day expert writers represent relations by implicit conjunction rather than by explicit markers underline the importance of language practitioners keeping abreast with innovations in academic writing for the purposes of providing relevant input and instruction.

The subsequent section provides a review of the literature on features of academic writing, including specific areas of language use that are generally found to cause difficulty for L2 or AL learners or students at university. This section will not be presented in as much depth as for verbs and connectors since the matters discussed here, while important for developing writing skills, have no direct bearing on the focus of the current study.

2.6.3 FEATURES OF ACADEMIC WRITING, STUDENT USE AND PEDAGOGY

The discussion here is focused on the nature of academic writing and how this is accomplished textually and linguistically. Since Genre Theory and the Systemic Functional Linguistics framework provided background for the text analysis described in the current study, in the sense that light is shed on the communicative purpose of academic texts and how this is conveyed by means of language and text creation, these aspects will be considered at some length. Furthermore, based on the insights into what is regarded as constituting successful academic writing, student uses will be examined to determine what type of writing interventions are necessary to help students with writing difficulties. It should be noted, though, that while an attempt will be made to treat these aspects separately for the sake of processing ease, overlapping is inevitable given the interrelated nature of writing, writer and writing instruction.

However, before commencing with the above, it is thought prudent to reconsider the EAP position at universities generally, that is locally and abroad, and to keep in mind what is viewed as being problematic for students having to learn what is often an unfamiliar discourse, and then to be reminded of what the writing difficulties are for South African and overseas university students, as reported by current studies.

2.6.3.1 The EAP position at universities

The EAP scenarios in higher education in Canada (Fox, 2009) and the United Kingdom (Wingate, 2012) are no different from the South African situation, where the tradition of mass education is relatively new. What Fox (2009) calls a "perilous position" is the fact that often EAP programmes exist as service units often manned by part-time or contract staff, with minimal full-time staff, whose sole purpose is teaching, rather than engaging in research which is crucial for informing writing and concomitant language pedagogy, to either provide remedial study skills courses to students from all disciplines, or to provide language support which would include writing instruction, as a stand-alone course, with no connection to disciplinary work or involvement by disciplinary experts. A further compounding factor is that, commonly, only one year is assigned (usually the first year) for attending to students' "deficiencies".

The United States and Australia are in a better position based on their long acquaintance with foreign students, and have a substantial body of research to rely on, and well developed practices of teaching academic writing. The US has also upheld the tradition of developing rhetoric or composition skills which are regarded as being integral to university education and success therein (Wingate, 2012). Attendance of composition courses is required of not only foreign students but also novice L1 writers. Nevertheless, in spite of the visible value of academic writing in the US, the concerns raised in writing research relate to whether academic writing can and should be taught as a generalisable discourse, specific to university study but generalisable across disciplines. Another concern relates to the issue of perpetuating the dominant/hegemonic western cultures of academic writing and dismissing other cultures and traditions. The third matter relates to the curriculum and syllabus design of EAP in terms of what the emphases should be, and how best to attend to identified features in materials development. All these matters impact students in various and serious ways: most students, in general, are unprepared for the writing demands at university since their previous school writing experiences have been different and largely bound to the five-paragraph essay, also referred to as the pedagogic essay. Here, source-based writing is rare, and awareness of notions of communicative purpose and audience may have been limited. Similarly, process writing involving revision of both content and language may have been non-existent or insufficient, and importantly, students may not have had adequate writing opportunities and meaningful feedback. In the same way as reading is

learned by reading, writing is learned by writing. Alongside these realities, students may not have experienced the nature of writing as being a creation of text being largely dependent on linguistic resources. They may also not have developed the requisite language resources to both process and generate academic texts, and in this respect, what some current research has revealed about South African learner/student writing will be presented next.

2.6.3.2 South African research on student writing

The studies reviewed here are those by Hattingh (2005) on the syntactic development of grade 12 ESL learners; Chokwe (2011) on student and staff perceptions of academic writing and ESL; Ward-Cox (2012) on language errors by first-year distance education students; Potgieter and Conradie (2013) on isiXhosa students' L2 data, Klos (2011) on learner experiences of a genre-based teaching model, and Butler (2006) on postgraduate student writing at the University of Pretoria. Throughout, the emphases will be on text creation and concomitant language difficulties. The detail of study design will not be recounted.

Hattingh's (2005) study determined the level of syntactic development in English among South African grade 12 learners. The sample comprised compositions obtained from six provinces. An error analysis was conducted, and problems areas in syntax were identified. A primary syntactic problem concerned connector use, and in terms of grammatical uses, the features which presented the most difficulty were: tense-related (verb forms); pronouns; articles; concord, and prepositions. Vocabulary errors also occurred. Chokwe's (2011) study on student and staff perceptions at the University of South Africa (UNISA) on academic writing based on data obtained from questionnaires, focus group interviews and marked student writing samples demonstrated conflicting beliefs between students and staff, and among tutors themselves. The students, in general, believed that they were producing acceptable academic texts based on their study of the prescribed material, whereas tutors were of the opinion that students' writing had not met the specifications of the academic writing model as set out in the prescribed materials and tasks. In general, too, while the students had rated their writing competencies as average, their tutors claimed otherwise. Tutors indicated that students had difficulty with the following aspects of writing: grammar; spelling; essay structure and paragraphing with respect to both coherence (making sense) and cohesion (being textually connected), and argumentation. Chokwe (2011) also points out that while students indicated that they value feedback, the perusal of marked

student writing samples revealed that in some instances, tutors did not provide adequate, understandable (explicit) and useful feedback. Chokwe (2011) attributes the feedback problem to two sources; either tutors are not equipped and trained to provide feedback, or they do not view this as their role based on the expectation that incoming students should have acquired the necessary writing skills during their schooling. In this regard, Chokwe (2011:49) recommends collaboration between the school and university to narrow the gap between what teachers and university lecturers believe to be academic literacy requirements to be able to address literacy and writing issues. He advocates a holistic approach commencing at elementary level through to university with writing being an integral part of learning outcomes. Besides feedback concerns, five themes which emerged from the students' responses are noteworthy: difficulty with paragraphing and overall text structure; not understanding what argument entails (many viewed this as comprising an altercation between two parties); difficulty with writing in English (most probably referring to being able to express their ideas in an AL); requests for more modelling (including strategies) for good writing, and finally requests for more work on academic writing (to mean more writing opportunities).

Ward-Cox's (2012) study on the language errors by first-year distance education students at the University of South Africa (UNISA) demonstrated that, overall, the means (specifying error types) were greater in the Black Southern African language group, specifically among the Xhosa-speaking students than that of other groups, Afrikaans and English/Afrikaans. It was also found that the means were higher in terms of error occurrences for those students who had attended rural or township schools. Features that were error-prone comprised: verbs (tense; form; agreement); articles; lexicon (word choice; form; idiom; pronouns); syntax (structure; run-ons and fragments); mechanics (erratic spelling and punctuation). The study by Potgieter and Conradie (2013) at Stellenbosch University based on the analysis of second language English free speech and grammatical intuitions of eight first language speakers of isiXhosa students revealed that the areas presenting the most difficulty were, in this order, syntactic, semantic and morphological. In terms of syntax, prepositions, articles, and the positioning of adverbs and particles were identified. Syntactical problems related to incorrect lexical choice, especially prepositions and prepositional phrases, and pronouns. Morphological infelicities mainly involved inflection relating to tense and/or aspect forms of past tense, progressive and irrealis structures, alongside the third person singular feature. Based on their findings, Potgieter and Conradie

(2013:121-122) argue that universities have to address the language-in-education issue, which, "if left unattended, might seriously disadvantage future generations of learners". The study by Klos (2011) on nursing students' uptake of academic text conventions in two disciplines, anatomy and physiology, at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) revealed that while students were generally able to organise information into suitable patterns at genre, register and discourse semantics level, they frequently had difficulty in arranging and formulating textual elements at the word class and word level. Students also had problems balancing the reader-writer relationship in terms of creating dialogic space and orchestrating voice. Additionally, students tended to lack the linguistic resources to reformulate source-based information without resorting to plagiarism.

Butler's (2006) study comprised an investigation into how writing interventions could be designed to afford appropriate assistance at the University of Pretoria to postgraduate students who experience writing difficulties. To establish the latter, data collection involved supervisors' perceptions of students' academic literacy ability, as well as their requirements in this regard, and students' own perceptions of their proficiency and the results of the Test of Academic Literacy Skills (TALL) that the students undertook. In addition, students' writing was analysed to identify possible writing challenges. Focus group interviews were also conducted with supervisors to gain insights for designing discipline specific courses. The key findings were that students generally rate themselves high on most functional literacy abilities and regard quality of content, argumentation and text organisation as more important than language accuracy, register and style. Most of the students also indicated that they would benefit greatly from a formalised writing course. More than half of the student cohort also mentioned that they find academic argument and persuasive writing problematic, and although they claimed to understand the notion of plagiarism, Butler's (2006) observation is that students do not fully comprehend what constitutes plagiarism (cf. Flowerdew, 2015; Klos, 2011). In contrast to the students' overall positive rating of their academic literacy abilities, the TALL results presented another picture. Only 40% obtained an average mark above the cut-off point, with 60% being "at risk". The students generally performed better in the first four sections (cluster 1) relating to: text relations; academic vocabulary; graphic and visual information, and text types. The most challenging areas were reading comprehension and text editing (cluster 2). In the reading comprehension skill domain, students had difficulty in distinguishing between essential and non-essential

information; recognising text or logical relations; sequencing; defining; making inferences, and interpreting metaphor and idiom. Text editing was substantially more difficult, where only 21% of the answers were correct. These findings demonstrate that these postgraduate students had difficulty with integrated reading, interpretive ability and knowledge of English. In addition, a writing task comprising a summary in essay format was analysed to assess to what extent the students had mastered the conventions of academic writing. Three main error categories were examined: students' use of the grammatical system of English; use of academic features relating to coherence in argumentation, general and specific text structure, and matters of style and register, and lastly, punctuation, spelling and layout. Butler (2006) provides a detailed description of these error categories, and because they would be a close reflection of the kinds of errors made by undergraduates, which is of direct relevance to the current study, a summarised list of errors is provided in Table 2.12 below.

Table 2.12: Categories of error types made in postgraduate writing at UP (Butler, 2006)

Category 1: Grammar	Description
Subject-verb agreement	Most common error type (even when Subject is next to Verb Phrase)
Article use (determiner)	Frequent problem • either insert unrequired article, or omit article when it plays a determining role
Mistakes in expressing temporal relationships	Not as frequent but occurrence attributed to either: • laxness or • not knowing the specific form of a verb to express time frames
Passive constructions	Two constructions proved difficult: • Passive + modal, where the main verb lacks necessary suffix (*needs to be address*) • Simple present passive, where the main verb is the simple present instead of the past form (*are deal*)
Possession	Frequent • either omit the apostrophe when this is appropriate, • or use it incorrectly, • or do not know the correct word form (with an -*s* or without)
Prepositions	Frequent errors Since these are idiomatic and use depends on knowledge of grammaticalised and lexicalised word units, prepositional use presents great difficulty for AL users (Biber & Gray, 2010; 2011)
Pronouns	• Students tended to use the colloquial "you" rather than the preferred generic "one" • Also frequent were incompatible uses within meaning units
Incorrect word forms and derivatives	Common
Omission of strategic words	• incomplete idiomatic expressions • omission of determiners when necessary • inability to parse language use to ensure that necessary word forms are

	in place
Syntax	Students had considerable problems with syntax (sentence construction; word order; incomplete sentences) • Very long sentences with more than one main idea • Sometimes sentence types not suited to communicative intent (directive rather than descriptive) • Conflation of sentences • Not a full sentence
Category 2: Academic discourse	**Description**
Formality	Most frequent contravention which Butler attributes to: • limited vocabulary • not realising that emotive and colloquial expressions are inappropriate in academic registers
Personalised writing	Overuse of personal reference in place of features creating a more objective stance (Butler suggests students use this as an effortless strategy to defend contentious claims instead of finding evidence for such claims)
Contractions	Common though dispreferred in academic writing
Redundancy/concessions	Lengthy descriptions , explanations and repetitive terms are common as opposed to conciseness (attributed to limited vocabulary)
Referencing	Two problems are very common: • Inconsistent use of referencing conventions • Not understanding the principle of citation requiring both acknowledgement of sources and paraphrase
Paragraphing	Often student texts displayed: • No paragraph division • No introduction and/or conclusion • Indicating a lack of understanding of these structures
Clarity (meaning and coherence)	Several students showed problems with the: • Accuracy and legitimacy of their ideas • Used language that obscured meaning • Changed the sequence of information such that the original logic of the sourced text was lost • Had missed or omitted relevant information contained in the sourced text • Did not know to what extent to elaborate on ideas • Could not connect ideas within a specific sequence • Reference to sources were not integrated into students' own arguments • Reference to unrelated, irrelevant sources
Category 3: Punctuation, spelling and layout	Frequent vagaries in punctuation, especially comma use Misspelling comprised: • Inconsistent spelling (mixes of American and British) • Incorrect spelling (in spite of access to correct uses) Many layout infelicities with students showing little understanding of visual/text appearance norms

Insight into South African students' language use is necessary for the sake of relevant EAP design in order to address difficulties and to align input with features found to be associated with academic writing quality. In this regard, the benefits of knowledge of learner language or learner

output for the development of learning tasks, syllabuses and curricula is highlighted by Granger (in Granger, Hung & Petch-Tyson, 2002). A diagram (Figure 2.1) indicating **the centrality of learner language in relation to instructional design** (the researcher's emphasis) is provided below.

```
                    Instruction
                    Task Syllabus
                    Curriculum

                    Learner
                    language

        Describing the              Characterising
        target language             the learner
```
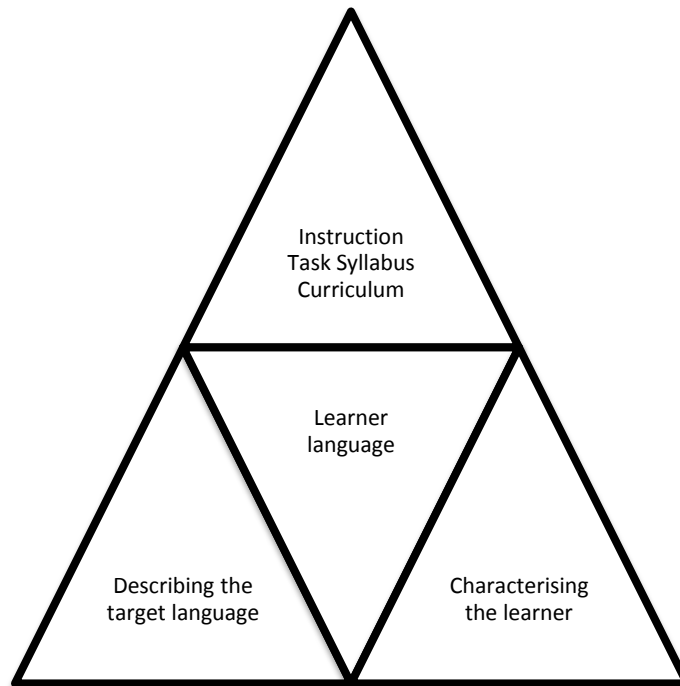
Figure 2.1: Focus on learner output (Granger, in Granger, Hung & Petch-Tyson, 2002)

2.6.3.3 Overseas studies on student writing

The overseas studies reported on here on students' language difficulties are testimony to the need for English language support at universities worldwide, and similarly reflect the problems of South African students. Chan's (2010) study on the free, unaided writing of Hong Kong Cantonese ESL learners (secondary and university) reveals the common lexico-grammatical errors found in Cantonese English (summarised in Table 2.13 below). Because English is a value-added language in Hong Kong and is indispensable for upward and outward mobility, competence is imperative; English is a compulsory subject at all school levels and is a medium of instruction at about a third of the total number of secondary schools and the majority of tertiary institutions.

Table 2.13: Summary of Cantonese English errors by secondary and university students (Chan, 2010)

Morphological level errors Affixes: Inappropriate selection: *Their academic results are still dissatisfactorily.* Overgeneralisation: *The happiness we have now cannot *enlast.*
Lexical level errors Inaccurate directionality: *I borrowed money to my friends and borrowed the money to him.* Synonym confusion: *My mother is nice, she didn't fight me.* [beat] Vocabulary compensation: *Open TV and open the playstation.* [turn on] Synforms (are lexical mis-hits because of formal resemblance to other L2 forms): *I sleep on the bed, my mother also sleep nearly.* [nearby]
Syntactic level errors Pseudotough movement (explained as the use of a tough adjective in an erroneous structure): *Up to now we are not easy to work together.* Misuse of *until*: *Until now, I enjoy the school life.* [have enjoyed] Misuse of conjunctions (many errors had correlative pairs attached to both clauses of a complex sentence): *Although we can't have our life there, but now we are happy.* Duplicated comparatives or superlatives: *That is the most happiest time.* Misordering of constituents in indirect questions: *I don't where is it.* *In*-prepositional phrases: *In many years ago my father* Independent clauses as objects or subjects: *You don't need to worry about the problem will struck at you.* *Be + ed*: *She is always cried.* Psuedopassives: *The floor can automatic clean.* Omission of subjects: *First ∧ talk about the traffic* Existential structures: *There had many people at there* Misuse of prepositions: *We played card games on the bus although it was crowded of people.* Verb form selection: *Every day he driving his car.* Misuse of relative clauses: *She will cook the food what I like to eat.* Incorrect order of adverbials or adverbs: *I was very work hard to read.* Serial verb constructions: *My mother was angry. And took a stick beat me.* Inappropriate case selection: *My sister always laugh of our.* Punctuation problems: *I saw her face, I will know that she was very angry, so I will go to my room,* Transitivity pattern confusion: *We will not listen him.* *Be* + base form: *My father was always buy a toy.* Omission of copulas: *They will ∧ very happy.* Concord problems: *I found a lot of shop.* Word class confusion: *It's so interest.* Calquing (a calque is a type of borrowing in which each morpheme or word is translated into the equivalent morpheme or word in another language): *My mother usually cooks something nice eat to me.*
Discourse level Periphrastic topic constructions (These sentences contained a topic-comment structure with the redundant use of a subject noun phrase or pronoun to repeat a fronted topic): *Hong Kong in the year 2047 it will have* Use of *it* as discourse deixis (these sentences showed an inappropriate use of *it* without a clear referent, as a discourse-deictic expression): *When I was talking to her, I feel it was so good.*

While Grant and Ginther's (2000) study on L2 writers in the United States aimed at establishing the extent to which a computerised tagging programme could capture proficiency level differences of L2 learners' essays, the findings relating to how the different proficiency cohorts

used the identified language features are relevant for the current study. Table 2.14 below sets out the features which were examined and provides category descriptions and/or examples. Thereafter, the main findings will be considered.

Table 2.14: Linguistic features tagged by computer (Grant & Ginther, 2000)

1. **General: essay length: total no of words**
2. **Lexical specificity: indication of how precisely the writer used vocabulary** • Type/token ration: No of different words per first 50 words of text • Word length: Mean length of words

3. **Lexical features**
    • Conjuncts (*for example; however*)
    • Hedges (*sort of; kind of*)
    • Amplifiers (*completely; absolutely*)
    • Emphatics (*such; really; so*)
    • Demonstratives (*this; that; these; those*)
    • Downtoners (*almost; barely; hardly*)

4. **Grammatical features**
    • Nouns
    • Nominalisations (words ending in *-ment*; *-ity*; *-ness*, etc.)
    • Personal pronouns (1st, 2nd and 3rd personal pronouns)
    • Verbs: Tense & Aspect (present; past; perfect); Verb types (private; public; suasive)
    • Modals: Possibility (*can; may; might; could*); Necessity (*ought; should; must*); Predictive (*will; would; shall*)
    • Adjectives (attributive only)
    • Adverbs (Time & Place)
    • Prepositions
    • Articles (definite & indefinite)

5. **Clause level features** Overall subordination: complements; relative clauses; adverbial subordination Complementation: *that* comp; infinitive   comp Relative clauses: subject; object; prepositional relatives Adverbial subordination (*because she was late*) Passives: *by* and agentless passives

One of the aims of Grant and Ginther's (ibid.) study was to determine if the more proficient student writers were using those features associated with mature L1 and L2 writing, for example, nominalisations; emphatics; conjuncts; passives; longer essays; more diverse words; and longer words overall. The results indicated that for overall word count and the measures of lexical specificity, there was a steady increase of the use of these features in relation to increases in proficiency levels. Similarly, with respect to lexical features, there was also an increase in the use of conjuncts, amplifiers, emphatics, demonstratives and downtoners. However, hedges were

not used very often at all, and although the authors suggest this may be due to the fact that the essay was timed, the general lack has pedagogical implications since this resource enables writers to convey degrees of uncertainty which is necessary in academic writing where reliability and accuracy of information is valued.

More proficient student writers used conjuncts much more frequently than the lower level cohorts. Emphatics were employed similarly across the groups to convey certainty, while amplifiers were used much more sparingly. The more proficient writers also used demonstratives much more often than the other groups, while downtoners which lessen the force of the verb, were generally infrequent among the groups, with increased use by the high proficiency cohort. In terms of grammatical features, use of nouns, verbs, modals, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions and articles was found to increase as the writing level increases. The greater use of nominalisations by the more proficient group indicates that the students have developed a more sophisticated awareness of the genre of academic writing; they have moved beyond the "one size fits all" to "the realisation of the subtle ways in which discourse changes to best fit certain situations" (Grant & Ginther, 2000:136). All levels showed an increase in the use of first person pronouns, with a decrease in the use of second person pronouns by the more proficient writers, unlike the less proficient group whose over-reliance on "*you*" is a reflection of a more oral style. Third person pronoun use showed a steady increase in writer proficiency, displaying ability to support claims with better detail. Regarding verbs, present tense increased across all levels.

However, past tense use showed a substantial increase by only the more proficient writers, which is attributed to the use of more examples and specifics to support stance or opinion. Perfect aspect did not appear to increase at all, and was sparse, but the authors explain that this paucity may be the effect of the topics, rather than inability or avoidance. With respect to verb types, private verbs were generally common as indicators of opinion, with the most frequent expressions *being: think; feel; believe*. However, there was a slight decrease in private verbs in the better writing. The use of modals showed a steady increase across levels. Possibility modals were preferred to necessity and predictive modals. The authors explain that this use was aligned to the prompt which asked for specific reasons, not projecting or predicting the future; also, necessity modals would have been too strong in terms of prompt requirements. Adjectives and adverbs increased across levels, with a substantial increase in the more proficient writing which

showed a similar increase for prepositions. Article use similarly increased alongside proficiency level increases, with the more proficient writers exhibiting an awareness of the cohesive role that articles play in text creation. While subordination use increased overall as proficiency levels increased, the most prevalent uses related to complementation and adverbial subordination rather than relative clauses. An explanation for this finding relates to the prompt requirements of discussing an opinion and giving reasons as support. Both complement clauses alongside first person pronouns and private verbs are resources for expressing opinion, and adverbial subordination lends itself to giving reasons. It was also found that as the writers improved, they employed more passive constructions, which function to create a sense of objectivity (by removing the agent) and/or placement of information (where fronting gives emphasis).

What is important to bear in mind, however, is that proficient student texts may not exhibit all those linguistic features mentioned here. Rather, "different profiles of highly rated texts can differ from one another in relation to features such as mean word length, nouns and nominalisations, prepositions, and present tense verbs" (Jarvis, Grant, Bikowski & Ferris, 2003:400). These authors explain differences in the use of features in terms of how specific writing tasks may constrain or allow for uses, which they argue, should be considered when determining the nature of quality writing. Also in terms of writing quality, Crossley and McNamara (2009:132) point out that more proficient L2 writers display far greater lexical specificity than less proficient writers. The latter's texts in comparison tend to lack coherence, are less abstract and therefore more likely to be context-dependent. Additionally, word choices have fewer associations and relationships and thus tend to be more lexically and semantically disengaged. Having insight into students' lexical difficulties is important since lexicon problems are strongly related to the production of global errors and academic achievement.

In a similar vein to Grant and Ginther (2000) above, Hinkel (2003) analysed the writing of L1 or native speakers (NSs) and L2 students or non-native speakers (NNSs) to establish whether there were differences in the use of three features associated with writing that is described as being basic or stylistically simplistic rather than sophisticated. The features comprised *be*-copula as a sentence main verb and its attendant structures, namely predicative adjectives and existential *there*. Because *be*-copula also occurs in the advanced constructon *it*-cleft, these uses were analysed as well. In addition, vague nouns (*people; thing; way*) and verbs in high-frequency

classes were examined. Verbs comprised three types: public verbs (*say; state; talk*); private verbs (*think; feel; believe*) and expecting/tentative verbs (*like; try; want*). Constructions with *be* as a main verb have both copula and existential functions and have reduced information content. They are features of spoken discourse, and in exposition have existential meanings when supplying information.

Predicative adjectives form part of a clause predicate, following *be*-copula or linking verbs. While predicative adjectives are common in conversational and academic genres, most occur in contexts describing a state of mind or emotion, more commonly associated with conversational registers. This structure or use "limits the range and type of content that can be conveyed because they require the presence of copular verbs and can only refer to states or particular referential properties" (Hinkel, 2003:282). Existential *there* constructions similarly belong to stative features that introduce new content while adding minimal information. In contrast, those with *it*-cleft are more syntactically complex but also have little lexical content. *It* is used to project impartiality, objectivity and evidentiality in academic prose when *it* refers to whole segments of the preceding text. Vague nouns (*people; thing; stuff*) are the most common features of conversation and lexically simple prose. Their meanings are generic in the sense that semantically "they refer to objects, concepts and events that are not well-defined and have few clear-cut lexical boundaries in the nonlinguistic world" (Hinkel, 2003:283) (cf. Grant & Ginther, 2000 regarding lexical specificity). Public verbs refer to actions that are observable publicly and are used to introduce indirect and reported statements (*say; explain; argue*) and are common in interpersonal/interactive types of discourse. Private verbs comprised groups: mental states and non-observable intellectual acts that are private, such as emotive acts (*feel; hope*) and cognitive acts (*believe; conclude; recognise*). Private verbs are three times more common the spoken register than public verbs, and almost six times more frequent in speech than academic prose. Expecting/tentative/wanting verbs refer to future time and are common in tentative constructions implying uncertainty. These are the least common of the verb types described here.

The results of the analysis revealed that *be*-copula as the main clause verb uses were significantly more frequent in NNS than NS texts. This structure was over-relied on to support claims. Rates of predicative adjectives were similarly significantly higher for the NNSs than NSs. While this construction served the function of description in the NNS texts, there was no

development of ideas beyond description; in other words, elaboration of ideas, integral to many academic writing tasks, was absent. In contrast, NS texts contained substantially lower numbers of *be*-copula and predicative adjective constructions, and instead employed a greater variety of constructions, including activity and causative verbs. Overall, existential *there* uses were infrequent. *It*-cleft constructions were more frequent in NS texts, where uses were accompanied by a greater variety of verbs and other attendant elements, such as prepositional phrases and subordinate clauses compared to NNS use, which largely occurred in *it* + copula + adjective patterns, for example:

It is because of their career goals that the students actually study. Few people pay thousands of dollars each year just to read textbooks and write papers. (NS)

Everyone knows that people who go to school to get an education that will help them to get a job. … It is clear that an art major can't pay off their education. (NNS)

Vague nouns appeared in NNS texts significantly more frequently than in NS texts, with expressions such as *people* and *things*, which Channel (1994, cited in Hinkel, 2003:292) refers to as "placeholders" in text, being excessive. In addition, the frequency rates for the three verb types, public, private and expecting/tentative, were very common in the NNS texts, indicating the restricted lexical repertoire of these students. At times, public verbs were also irrelevant to the writer's argument, or verbs were lexically, ideationally and syntactically redundant. Although private and public verbs did appear in NS texts, the rates were substantially lower than for the NNS texts. The uses of vague nouns and public and private verbs in the NNS texts are a clear indication of how limited vocabulary can thwart elaboration of ideas, and negatively impact judgements of quality writing. Based on her findings, overall, Hinkel (2003:297) therefore asserts that "instruction for university-bound L2 students needs to concentrate on expanding their syntactic and lexical repertoire".

Having sound insight into students' language abilities is further demonstrated by Fox's (2009) study at a Canadian university of advanced international students' language ability including academic writing, which revealed that results of high stakes tests, such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and the International Language Testing System (IELTS) compared with her diagnostic test results for the same student cohort yielded what she described as

"considerable evidence of instability in the score concordance relationships", which Fox (ibid.) believes underlines the value of in-house placement tests for the purposes of "targeted instruction that focuses on increased attention on individual student needs and strengths" (Fox, 2009:38). In some respects, the discrepancy between assessment tools is reverberated by van Rooy and van Rooy (2015) who compared the National Senior Certificate (NSC, Department of Basic Education, South Africa) results of a student cohort at the North West University, Vaal Triangle Campus with their results for the both the National Benchmark Test (NBT) and the Test of Academic Literacy Levels (TALL and TAG – the Afrikaans counterpart). The key finding was that the matric or rather NSC language scores, more particularly English first additional language scores, do not correlate well with the NBT and TALL/TAG results, which according to van Rooy and van Rooy (2015), indicates that the NSC marks should not be used as an indicator of academic literacy at all. They further state that "they are not reliable predictors of general academic success" based on their findings regarding this cohort's progress over a period of two years (2011; 2012) in certain programmes, such as B.Com (General; Accountancy); B.Ed; B.A. (General; Languages; Development & Management); B.Sc and Diploma in Sports Management.

A discussion of the features of academic writing and how this has become to be understood in terms of Genre Theory and Systemic Functional Linguistics perspectives follows next.

2.6.3.4 Academic discourse as persuasion

Before considering the nature of academic writing, which is, perhaps, best described as academic discourse (as signposting its communicative goal), it should be pointed out that while the emphasis is on the nature of academic writing as shaped by particular discourse communities, what is nevertheless acknowledged are the concerns raised by Street (1999, in Turner, Jones & Street, 1999) in his Academic Literacies campaign. He, like others, contends that the academic writing focus discredits the writing abilities of many students. For example, he cites Lea (1993, in Street, 1999:197) who points out that "many [mature students] were already skilled in writing before they came to university, but the demands of 'academic literacy' seem to deskill them". In this regard, Street (ibid.) argues that the problem lies in different expectations by faculty and students, not at the level of writing technique, skills, grammar, but more significantly at the level of identity, self-hood, personality (Street, 1999:197). Here, Street's (1999:198) concern is that unless university writing is afforded a central place in all learning and is shared by discipline

specialists to help their students understand disciplinary epistemology "(who controls knowledge and how; who has the right to give voice) and of identity (what version of self is being expressed in different forms of writing)", students will continue to be confused since, without a disciplinary basis for analysing genres and voices, there is no explicitness. Street's (1999) concerns are therefore valid: in our quest for developing students' academic writing: are we building on our students' literacies, and is it possible to develop academic writing literacy without the involvement of disciplinary specialists? Street's (1999:198) argument is that universities have the responsibility of responding differently rather than "simply sending students with 'difficulties' to a 'study skills' Unit, whilst they [discipline lecturers] get on with the job of 'teaching' academic knowledge".

Matsuda and Matsuda (2014:372), proponents of the World Englishes paradigm, hold a similar view. They argue for an approach that both develops global literacy, which implies an Academic Literacies approach, and supports responsible teaching that attends to the dominant language forms and functions: "to not make the dominant codes available to students who seek them would be doing disservice to students, leading to their economic and social marginalisation". Here, while the emphases should be levels of appropriateness and acceptability with respect to varieties and alternatives, these authors point out that students also need to know what does not work (as either inappropriate, unacceptable, or simply incorrect).

Hyland's (2004:89) explication of the nature of academic discourse as being persuasive rhetoric, the art of which dates back to Aristotle where orators or writers strove to establish credibility (*ethos*) and considered the audience's potential responses to the argument (*pathos*), is relevant to any discussion of features of academic writing. Hyland (ibid.) points out that all scientists transform their research findings into academic knowledge by way of rhetoric, which involves three elements of persuasion, namely: citation, interaction and self-mention, and in order to examine to what extent, and how different disciplines employed these resources, Hyland (2004) undertook a corpus analysis of published papers in leading journals in four "hard" and four "soft" fields. In terms of disciplinary practice, the hard fields are essentially analytical and structuralist, attuned to model building and the analysis of observable experience to establish empirical uniformities. On the other hand, the soft fields address the influence of human actions or events. There are more variables and causal connections are tenuous rather than fixed.

Synthetic rather than analytic modes of enquiry are preferred and reiterative patterns of development with limited scope for reproducibility occur.

Citation as an essential strategy in argument for creating an intertextual framework for new work enables the writer/researcher to both indicate an allegiance to a particular community and to position her own research contribution. Compared to the soft sciences, references are relatively rare in the hard sciences, and are tightly topic-bound, contributing to a sense of linear progression. In the soft sciences, they are more frequent and draw on literature that is "more dispersed and open to greater interpretation" (Hyland, 2004:96) since it cannot be assumed that readers share the same knowledge so writers take greater care in elaborating a context through citation. Here too, more prominence is afforded to the cited author through use of integral structures and by placing the authors in subject position. By contrast, this practice is rare in the hard sciences, where the author's role is reduced by means of non-integral and numerical-endnote formats, with rare uses of citation verbs, which are mainly cognition verbs. Given the dominant role of persuasion in the soft sciences, such as the humanities and social sciences, far more and varied reporting or citation verbs are utilised, mainly verbs involving verbal expression (*proposes*) or cognition (*believes*) (Hyland, 2004:96). In view of the citation practices by disciplines, Hyland (ibid.) emphasises that "textual conventions are not simply stylistic proclivities, but represent distinctions in how knowledge is typically negotiated and confirmed in academic communities" (cf. Street, 1999). The second element involves how writers signal interaction and involvement, which according to Hyland (2004:98) is most obviously achieved when explicit text features are employed. Some of these are: the use of inclusive, second person, and indefinite pronouns and asides to address readers directly as participants in the discourse, and questions, directives, and references to shared knowledge. The latter three are explained as having two main functions, one is to direct the readers' attention to the discourse at key points and to guide them to particular interpretations, and the second is to rhetorically position the audience by anticipating any criticism and negation of claims by predicting and responding to possible objections and alternative interpretations. The two most frequent strategies are pronoun use, with the first person plural *we* being the most common expression, and directives, which "instruct the reader to perform an action or see things in a way determined by the writer" (Hyland, 2004:100). Directives are realised in three ways: by using an imperative; by a modal of obligation addressed to the reader, and by a predicative adjective expressing the writer's

judgement of necessity/importance controlling a complement *to*-clause, as shown by the following examples taken from Hyland (2004:100-101):

Note *that the regular ...* (imperative)

*What **we** now **need to examine** is whether ...* (obligation modal addressed to reader)

*It is **necessary to understand** ...* (a predicative adjective controlling a complement *to*-clause)

To better understand how directives were being used in the hard and soft sciences, Hyland (2004:101-102) distinguished three main types of activity that they direct readers to engage in: textual acts (to refer to other parts of the text or another text), physical acts (to instruct readers to participate in either a research process or real world action, and cognitive acts (to guide readers to certain lines of thought). Directives as physical acts were preponderant in the hard sciences, with more textual type directives in the soft sciences. Hyland (2004:102) attributes the preponderance of directives in the hard sciences to their ability to offer economic expression highly valued by information-saturated scientists, and because they enable writers to engage and lead an audience through an argument to a conclusion without the intrusion of an authorial identity. Self-mention is the third element and refers to the extent to which writers explicitly intrude into their discourse. In all academic writing, it is incumbent on the writer to control the level of personal projection in their texts. One such strategy of self-mention is self-citation, which was common in the hard sciences, which, according to Hyland (2004), is most likely explained by the fact that scientific research is highly specialised which means scientists can more easily create a niche of expertise and can make precise contributions. However, the general paucity of self-mention in the soft sciences may have been fewer opportunities for self-citation.

First person pronouns are also used differently in the hard and soft sciences, with the latter occurring most frequently in humanities and the social sciences. Self-mention was found to serve four main purposes: stating a goal or outlining the structure of a paper; explaining a procedure; stating results or making a claim, and elaborating an argument. The first person pronoun use in the humanities and social sciences collocated with verbs conveying reasoning and possibility for the purposes of confidently elaborating arguments (*I would argue that ...*). In the hard sciences, uses were mainly associated with describing research activities *(... we elected to model the ...*).

Self-mention as a feature of scientific argument is clearly relevant to academic writing pedagogy, as Hyland (2004:108), himself, asserts: "despite the strong feelings it often generates among teachers and textbook writers, self-mention is important because it plays a crucial role in mediating the relationship between writers' arguments and their discourse communities". The rhetorical purpose of self-mention is further attested in Zareva's (2013) study of TESOL graduate students' oral presentations, where the use of first person pronoun served as indicating the presenter as guide (used to remind the audience of previous points or to locate information); as a recounter of the research process (used as mitigator and agent of the research process); as an architect (used metadiscoursally) and as an opinion holder (used to express stance).

Based on the elements of persuasion examined here, Hyland (2004:109) concludes that what lies "***at the heart of persuasion is language***" (researcher's emphasis), and that "the linguistic features that we teach are no more regularities of academic style than they are a representation of reality" and that "by showing learners that literacy is relative to the beliefs and practices of social groups, teachers are able to provide them with a way of understanding the discoursal diversity they encounter at university." In acknowledgement of the role of language (lexico-grammatical intricacy; organisational markers; hedging) in argument, Stapleton and Wu (2015) indicate that an over-emphasis on structure of argument as opposed to reasoning quality in terms of reasons and evidence (claims; counterclaims; rebuttals – including their alignment) remains a matter of concern in student writing. In this regard, they recommend the use of an integrated assessment framework and analytic scoring rubric as a general guide for making the elements of persuasion in argument explicit to students.

With respect to the nature of argument as described by Hyland (2004), Wingate (2012) offers insights into areas of difficulty for students surrounding argument. One of these is the discipline's value system and epistemology, as pointed out earlier with reference to Street (1999). Wingate's (2012) proposed model for teaching argument will be presented later. The contribution of Genre Theory and Analysis to our understanding of texts, and more particularly academic discourse, will be discussed next.

2.6.3.5 Genre Theory and Systemic Functional Linguistics

Genres refer to typified forms of discourse, and "embody a social group's expectations not just for linguistic form, but also for rhetorical strategies, procedural practices and subject-matter or content" (Tardy, 2011:54). Genre Analysis, therefore, aims to describe features of these forms and actions within the context in which they occur. Theories of genre have spanned disciplinary orientations, more particularly in applied linguistics, such as Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and rhetorical studies, or New Rhetoric. Earlier genre work emphasised the rhetorical nature of texts and analysis comprised identifying moves or text parts that carried out distinct rhetorical functions. Rhetorical elements can also be examined at the lexico-grammatical level where patterns in metadiscourse are identified, such as frame markers, attitude markers, hedges and boosters. Because genres are socially situated actions, they are dynamic in the sense that they may change and evolve in relation to their users, uses, and other contextual factors. Genres are also embodiments of intertextual action, which means that "the communicative work that they do is almost never carried out by isolated, single texts. Rather, genres work in coordination to accomplish complex tasks and social goals" (Tardy, 2011:58). The relations between genres are explained by Swales (cited in Flowerdew, 2015:107) as constituting a constellation, that is the systems according to which genres inter-relate. There are four systems.

A genre hierarchy refers to how genres are ranked against each other and with respect to their perceived qualitative differences. A genre chain refers to the chronological ordering of genres. A genre set is the grouping of genres that individuals engage in as part of their occupational or institutional practice, and a genre network is the "totality of genres available for a particular sector as seen from any chosen synchronic moment". The one form of intertextuality that poses concern in the academia, is plagiarism, which Flowerdew (2015:108) argues is not restricted to undergraduate study, but "is still a problem at post-graduate levels". Some, though, would argue that this form of "borrowing" or what Flowerdew (ibid.) terms "language re-use", also referred to as patchwriting, is a legitimate developmental stage in learning to write. This phenomenon relates, in some sense, to the use of formulaic language, a natural language occurrence. Formulaicity or multi-word units as important features of academic discourse will be discussed further on. Manifest intertextuality is prevalent in academic texts, which generally draw

extensively on other texts, by way of several techniques (Bazerman, 2004, cited in Tardy, 2011:59), such as: direct quotation; indirect quotation; mention of a person, document or statements; comment or evaluation on a statement, text or otherwise invoked voice; using recognisable phrasing, terminology associated with specific people or groups of people or particular documents, and using language and forms that seem to echo certain ways of communicating. The last two are also referred to as interdiscursivity or constitutive intertextuality. The practice of intertextuality, as Bhatia (2008, cited in Tardy, 2011:66) indicates, results in the creation of hybrid genres, which occurs when there is appropriation of conventions of one genre into a different genre. Today, genre as multimodal communication is relevant today and behoves attention to this in university teaching. While the creation of text remains central in teaching, the presentation and delivery of text is changing at the speed of light. Genres, as underlined by the proponents of Academic Literacies, are also a reflection and reinforcement of power, because they mirror their users' values and practices which are neither neutral nor free of power dynamics. This, clearly, has implications for student writers and pedagogy, in terms of whether the focus should be on creating genre awareness or critical discourse analysis.

Walker's (2012) proposal for developing genre, audience and register awareness among students will be dealt with next, since the notion of grammatical metaphor (cf. Halliday, 2004) - found to be a prominent feature in modern day scientific/academic prose – is introduced, and links up with the research on modern day features of scientific/academic prose, which shows that compression (comprising grammatical metaphor) is preferred to elaboration.

Walker (2012) argues that in teaching academic genres, a meta-language approach be used for conceptualising academic language development. She bases this on what often appears to be "a lack of a relevant model of language that supports learning outcomes from the level of discourse down to the lexico-grammar" (Walker, 2012:316), which she states as resulting in "a considerable degree of invisibility of language itself". Camhi and Eisenstein Ebsworth (2008:13), similarly, advocate a metalinguistic grammar approach to developing L2 academic process writing. They state that this is in keeping with the spirit of the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach; by increasing access to metacognitive principles students gain independence from the teacher. Walker (2012:317) therefore proposes the use of Systemic

Functional Linguistics (SFL) theoretical tools to conceptualise this development. SFL is the theory of language developed by Michael Halliday based on the idea that language is a system of choices used to express meanings in context. (Refer to Table 2.15 below which provides a summary of her explication. The highlighted terms constitute the main concepts). She is also confident that SFL tools can be used in the planning of all English medium subjects (Walker, 2012:316). She argues that academic language development moves on from "telling" in sequentially unfolding genres to "building abstractions, generalisations and arguments about areas of life" (Christie, 2002, cited in Walker, 2012:306). This development encompasses both expansion in the contextual range (the ability to write a range of texts) and occurs alongside linguistic complexity expansion, which Walker (ibid.) understands to be two forms of intellectual growth. The first is when students' vocabulary and grammar resources become more powerful, and the second is when students move from "congruent" everyday grammar to "incongruent" metaphorical grammar or cognitive academic language (CAL). "The beginnings of grammatical metaphor are when students compact information in noun groups by pre- and post-modification" (Walker, 2012:307) (cf. Biber & Gray, 2010; 2011, in § 2.6.3.6). Another indicator is when modality is not solely conveyed by modal verbs but by modal adjuncts (*perhaps*) or clauses (*I think*), which signal authorial voice metaphorically.

Table 2.15: Summary of meta-language model for academic writing development (Walker, 2012)

CONTEXTUAL FEATURES	These refer to MEANINGS made by any text		GRAMMAR/LANGUAGE (to create/convey MEANINGS)
Field WHAT?	Topic/Content = text's **ideational meaning**	**Ideational meaning** comprises **experiential** & **logical** meanings (= what the text is about & how propositions are interrelated)	**Grammar in experiential meaning includes:** **Nouns** (clause **participants** in clausal event) **Verbs** (clause **processes or events**) **prepositional phrases & adverbial adjuncts** (circumstances of clausal events) **Grammar in logical meaning includes:** **conjunctions** (logically connect clausal propositions)
Tenor WHO?	Relationships with readers = text's **interpersonal meaning**	**Interpersonal meaning** refers to the writer's **awareness of the reader** and the need to	**Grammar developing the reader-writer relationship includes the mood system:** e.g. **Declarative** mood (writer as giver of information)

		create a text that meets the **reader's expectations**	• **Pronouns** • **Modality** • **Evaluative & attitudinal wording** • **Authorial voice**: construed by tense & polarity, or projecting/projected clauses
Mode HOW?	Refers to the "**writtenness**" of the text in terms of paragraphed order of meanings, vocabulary & grammar patterns = text's **textual meaning**	**Textual meaning** refers to **how texts "hang" together**	Created by: • **Theme** development (wordings placed first in clause across a text) • **Cohesive resources**: reference (pronouns; ellipsis) • **Conjunctive resources**

The emphasis, therefore, of SFL is on the socially constructed language system, or language use with a text orientation as opposed to Academic Literacies which focuses on the socially constructed language, or language users, with a practice-orientation which may (and does) pose potential tension between the two perspectives. However, as Coffin and Donohue (2012:73) caution "there is a danger of over-simplifying or over-dichotomising the relationship"; they believe that both approaches have much to offer each other in terms of the field of EAP and the study of academic writing for the purposes of best supporting "the learning of an increasingly diverse body of students that include both L1 and EAL [English Additional Language] speakers, and … foster meaningful critical orientations to EAP". Of note, here, is the advice by Flowerdew (2015:110) that while taking cognizance of English as a world Lingua Franca (in line with the World Englishes paradigm), it would be too radical to disregard standard and phraseological patterns, but it could be pointed out to students that such patterns may not always be insisted upon in international journals.

Johns (2015) shares Walker's (2012) concern that the "transitional" student (moving from school to university) is not prepared for university writing, and bases this on the notions of audience and context being largely side-lined. Johns (2015) adds that understandings of audience may pose problems, where earlier, audience was perceived of as individualistic, an expression of authentic self, whereas currently in theoretical literature, an academic writer's voice is seen to be dialogic, or dialogue between writer, reader and others. Johns (ibid.), therefore, proposes an instructional method with a focus on genre and task to develop genre awareness goals, which incorporates students " [interrogating] the context for writing, particularly those elements that will have the

most effect upon the success of text reception" and "[revising] their conceptions of text production; from invention, to process, to 'publishing' for an audience, and to text reception", which she refers to as taking a "socio-literate" rather than a purely "cognitive or text-focused" approach (Johns, 2015:118). To enable students to do this successfully, she advocates the study of exemplars or prototypes (model texts) as noticing tasks. Importantly, Johns (2015:121) points out that writing development takes time and that "*a text must travel a long distance before it is ready to make the final trip*" (researcher's emphasis).

Next, a modern-day feature of academic (scientific) writing, namely compression, and formulaic language, characteristic of general NS language use, and as a feature of academic writing, will be discussed.

2.6.3.6 Compressed versus clausal elaboration

Halliday (2004) describes the innovations in scientific writing as instances of "<u>grammatical metaphor</u>", which he states is like metaphor in the usual sense, except that here one grammatical class, or one grammatical structure, is substituted by another, for example (taken from Hewings & Hewings, 2005:61):

If women consume alcohol in pregnancy, this can lead to birth defects. (the process is described by the verb *consume*)

The consumption of alcohol in pregnancy can lead to birth defects. (the process is nominalised in *consumption*)

The lexical words are the same but what has changed is the grammar. Halliday (ibid.) explains that in English, and other languages of Europe, the older pattern is the clausal one, and is based on certain principles of wording, which he summarises as follows:

Processes	expressed by verbs
Participants	expressed by nouns
Circumstances	expressed by adverbs and prepositional phrases
Relations between processes	expressed by conjunctions

However, changes in expression were beginning to feature from Isaac Newton onwards, not as arbitrary changes, but as a response to evolving scientific discourse steeped in experimentation, a step by step process, which "had to be presented in a new way to make its status in the argument clear" (Halliday, 2004:88). This "change" gave rise to the predominant status of the noun phrase and its modification, which is described next as the preference for compression as elaboration in scientific writing.

Biber and Gray's (2010; 2011) corpus work has shown that modern-day academic texts are structurally compressed rather than elaborated. Various factors, such as the rise of the experimental research article, the development of many more academic sub-disciplines, easy access to information, and technological advancements, have contributed towards the development of this discourse style. And, importantly, this compressed structure eases the expert reader's processing. However, this style creates problems for novice students in the sense that the discourse is inexplicit in comparison to elaborated text comprised of dependent clauses which are made explicit by logical connecting devices. It is, therefore, important that those features through which compression is realised be taught. The following Table 2.16 provides a list of the grammatical features associated with structural elaboration and compression.

Table 2.16: Grammatical features associated with structural elaboration and compression (Biber & Gray, 2010:5-6)

Structural elaboration as dependent clauses (clausal embedding)	Structural compression as phrasal clauses (phrasal embedding) – used to modify a head noun (= to add information)
Finite complement clauses	Attributive adjective (adjectives as noun pre-modifier) *Gradually expanding cumulative effect* (Biber & Gray, 2011:229)
Non-finite complement clauses	Noun as noun pre-modifier *Baggage inspection procedures* (Biber & Gray, 2011:229)
Finite adverbial clauses	Appositive noun phrase as noun postmodifier
Finite relative clauses	Prepositional phrase as noun postmodifier *A high incidence of heavy alcohol consumption amongst patients* (Biber & Gray, 2011:229)
Non-finite relative clauses	Prepositional phrase as adverbial

Various examples of structural compression (all taken from Biber & Gray, 2010) are provided to illustrate how this is realised:

From the system [nominal pre-modifier] ***perspective***, *these stages are marked **by the appearance of new systemic** [adjectival pre-modifier] **mechanisms and corresponding levels of complexity***.

There is only a single main clause with one main verb (*are marked*). There are no dependent clauses. The use of multiple (four) prepositional phrases (highlighted) makes the sentence long.

A similar example is:

*This may indeed be part of the reason for **the statistical link** between schizophrenia in the **lower socioeconomic classes.***

What is important to note is that in academic prose when sentences are elaborated, they have optional phrasal modifiers, especially nominal pre-modifiers (adjectives or nouns) and nominal postmodifiers (prepositional phrases).

An illustrated comparison of elaborative expressions employing phrasal modification and clausal modifiers is provided below (Gray & Biber, 2010:9):

Phrasal	Clausal
The participant perspective	*the perspective that considers the participant's view*
A systems, theoretical orientation	*an orientation which is theoretical and which focuses on the analysis of systems*
Corporations within the petroleum industries	*corporations which are part of the industries that process petroleum*
Facilities for waste treatment	*facilities that have been developed to treat waste*

- The following are examples of nouns compounded with adjectives:

Aspirin-resistent patients (patients who resist aspirin)

An ATP-dependent conformational change (a change that is conformational and depends on ATP)

- Appositive noun phrases are also compressed structures, for example:

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*Numerous variables were measured, including case status, sex, race, date of enrolment (**date of first visit with the pertinent diagnosis**), age at first visit …*

- Another inexplicit grammatical device for compressing information is the colon, which can either be used as an alternative to the comma to connect two appositive noun phrases or connect appositive noun phrases at a distance, for example:

The articles are written from different perspectives: formalist, feminist, psychological, and Marxist.

One possible pathogenetic mechanism can be excluded with certainty in man: a physiological decrease of intestinal lactase activity with advancing age.

- But clauses connected by a colon can also have an explanatory or causative relationship, where the sentence below could be paraphrased with a reason clause:

If replication of the viral nucleic acid is dependent, there is no need for special enzymes in order to carry it out: the normal cellular enzymes should be sufficient.

What is observable from these examples is that all the features of compression relate to the noun phrase. Phrasal elements such as attributive adjectives, nouns as noun pre-modifiers, appositive noun phrases, and prepositional phrases as noun postmodifiers, are also elaborating like subordination, in the sense that they add optional, extra information (Gray & Biber, 2011:150). What is further noticeable in the analysis of scientific texts (research articles, more specifically) is that the use of linking adverbials, an important grammatical resource for explicitly specifying the logical relationships among clauses is declining (Biber & Gray, 2010:15), alongside the relative absence of finite verb phrases. Clearly, these innovations have pedagogical implications, particularly for reading advanced academic texts, and for the purposes of teaching the grammatical realisations of compression to enable students to use these in their own writing. This does not, however, negate the relevance of more explicit structures like those of clausal elaboration, where finite verbs uses would feature. At the undergraduate level, especially, both types of elaboration have a place in writing.

Bearing in mind the centrality of the noun phrase in compressed elaboration, Flowerdew (2003, cited in Leistyna & Meyer, 2003) points out the prevalence of what he terms "signalling" nouns

(referred to as "shell" nouns by Gray and Cortes, 2011) in academic discourse. These are also referred to as general, generic or abstract nouns. Flowerdew (2003:39) explains the purpose of signalling nouns as "[labelling] propositional acts recoverable from the clause or clauses to which they refer"; they "only have generalised reference until their meaning-specific reference is identified elsewhere in the text, when taken in isolation, they do not appear to be specific to any particular field." Examples are *process; purpose; problem.* Because signalling nouns serve an important cohesive function in texts, which explains their prevalence in academic texts, it would, therefore, be important for students to be aware of the types of signalling nouns used in their learning materials and to be able make connections between these expressions and their referents, and for the purposes of creating cohesive text.

Linguistic compression and the prevalence of signalling nouns in academic discourse, clearly, have implications for vocabulary development in writing pedagogy. If AL students are not explicitly exposed to the syntactic features of compression, especially those involving multiple modification structures, and to the range of signalling nouns used in their fields of study, "their language development may struggle to develop efficient, fluent processing [and use] of these features" (Miller, 2011:36). Besides exposing students to the well-known word lists, namely Coxhead's (2000) Academic Word List (AWL) and West's (1953) General Word List (GWL), Valipouri and Nassaji (2013) encourage language practitioners involved in discipline-specific based language teaching to compile their own word lists for the purposes of addressing students' specialised vocabulary needs. This necessitates a corpus approach using carefully selected texts to ensure relevance.

An additional consideration with reference to teaching noun phrases (for compression) and signalling nouns (as cohesive resources), is helping students to work with the English definite article, and *this* and *these* as determiners, since these features pose great difficulty for AL students, and in South Africa, particularly for the African and Afrikaans students. The prevalence of *this/these* (as determiners) with shell nouns (which relates to the notion of signalling nouns described above) in applied linguistics and materials and civil engineering is attested in the research by Gray and Cortes (2011). These authors understand shell nouns as a sub-category of abstract nouns, which "are used to sum up, or encompass detailed information in an efficient

manner (Gray & Cortes, 2011:35-36). The following excerpt taken from Gray and Cortes (2011:36) illustrates determiner use with a shell noun:

*The next phase of research will consider ways in which teachers might best raise learner consciousness of the importance of theme in English information structure, and how **this awareness** may be activated to help learners produce fully coherent written discourse*.

Regarding definite article use, Yoo's (2009) study reveals that the most prevalent uses are situational or cataphoric in conversation and academic prose, and not anaphoric which is the common assumption. He therefore emphasises the importance of creating awareness of this feature in terms of its three functions (second mention; shared knowledge; situation use) with reference to its cataphoric role.

Next, what research reveals about the formulaic nature of language, and the relevance of these insights for language instruction for writing development, will be considered.

2.6.3.7 Formulaic language

Corpus studies reveal the ubiquity of formulaic patterns in academic genres. These fixed collocational (cf. Paquot and Granger, 2012 below) patterns constitute an important phraseology (idiom) in language use whereby speakers and writers co-select words in routine ways. Most lexical bundles (also referred to as clusters; multi-word units), unlike idiomatic phrases, are "semantically transparent and formally regular, mainly being nominal or prepositional phrases" (Hyland, 2012:157). The linguistic macro-functions comprise three broad types (Halliday, 1994, cited in Hyland, 2012:159), namely:

- Research-oriented (ideational), which help writers to structure their activities and experiences of the real world (*at the same time; in the present study*)
- Text-oriented (textual), concerned with the organisation of the text and its elements as a message (*on the other hand; these results suggest that*)
- Participant-oriented (interpersonal), which focus on the writer or reader of the text (*may be due to; it is possible that*)

In terms of these macro-functions, Hyland's (2012:164) study shows that in the sciences and engineering, bundle use was primarily research-oriented, in contrast with use in social science

texts which contained many participant-oriented bundles where writers "sought to establish their claims through more explicit evaluation and reader engagement".

Biber, et al. (1999, cited in Hyland, 2012:154) indicate that particular formal patterns occur in academic prose, namely:

- Preposition + noun phrase fragments
- Noun phrase + of phrase fragments
- Anticipatory *it* fragments

Paquot and Granger (2012) understand collocation as <u>co-occurrence or restricted collocations</u> referring to lexically constrained combinations that allow for limited substitution within a particular grammatical construction (verb-object; adverb-adjective; adjective-noun), for example, *do* and not *make a task*. These present the most difficulty for learners, even at advanced levels. While, research has shown that learners are quick to take up highly frequent collocations, the less common, strongly associated items take longer to acquire. What is also observable is that more advanced students produce more near hits compared to lower intermediate counterparts. The other group of multi-word units comprises <u>recurrence</u>, defined as the repetition of contiguous strings of words of a given length (Paquot & Granger, 2012: 138) referred to as lexical bundles by these authors. According to them, learners' use of lexical bundles (recurrences) decreases, unlike collocations (co-occurrences) as proficiency increases.

More specific difficulties relate to verb-noun combinations, of both the free and restricted types, and that of phrasal verbs, with four error types indicated below (Paquot & Granger, 2012:133). Learners either use:

- The right verb with the wrong particle (*a task which must be carried on* [out]
- The right particle with the wrong verb (*we tried to come* [go] *back to*)
- Collocational mismatches (*make up a proposal* [make a proposal])
- Over-extension of the literal meaning of phrasal verbs to figurative contexts (*cut down a life*)

The relevance of including multi-word constructions in the teaching of academic writing is further supported by Liu (2012:31) whose multi-corpus study generated a list of the most

common lexical bundles in general academic writing, and revealed new findings in terms of the high frequency of Noun Phrase + linguistic action verb (*suggest*) and lower frequency of bundles incorporating the passive construction (*it has been suggested that*), which indicates the need to include the active form (NP *suggest/s*) in writing pedagogy.

How learners use lexical bundles is also relevant for targeted pedagogic intervention. The study by Staples, Egbert, Biber and McClair (2013) revealed that learners of different proficiency levels employed bundles expressing stance frequently, but that bundles functioning to organise discourse or frame references to entities were less frequent, in comparison to academic discourse which shows a preponderance of referential bundles. What is also significant is the fact that learners tended to use the types of bundles found in conversation rather than academic writing. Examples of learners' bundle uses taken from Staples, et al. (2013:221) are provided:

- *There are a lot* (referential)
- *It is important to* (stance)
- *On the other hand* (discourse-organiser)

Finally, as Meunier (2012: 115) points out, on the basis of formulaic language being a natural phenomenon and its frequency in academic discourse, and the fact that using formulaic language constitutes a major challenge for learners, the quantity and quality of input learners receive is paramount, and will necessitate use of authentic data since it cannot be assumed that teacher-talk would promote this resource, as most teachers of English are non-native users.

Another important skill that merits attention in a discussion of academic writing development is paraphrasing which is dealt with next.

2.6.3.8 Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is described by Hirvela and Du (2013:87) as a necessary, but complicated device for the treatment of source material. Paraphrase is particularly important for knowledge transforming. Without paraphrase skills, students resort to borrowing or patchwriting, generally viewed of as plagiarism (cf. Flowerdew, 2015). As these authors state, paraphrasing gives the teacher insight into how well students read and write. While paraphrasing has a role in both knowledge telling and transforming, the valued role is that of transforming knowledge. However,

for students in general, their familiarity with paraphrase is as knowledge telling, and therefore, academic writing instruction, needs to "return to paraphrasing skills for knowledge transforming purposes, and not assume that students can easily transfer the ability they encountered when introduced to paraphrasing as a knowledge telling device" (Hirvela & Du, 2013:93). Also, since the act of paraphrasing is always in relation to source-based texts, aspects such as citations and multiple voices should be addressed, in other words, an inclusive view of paraphrasing should be adopted where the resource is understood as a tool for developing one's argument, rather than as a mechanism to simply rearrange and replace words. Learners need to be made aware of paraphrasing as a conceptual and rhetorical resource, and not as an antidote to plagiarism (Hirvela & Du, 2013:96) (cf. Flowerdew, 2015; Klos, 2011).

Finally, some proposals for academic writing instruction will be considered in relation to the issues and concerns expressed in this literature review.

2.6.3.9 Academic writing pedagogy

The literature relating to academic writing pedagogy reveals two main strands: a genre-based approach, more particularly discipline-specific, and collaboration between language and discipline-specific specialists.

One of the main criticisms of the Academic Literacies perspective is what is perceived to be the prescriptive nature of the genre approach, and proponents therefore advocate a Critical Language Awareness approach. Wingate (2012), however, states that novice writers are not ready for a critical approach and first need to understand the conventions and practices of disciplines by way of analysing discipline-specific texts. Her reference to discipline-specific texts is based on the fact that in the United Kingdom (UK), students start specialising in the first year of study. She proposes the following model (refer to Figure 2.2 below) for teaching argument. Based on the success of her application of the model, Wingate (2012:153) states that the framework helps to organise writing instruction "in a way that enables students to fully understand the requirements of the genre". She, however, cautions that the complex aspects appearing in the lower boxes, being topic-dependent, require the use of showing by means of using exemplar student and model texts to demonstrate how these aspects are manifested in real texts.

Main aim: Developing an argument		
Selecting and using relevant information from sources	Establishing your own position	Presenting your position in a coherent manner
Identifying which sources are relevant Evaluating which/how evidence/ideas can be used (being critical)	Comparing and contrasting evidence/ideas from sources and finding support for your position	Formal schemata: Structure, signposting, style, register, referencing

Figure 2.2: Essay writing framework for argument (Wingate, 2012:153)

The genre-based approach is generally explicated according to the Systemic Functional Linguistics framework, and gives recognition to the importance of the Vygotskyan principle of scaffolding (modelling; coaching and fading) where Genre Analysis is introduced by means of deconstruction of texts by the instructor, followed by joint construction of writing tasks by the students with the assistance of the instructor, and finally independent construction (Flowerdew, 2015). The principle of scaffolding in terms of the theoretical construct of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) was applied by MacDonald and Pinheiro (2012) in the teaching of grammar, specifically parts of speech (POS), to grade 10 learners, and it was found that the learners, whose exploratory activities with parts of speech, were able to develop insight into the relationships of the linguistic features (POS), and that they can function differently depending on their position in a sentence. Based on the success of their intervention, these authors (2012:100) state that "students will learn to develop the skills necessary to act responsibly, creatively and ultimately be able to reflect on their own practice if they are allowed to opportunity for meaningful interaction".

What the reviewed literature also indicates is the importance of the use of meta-language (generally with reference to the SFL framework) to develop students' understanding of the

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nature and concomitant language features of academic writing (Schleppegrell & O Halloran, 2011:11) (cf. Walker, 2012, in § 2.6.3.5), and meaningful feedback that (1) states the problem (2) explains why it is a problem and (3) suggests how to fix it (Mahoob, Dreyfus, Humphrey & Martin, 2010:31). Rubrics giving clear task specifications and requirements are also viewed as crucial in developing academic writing skills. The role of assigning realistic time for language development is also acknowledged: "language development requires continuous support over time to have an impact" (Mahoob, et al., 2010:41) (cf. Johns, 2015). Also important is the alignment between "the writing strategies targeted, the supports provided, and the tasks assigned" (Alston, 2012:136) (cf. McCabe, 2008) and engaging students in learning content and language simultaneously (Schleppegrell & O Halloran, 2011:13). In this regard, Schleppegrell and O Halloran (ibid.) emphasise the role of subject-specialists in supporting learners' academic language development.

Another useful approach proposed by Humphrey and Economou (2015) for developing awareness of the dependent relationship between the different patterns or functions of discourse, is the Onion model as a layered model of academic writing development. The dependency between the four discourse patterns is represented by the Onion's layers, as depicted in Figure 2.3 below.
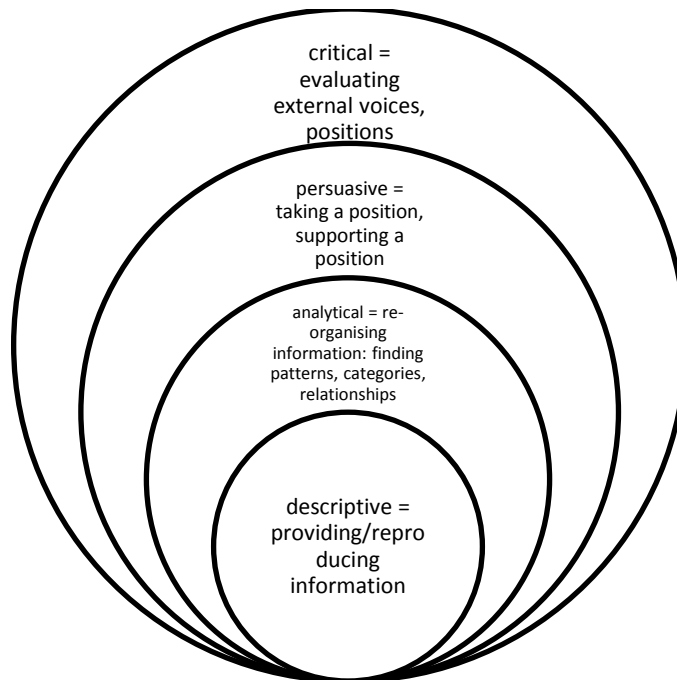
Figure 2.3: The Onion: a textual model for critical analysis (Humphrey & Donohue, 2015:41)

At the descriptive level, texts are concerned with knowledge telling which is part of the field's knowledge structure and is not contested. At the analytical level, information is not presented as the way things are in the field, but as the way the writers choose to present information in the field in order to address the concerns of their texts. An important feature of analysis is abstraction, sometimes requiring the use of nominalisations. Persuasion, the next level, is often served by both description and analysis. At the persuasive level, the writer develops and argues for an explicit evaluation of claims. Here, attitude and graduation markers play an important role, including engagement strategies which convey the writer's dialogic positioning (Humphrey & Economou, 2015:44-46). The most highly valued successful academic writing displays ability to critique (embedded in persuasion), to challenge existing theories or claims, and to position the reader to accept the counter-position. The interrelation is thus: "persuasion is embedded within critique, while the writer's claim is supported by embedded analytical and descriptive grounds phases" (Humphrey & Economuo, 2015:47).

As was mentioned earlier, a collaborative approach to developing students' academic writing appears to be the trend in higher education worldwide in spite of what Butler (2013:83) believes

to be without empirical evidence for its impact. While impact considerations are important, it is generally agreed that institutional policies should be translated into opportunities for the collaboration between content and EAP/ESP lecturers to develop coherent Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) programmes at university that address the language needs of both students and lecturers (Arnó-Macià & Mancho-Barés, 2015:72). Jacobs (2010:237) makes a strong case for collaboration which she contends will enable the integration of "'situated practice' 'overt instruction' and 'critical framing' that will ultimately lead to 'transformed practice'". This means that disciplinary specialists will be allowed to "bring their tacit knowledge of the rules underpinning the literacy practices of their disciplines to an explicit level and then to collaboratively [with language specialists] translate this into 'overt instruction' which allows students access to the discourses of the disciplines" (Jacobs, 2010:237).

However, within the South African university context, Carstens (2013:123) points out that there are still few prospects for systemic support for such collaboration and that transformation would rest on the language practitioner's initiative. Carstens (2009) also undertook a study to determine the impact of cross-disciplinary versus subject-disciplinary interventions and found that while both interventions were effective, the subject-disciplinary group performed significantly better than the cross-disciplinary group, and performance was more consistent for different dimensions of the scoring instrument. Participants in the discipline-specific group were also more positive about transferability of skills. The benefits of discipline-specific approaches to academic writing development are further attested by Achugar and Carpenter (2014) whose approach included deconstruction of history texts with students to identify the strategies and features associated with developing historical argument. Students' writing was pre- and post-tested to determine impact. A key finding was an increase in clause subordination and embedding or intra-clausal compression of information, with information organised in terms of ideas and reasons rather than actors. There was also a higher use of expansion in the sense that students were going beyond what the author had said (knowledge telling), to expanding information through their own interpretation of others' ideas (expansion). Students were also able to project an authoritative voice by using evaluation strategies. Based, therefore, on the successful impact of their intervention, Achugar and Carpenter (2014:70) state that "integrating an explicit discussion about language and meaning in textual choices allows for a discussion of language that centers on content and puts language analysis at the service of it." What is particularly noteworthy is the

comment by Kuteeva (2013:95) who asserts that in the humanities especially, disciplinary-specific approaches are crucial since humanities disciplines are far more varied than those in the hard sciences, and therefore present more challenges to students outside of the English-speaking world.

Another important matter in academic writing pedagogy that deserves attention concerns whether grammar (form) should be taught, and generally, recent research shows that there is a need for "the provision of extensive exposure to, as well as focus on, the target forms to promote their acquisition" (Nassaji & Fotos, 2004:137). The value of a highly targeted intervention in terms of grammar is reported by Nudelman and English (2016) who based their intervention on a needs analysis of engineering students at the University of Cape Town. However, only students' responses in terms of their perceptions of value were elicited. Generally, the student participants were of the opinion that the intervention was beneficial. However, since the data was perceptual in nature, this does not provide empirical evidence in terms of actual uptake. Harran (2012) states that a balanced approach to form, in relation to meaning is appropriate, a view shared by Donohue and Erling (2012:216) who argue that "If language is to be addressed at all, it needs to be done by looking through language (to meanings) and looking at language (forms) at the same time", and in this regard, what their study suggests is that students are more willing to pay attention if subject lecturers draw their attention to language. Celce-Mercia (cited in Meunier, 2002:124) argues that there is a "current need in … ESL/EAP/ESP … to re-analyse virtually all of English grammar at the discourse level" since structure and use are not independent aspects of the English language and therefore learning both are necessary to understand how English grammar functions in the communicative activities of the academia, more particularly academic texts.

Finally, effective academic writing pedagogy rests on relevant materials design, and in this regard, McCabe's (2008) empirical study on evaluation criteria of materials design for EAP instruction at a South African university has shown that nine criteria are particularly important. These are listed below. The commentary in parentheses is that of the researcher.

- Materials should provide a basic framework for students and lecturers across all instructional activities (to ensure consistency among staff, and to provide students with a reference in terms of course work and objectives);

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- The desired learning outcomes for each unit should be clearly indicated (which is in line with DoE requirements at all levels of education in SA);

- Activities should provide opportunities to make and negotiate meaning (in other words, students use language for communicative goals);

- Writing activities should allow process writing practice (this fosters an understanding of text creation among students);

- Activities should develop cognitive skills and critical thinking (this provides stimulation, leads to students' understanding the relationship between language and meaning, and that knowledge is constructed and can be transformed);

- Writing tasks should include creating awareness of cohesive devices (for the sake of creating coherent text);

- Feedback should be meaningful and lead to reflection (this is in line with feedback being a powerful tool in language/writing pedagogy and should be used to enhance students' learning);

- Opportunities for practising grammar is necessary (this relates to the inescapable role of form in language development, more particularly academic writing; practice of form should be contextualised and directed at performing communicative functions);

- Dictionary work including collocation tasks for vocabulary and idiom development is necessary (at lower proficiency levels dictionaries are a necessary resource but should be used alongside text study for language to be experienced as discourse).

2.7 CONCLUSION

The literature review has attempted to shed light on those aspects and issues that are relevant to academic writing, particularly for the purposes of academic writing instruction to mainly AL learners. In some cases, the review has been wide-angled to capture the broader picture, and in other instances, a narrower perspective has been provided, especially with respect to the linguistic features (verb phrases and connecting expressions) examined in the current study. Hopefully, what the review has shown is the complexity of academic writing as an epistemological enterprise, and how this does, and would pose difficulty not only for AL student writers but also novice writers. The task of writing instruction is also daunting – making demands on the teacher's own linguistic expertise, and in terms of the need to provide

meaningful intervention in spite of many systemic constraints. However, the reminder by Davidson and Tomic (in Jones, Turner & Street, 1999) is encouraging:

> Despite a sometimes stubborn lack of support in real terms from within the university and the culture at large for writing as an intellectually creative task, at times composition returns to the role earlier rhetoricians would have recognised: not only promoting competency but investigating, questioning and even shaping the discourse of the university.

With the above in mind, EAP teachers should remain mindful of modifying instruction to assist World Englishes students in developing the academic English required by their field of study while also maintaining pride in their own variety of English and in the culture and identity that variety represents (Ates, Eslami & Landua Wright, 2015:498-499).

In the following Chapter 3, the methodology of the current study will be described.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY: PART ONE

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to describe the research procedures that were followed in order to achieve the research aims and answer the research questions. A second aim is to describe the analytical frameworks that were used in the present study, and to illustrate the frameworks with examples from the sample texts.

The contents of chapter 3 are presented in two parts for the sake of facilitating reader processing. Part One describes the analytical frameworks for appropriate and inappropriate connector use and Part Two describes the analytical frameworks for appropriate and inappropriate verb phrase use.

3.1 AIMS OF THE STUDY

As mentioned in chapter 1, the overall aims of this study were:

1. To compare connector use between the two achievement groups.
2. To compare verb phrase use between the two achievement groups.

The aims regarding connector and verb phrase use were addressed in the course of investigating the following research questions:

1. Is there a difference in the frequency of appropriate connector use by the Lows, relative to the frequency of appropriate connector use by the Highs?
2. Is there a difference in the frequency of inappropriate connector use by the Lows, relative to the frequency of inappropriate connector use by the Highs?
3. Is there a difference in the frequency of appropriate verb phrase use by the Lows, relative to the frequency of appropriate verb phrase use by the Highs?
4. Is there a difference in the frequency of inappropriate verb phrase use by the Lows, relative to the frequency of inappropriate verb phrase use by the Highs?

3.2 DESCRIPTION OF STUDY DESIGN

The study design was essentially quantitative in that counts were done of appropriate and inappropriate uses of connectors and verb phrases. Log Likelihood calculations (which compare the frequencies of a particular feature in relation to the total number of words in each corpus across the two cohorts) were done to determine whether differences in the use of connectors (connecting expressions) and verb phrases between the two achievement student groups were significant, or not. The Log Likelihood calculations also generated relative frequencies for each use; this helped to compare the use between achievement groups.

3.2.1 Sampling method for essays

The essays that scored a pass mark (50% and above) comprised a convenient sample in that out of the original 669 essays that constituted the UL sample, only 124 passed, referred to as the HIGHS or Hs. The remaining essays scored less than 49%, and therefore failed, referred to as the LOWS or Ls. In order to obtain a similar sized sample to the HIGHS, a systematic sampling procedure was undertaken. However, in order not to lose small sub-samples comprising 10 or fewer essays in the different degree programmes, these groups were retained as far as possible depending on whether the essays met selection requirements (cf. exclusion criteria below). When groups were bigger than 10, every 3rd essay was selected, till the sample size approximated that of the HIGHS. A total of 126 essays constituted the LOWS. The UL student sample therefore comprised 250 essays in total.

3.2.1.1 Exclusion criteria for essays

Essays with a change of topic, and those that disregarded length specifications (majorly long or very short), were excluded.

3.3.1 Essay task

The essay task was an unprepared, timed (one-hour) writing activity to establish entry-level students' writing achievement levels intended to provide language support staff with insight into students' abilities and difficulties at entry, and for providing feedback to both EAP and faculty staff with suggestions for writing course instruction.

In order to circumvent the possibility of "borrowing" (§ 2.6.3.2; § 2.6.3.8), it was decided that the essay would not be source-based, since patchwriting would not provide an accurate indication of students' writing ability. The nature of the essay task, therefore, was similar to American freshman college essay composition. In the UL essay task, students were expected to express a personal opinion, based on suitable and adequate substantiation. To some extent, therefore, the essay comprised elements of argument or persuasion (§ 2.6.3.4). The essay topic is provided below, and as can be seen, the topic continues to have relevance today, in the light of the "*fees must fall*" debate in South Africa.

Essay task and topic

There are many different opinions on the topic below. You may agree OR disagree. Write an essay in which you argue (defend) your position. Your essay should have an introduction, discussion section and a conclusion. Write 500 words and indicate the word count at the end of the essay.

University education should be free for students who are admitted.

Rating scale

The rating scale was holistic in nature, for which marks were awarded for content and organisation – overall text structure and paragraphing (25 marks) and language control – register; vocabulary, syntax and mechanics (25 marks). The total out of 50 was then converted to a percentage. The EAP staff at Medunsa campus jointly designed the rating scale. Holistic rating is the preferred method of assessing essay writing in the first-year EAP course at the Medunsa campus.

As indicated in chapter 1, the marking procedure used at Medunsa campus was followed. The essays were divided equally among the EAP staff at Medunsa campus. The Head of Department moderated the marking to ensure consistency. Due to this marking practice, an interrater reliability test could not be administered. Nevertheless, the moderation (common practice at Medunsa campus) should have ensured a reasonable degree of consistency in marking, further ensuring a reliable sample of both HIGHS and LOWS.

Coding of essays/texts

For the sake of anonymity, all the student essays were coded to indicate respective study programmes and achievement levels. The study programmes are indicated in Table 3.1 below. It

should be noted that the coding was for identification purposes only. No assumptions were being made regarding connector or verb phrase use by students in different degree programmes.

Table 3.1: Essay/text codes

UL CAMPUS	TEXT CODE	STUDY PROGRAMME
Medunsa (Health Sciences)	BCURA	Nursing
	BCURB	Nursing
	BDS	Dental Surgery
	BDT	Dental Therapy
	DIET	Human Nutrition
	MA	MBChB (Medicine)
	MB	MBChB
	MC	MBChB
	MD	MBChB
	OH	Oral Hygiene
	PHARM	Pharmacy
	PHYSIO	Physiotherapy
	OT	Occupational Therapy
	SPEECH	Speech Language Pathology & Audiology
Turfloop (Humanities)	BA	Bachelor of Arts
	CEMS	BA in Contemporary English & Multilingual Studies
	COMM	Communication
	MS	Media Studies
	INF	Information Science

3.3.2 Analytical framework

The analysis of the students' use of connecting expressions and verb phrases was undertaken to answer the four research questions of the study.

For the analysis of connecting expressions (CEs) and verb phrases (VPs), context (topic and genre – with the overall rhetorical purpose being persuasion) and co-text were both necessary for interpretation and decision-making, and while separating language items is always problematic and artificial in the sense that one can never disregard the overall communicative purpose of the text, nor the dynamics/interrelatedness of language (form) and how this influences meaning (function), keeping the lens on language items was necessary for analysis.

However, the analysis did not entail the more narrow view of error analysis. Rather levels of acceptability were considered (cf. Scheepers in § 2.6.1.1). This approach is more in line with the broader social context of South Africa where English is an additional language for the majority

of university students, and the fact that the students are at different stages of language development. For many, essay writing is challenging. The aim of the text study, therefore, was not to disregard writing abilities, but to identify problematic language and text areas to address writing instruction gaps in order to better assist student writers to produce acceptable written texts during their university studies.

The frameworks used for analyses will be presented in the order set out below.

- Connecting expressions appropriate uses
- Connecting expressions inappropriate uses
- Verb phrases appropriate uses
- Verb phrases inappropriate uses

First, each framework (based on Biber, et. al, 1999) is tabulated for convenient reference, after which examples will be provided. The examples of CE and VP use were mainly taken from the student writing; otherwise examples were selected from Biber et al.'s (1999) academic corpus (abbreviated as ACAD), for the purposes of demonstrating optimal use when these were either sparse, or less effective in the student writing. It should also be noted that the text extracts from student texts are generally verbatim, with few attempts to correct or revise additional problematic uses, but rather to keep the focus on the features under investigation.

3.3.2.1 Framework for appropriate uses of connecting expressions

Appropriate uses were analysed according to four main categories, namely: co-ordinators, relativisers, circumstance adverbials and linking adverbials.

Table 3.2 below indicates the analytical framework for co-ordinating expressions.

3.3.2.1 (a) Co-ordinators

Table 3.2: Framework for use of co-ordinators (Biber, et al., 1999)

Connector categories & expressions	Sub-categories/functions/analysis
CO-ORDINATORS /CO-ORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS	Build phrase and clause structures that are co-ordinate (equal). For the current study, mainly clausal co-ordination was analysed. Phrasal co-ordination was considered when two new ideas were being linked.
ADDITION	
And	Typically used as a phrase-level connector Only counted when two new (as opposed to the extension of the same idea) ideas were being linked

CONTRAST	
But	Chiefly connects clauses
ALTERNATIVE	
Or	Used on its own
Nor	Used on its own
CORRELATIVE CO-ORDINATORS	
ALTERNATIVE	
Either /or	
Neither /nor	
CONTRAST	
On the other hand	
Not only / but also	

Example of co-ordinator use:

[1]   *Yes campus life is expensive **but** [**but could also be viewed as signalling concession in this context**] why not make a future worthy investment by giving the poor people who have the potential to achieve well the opportunity to study and develop this nation?* (PHARM29H)

3.3.2.1 (b) Relativisers

Relativisers constituted the second main category of connecting expressions indicated in Table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3: Relativisers

Connector categories & expressions	Sub-categories/functions/analysis
RELATIVISERS	Identify reference of Head Noun (HN)/add some description
Who/m	
Whose	
Which	
That	
Where/ when	Sometimes both forms can be used interchangeably to indicate times, periods, cases (Biber, et al., 1999:628)
Wherein	
Whereby	
Whether	
Why	
Zero use	Although common in NEWS & ACAD registers (Biber et al., 1999:621), zero use was not counted in this study
	Omitting the relativiser is seen as contributing towards a more colloquial tone to informative prose /expository text

Examples of relativisers:

[2]   *Many learners **who** are currently in high school level only dream of going to university, especially those **who** come from a disadvantaged background. …* (BCURB20H)

[3]   *The students can begin to lose focus on their studies because they know that it is not their money **that** is being used.* (MA30H)

3.3.2.1 (c) Circumstance adverbials

A third main category of connecting expressions comprised circumstance adverbials (CA), which are subdivided into six sub-categories, namely:

3.3.2.1(c) (i)	Time
3.3.2.1(c) (ii)	Contingency reason
3.3.2.1 (c) (iii)	Contingency conditional
3.3.2.1 (c) (iv)	Contingency purpose
3.3.2.1 (c) (v)	Contingency result
3.3.2.1 (c) (vi)	Contingency concessive

3.3.2.1 (c) (i) Circumstance adverbials time

The first sub-category comprises <u>CA time</u> expressions as shown in Table 3.4 below.

Table 3.4: Circumstance adverbials (CA) time expressions

Connector categories & expressions	Sub-categories /functions/analysis
CIRCUMSTANCE ADVERBIALS (CA)	
TIME	Convey a temporal relationship between 2 events /states
While	
As	
Since	
As long as	
During	
Throughout	
After	
Thereafter	
Afterwards	
When	
Where	

Examples of circumstance <u>time</u> adverbials:

[4]   *For **as long as** the university education is not free to admitted students, the crime rate will rise till it touches the sky.* (MS65H)

[5]   *And this could make improvement at secondary level because the learners will be certain that **after** matriculation, they are off to higher institution without worrying about University fees.* (MS49H)

3.3.2.1 (c) (ii) Circumstance adverbials contingency reason

The second sub-category of CAs is comprised of <u>contingency reason</u> adverbials as indicated in Table 3.5 below.

Table3.5: Cicurmstance adverbial contingency reason expressions

Connector categories & expressions	Sub-categories/functions/analysis
CA CONTINGENCY: REASON	
Because	Can signal Reason or Cause
Since	
As	
In this way	
Due to	
For	Can signal Reason or Purpose

Examples of <u>contingency reason</u> CAs:

[6]   *University education is the most needed thing in one's life **since** well most of the job opportunities available are the ones that needs the qualifications.* (OH2L)

[7]   *A country in never free while poor citizens are expected to pay expensive fees that will take their whole life to pay, and never pass **due to** stress because one can not focus if one does not know what he/she will eat in the morning and afternoon.* (COMM35H)

3.3.2.1 (c) (iii) Circumstance adverbials contingency conditional

The third sub-category of CAs comprises <u>contingency conditional</u> expressions as outlined in Table 3.6 below.

Table 3.6: Circumstance adverbials (CA) contingency conditional expressions

Connector categories & expressions	Sub-categories/functions/analysis
CA CONTINGENCY: CONDITIONAL	
With /without /within	Conditional AND/OR Reason
Provided /given that (VVN /+*that*)	
By making (*By* + -*ing*/VVG)	
Unless	
In/as far as	

If/then	Both *if* on its own & *if then* counts were done *If* + *then* combination signals Conditional & Reason /Inference relationship
Whether (or not)	
When	
Once	
Hypothetical inversion structure (subjunctive verb form in initial position)	

Examples of <u>contingency conditional</u> CAs:

[8]   *I must agree that it would be a very good thing for qualifying students who meets full university requirements to have their education paid for, **provided** they give a guarantee that they will complete and get good marks/results.* (MS10H)

[9]   ***If** that keep on happening and the number of people with matric certificates who were not able to go to university keep on increasing, **then** this country will face a crisis of lacking skilled labour force.* (INF20H)

[10]   ***When** people are educated, they are knowledgabable, meaning they can stand up for themselves. They are not ignorant, but they are open minded to new ideas.* (COMM57H)

3.3.2.1 (c) (iv) Circumstance adverbials contingency purpose

The fourth sub-category of CAs comprises <u>contingency purpose</u> expressions as shown in Table 3.7 below.

Table 3.7: Circumstance adverbial contingency purpose expressions

Connector categories & expressions	Sub-categories/functions/analysis
CA CONTINGENCY: PURPOSE	
So that	
So as to	
In order to/for/that	

Example of <u>contingency purpose</u> CAs:

[11]   *A university is meant for everyone, meaning it is open to the public and because it takes care of the nation, the government has introduced subsidies. In a subsidy, money is given to the university **so as to** help and promote education.* (MC5H)

3.3.2.1 (c) (v) Circumstance adverbials contingency result

The fifth sub-category of CAs comprises <u>contingency result</u> expressions which are displayed in Table 3.8 below.

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Table 3.8: Circumstance adverbial contingency result expressions

Connector categories & expressions	Sub-categories/functions/analysis
CA CONTINGENCY: RESULT	
As a result	
Due to	

Example of <u>contingency result</u> CAs:

[12]   *Learners in high school are encouraged to apply for admition to study in tertiary level but get frustrated after passing matric thinking about how they are going to pay for their studies. **As a result,** those who do not have good financial background end up not being able to register for their studies.* (MS32H)

3.3.2.1 (c) (vi) Circumstance adverbials contingency concessive

The sixth sub-category of CAs comprises <u>contingency concessive</u> expressions as seen in Table 3.9 below. These are distinguished from Linking concessive adverbials whose function is to connect units at the discourse rather than at the intrasentential level.

Table3.9: Circumstance adverbial contingency concessive expressions

Connector categories & expressions	Sub-categories/functions/analysis
CA CONTINGENCY: CONCESSIVE	Expresses an idea/information that runs counter to either the rest of the meaning unit or clause, or main clause
Though	
Although	
Even though	
Yet	
Regardless/of	
Irrespective of	
No matter	
Whilst	
As ... as	
Along with	

Examples of <u>contingency concessive</u> CAs:

[13]   ***Although** many people will disagree with the idea of free education it is still the best option for everybody, but mostly students and their parents.* (BDS25H)

[14]   *Free education would mean that admitted students do not pay any tuition and possibly would not pay for residence. **As pleasurable as** it may sound, the other issues involved are not so good.* (MB48H)

3.3.2.1 (d)Linking adverbials

The fourth main category of connecting expressions is made up of Linking adverbials, with the following five sub-categories:

>   3.3.2.1 (d) (i)   Apposition
>
>   3.3.2.1 (d) (ii) Result/inference
>
>   3.3.2.1 (d) (iii) Concessive
>
>   3.3.2.1 (d) (iv) Contrast
>
>   3.3.2.1 (d) (v) Addition

3.3.2.1 (d) (i) Apposition

Table 3.10 below reflects the first sub-category of LAs, namely apposition LAs.

Table 3.10: LA Apposition linking expressions

Connector categories & expressions	Sub-categories/functions/analysis
LINKING ADVERBIALS (LA)	
APPOSITION(AL) RELATIONSHIP	Restatement of 1st /previous meaning unit /reformulation to make explicit Commonly prepositional phrases or syntactic forms (ACAD, Biber, et al., 1999)
Such as	
Like	
For instance	
For/an example	
In other words	
That is	
Namely	

Example of appositional LAs:

[15]   *The world economy is also a huge factor preventing access to free education globally, because it is too low. It is also not easy or advaisable to invest on someone not to pay back at a later stage.* **In other words,** *students must rather be given a loan which they will pay when they start working to help others to reach their dreams.* (MC38H)

3.3.2.1 (d) (ii) Result/inference

The following Table 3.11 displays the second sub-category, namely result/inference LAs.

Table 3.11: LA Result/Inference expressions

Connector categories & expressions	Sub-categories /functions/analysis
LA RESULT/INFERENCE	
Then (on its own)	Signals consequence
So	Commonly used in conversational discourse Has 2 uses (*therefore/as a result* to signal Result/Inference OR *in order that* to signal Purpose)
As such (NOT to be confused with *such as*)	
In turn	
Therefore	
Thus	
As a result	
Hence	

Examples of <u>result/inference</u> LAs:

Strictly speaking, *so* would not be regarded as conventional use in formal, and more particularly, academic writing. However, in certain cases the use of *so* was viewed as acceptable, for example:

[16]   *South Africa does not have enough money to help the poor **so** [ACC - therefore] where will it get money for free education to all admitted students?* (BDT12H)

[17]   *Furthermore, higher learning tuition fees are increased annually while the rate of unemployment increases. **Thus** most parents can only afford the registration fee …* (MD7H)

3.3.2.1 (d) (iii) Concessive

<u>Concessive</u> expressions constituting the third sub-category of LAs, is reflected in Table 3.12 below.

Table 3.12: LA Concessive expressions

Connector categories & expressions	Sub-categories/functions/analysis
LA CONCESSIVE	**Shows incompatibility between information in different discourse units**
However	
Nevertheless	
Yet	
Besides	
In spite of	
Despite	
On the other hand/side (BSAE)	
Otherwise	

Examples of <u>concessive</u> LAs:

[18]   *Education is the key to success and a backbone to our future. **However** it is always followed by fees to get it.* (OH5L)

[19]   *... not all of us can afford this kind of life. **On the other hand,** every University qualified learner's deserve's to be in varsity and persue his/her dream ...* (MC35H)

3.3.2.1 (d) (iv) Contrast

The fourth sub-category of LAs comprises <u>contrast</u> expressions as shown in Table 3.13 below.

Table 3.13: LA Contrast expressions

Connector categories & expressions	Sub-categories/functions/analysis
LA CONTRAST	
Instead/of	
Rather/than	
Than	
Contrary to	
By contrast	
Compared to	
Unlike	
Whereas	
While/st	

Examples of <u>contrast</u> LAs:

[20]   *In conclusion, it is not wise to let students study in the university for free. **Instead,** more sponsoring organisations could be introduced to assist a huge number of individuals through out their tertiary educational years.* (MC36H)

[21]   *University education doesn't have to be free to those students who have been admitted, for if it ought to be so, pass rate will decrease enormously since the students will be relaxing, knowing that they got nothing to lose – they won't be as hardworking, **rather** they will be relaxed.* (SPEECH1H)

3.3.2.1 (d) (v) Addition

The fifth sub-category of LA expressions is <u>addition</u> as shown in Table 3.14 below.

Table 3.14: LA Addition expressions

Connector categories & expressions	Sub-categories/functions/analysis
LA ADDITION	Primary use is to link units of discourse
Also	To signal that a current proposition is being added to a previous one Is more common in expository registers (Biber, et al., 1999:795)
In addition/to	

Another	
Moreover	
Further/more	
Similarly	
Likewise	
Besides	
As well as	
Too	
On top of…	

Examples of <u>addition</u> LAs:

[22] *There are so many things that need to be improved world wide. Looking at country, South Africa, employments should be provided; medication in hospitals should always be available; more schools in hospitals need to be built.* ***Moreover,*** *good facilities need to be decentralised to villages so as to avoid rural depopulation and other aspect lead by lack of facilities.* (DIET3H)

[23] *… most parents can only afford the registration fee and there after students are left stranded and faced with a lot of stress (financially) hence a negative impact on their overall performance in their academic studies.* ***Likewise*** *it is very difficult for people from poor backgrounds, not having alternative financial aid to cope …* (MC9H)

The categorisation of inappropriate CE uses is presented next.

3.3.2.2 Framework for inappropriate use of connecting expressions

Rather than use the traditional classification system for error analysis (§ 2.5) for the analysis of inappropriate uses of connecting expressions, I found it easier to formulate my own categories in relation to the common idiosyncrasies that appeared in the student writing. Each of these is described in Table 3.15 below, followed by examples in each category.

3.3.2.2 (a)   Dispreferred

3.3.2.2 (b)   Omission

3.3.2.2 (c)   Wrong

3.3.2.2 (d)   Redundant

3.3.2.2 (f)   No break

3.3.2.2 (g)   New sentence

3.3.2.2 (h)   Punctuation

3.3.2.2 (i)   Incoherent

As indicated earlier, the notion of levels of acceptability (referred to in § 2.6.1, cf. Scheepers, 2014) was applied in the decision-making regarding inappropriate use rather than the more prescriptivist error approach. While there are often additional problems in text samples, the intention of the extracts is to keep the lens on the linguistic item/s under discussion (highlighted). This is also important for processing purposes since it would be impossible to digest and address the numerous areas/aspects/features requiring attention under time constraints. It is also important to take cognizance of the fact that repair work or improvements may not simply involve a single word substitution or replacement; more realistically, reformulation of a whole meaning unit is usually required, which may further necessitate considering co-text and concomitant language choices. Clearly, these dynamics are relevant in writing instruction, which is a lengthy process of serving an apprenticeship in writing.

Table 3.15 below provides a synoptic description of the analytical framework for inappropriate CE use.

Table 3.15: Framework for inappropriate uses of connecting expressions

Categories of Inappropriate CE use	Description
Dispreferred (DP)	While use is not grammatically/technically incorrect, there are better options / or form is overused in text creating a sense of awkwardness (more than 5 uses of a particular form)
Omission (OM)	A necessary CE is missing /the connection should be indicated explicitly
Wrong (W)	The form is incorrect – does not sufficiently signal the intended relationship between meaning units/spelling is incorrect OR use is simply out of place/misfit
Redundant (RED)	It is not necessary to signal the connection explicitly or another appropriate CE has already been used making this use unnecessary
No break (NB)	Break has been inserted when there should not be a break/break is illogical/disrupts unity
New sentence (NS)	A new sentence is required/would be better in this case
Punctuation (P)	The punctuation use/marker used with the CE is either missing or incorrect
Incoherent (INC)	The textual/ meaning unit is beyond comprehension and cannot be easily inferred, analysed or repaired. This requires reformulation

Admittedly, the number of examples for inappropriate CE use by students exceeds what would normally be considered appropriate given space constraints, but based on the fact that what constitutes inappropriate use may be contested, and the fact that the analysis revealed that the UL students appeared to have great difficulty with respect to CE use, it was decided to rather present problematic CE (and VP) uses at some length, alongside some explanation, for the purposes of transparency and clarity.

Examples of inappropriate CE uses

3.3.2.2(a)   Dispreferred (DP)

More suitable options (but not necessarily the only available options) are indicated in square brackets following the DP use.

[24]   *Education makes a country to grow so the availability of University education is going to make students work very* **hard and** **[hard; the…]** *the more educated people we have the countries economy grows and the country as a whole functions in a better way.* (PHARM26H)

[25]   *There can be many qualified people and maybe there can be more ideas that can arive to solve the economy problems we have* **and** **[which might alleviate the]** *poverty crisis might decrease too.* (DIET24H)

[26]   *The university still accepts people first with their marks, but will they work hard* **when** **[if]** *they know it is not their parents' money they are using.* (BDS4H)

In the extract below, *so* is dispreferred.

[27]   *It should be free because the apartheid had a large strain towards people particularly black and coloured people.* **[NB – the proposition should continue with No Break]** *Which* **[who]** *are the races that have a high rate of unempl-oyment and illiteracy.* *So* **[As a result]** *most people do not earn much while some are unemployed which makes it difficult to apply for educational loans.* (DIET32H)

Students appear to avoid the use of the relativiser *which* in cases such as the one below, and instead opt for the CE *and* or the expression *and this*.

[28]   *Many people in our country are not educated and they did not have money to go to universities* **and this** **[which]** *will continue going on and on as many of our parent can not affort to take us to universities.* (DIET 43H)

In the excerpt below, the use of [*bursaries*] is wrong since the notion of person [*bursors*] is intended, and therefore the preferred relativiser in ACAD would be *who* rather than *that*.

[29]   *There are many bursuries [bursors] out there* **that** **[who]** *are willing to help as much as they can.* (BDT2H)

Improving the connection in the excerpt below is quite challenging, since students are either unfamiliar with using *what* as a connector, or their use is awkward. Instead of *what*, the NP [*hard*

work] could be referred to by means of a collocation [*criterion*]. Here, students' reference to existing Academic Word Lists would prove fruitful in developing general academic vocabulary, and exploring how academic words collocate.

[30]   *Not that I would not appreciate free education. It is just that I think there would be too much complications if they are made free. I believe that hard work should be **the one that** [**what/the criterion that**] earns a student free education.* (BDT12H)

In the following extract, *again* is used to link two similar ideas between two paragraphs. Given its conversational currency, better options are advised.

[31]   *NSFAS is doing a brilliant job by providing the study loans to those students who don't have enough money to pay for their tuition fees ...*

         ***Again* [Similarly/In addition]** *thanking the government with its various department, now students have all the opportunities. These various departments provide bursaries for those hardworking students ... .* (SPEECH1H)

3.3.2.2 (b)   Omission (OM)

Where a CE is omitted, this is indicated by the use of square brackets containing either a CE or punctuation marker, or an alternative means of connecting the meaning units.

[32]   *Graduates are needed everywhere* **[since OR semi-colon]** *there's still a scarcity or shortage of qualified people to work and change the current situation ...* (PHARM29H)

[33]   *People are different in their own ways and in their ability to be what they want to be. This implies that if somebody can not afford University education one is* **[nevertheless]** *capable of being the best in his/her field eg being a doctor.* (MC7H)

[34]   *We all rely on economic growth for survival* **[semi-colon + however + comma]** *only free education can strengthen our economy.* (MS65H)

[35]   *Free University education would turn our developing country into a developed country. Many jobs which are available requires University education.* **[A contrast or concessive marker is necessary - However,]** *Only a few South African have the qualifications.* **[The idea of career choice should be linked to the previous information – a lack of suitable qualifications. Similarly is a suitable linking expression in this case.]** *Learners should not focus only on one career as it would leave a loophole for other careers.* (DIET48H)

3.3.2.2 (c)   Wrong (W)

[36]   *There are many cases reported every year of matriculants that did very well in their examination **and** [**but**] they do not have money to go to universities and they end up on killing themselves **and** [**; however,**] if education in Universities was free these kinds of tragic incidents were not gonna occur.* (PHARM26H)

[37]   *For a university to grow, succeed and become admired or noticed for its high pass rate and successful students, it needs money to pay for that material used and its different lectures and management. **Therefor** [**misspelling**] students should pay for this.* (BDS16H)

[38]   *Lastly, South Africa will be a better place to live in because of the high rate of literate people **thus this** [**which**] show [demonstrates] that free University education will have a very positive impact on …* (MC7H)

[39]   ***So [Therefore]*** *at the very same time **when** [**while**] helping the students they will also be investing their money.* (OT24H)

[40]   *… imagine if you had to buy books and also pay for tuition**, on the other side** [**no comma – while**] your parents are struggling to pay school fees for your younger brothers and sisters.* (PHYSIO31H)

In the example below, the subordinate idea could be rather placed in initial position, also referred to as fronting or weighting information, since this conveys the crux of the matter.

[41]   *The government must also contribute in building other university faculties, **hence** [**no comma - since**] there are not enough for all the children to all study.* (BCURA22H)

[42]   *In this essay, I will agree with the topic and **yet** [**no concession is necessary here, therefore** yet **use is unnecessary**] substantiate on my motion.* (COMM64H)

[43]   *Those bursaries are given to the best learners, **then** [**but**] what happens to those who passed with average?* (DIET44H)

3.3.2.2 (d)   Redundant (RED)

There was a student tendency to overuse specific linking expressions (*in addition; moreover; furthermore*) as paragraph links. The excerpt below, however, is an example of a redundant link within a paragraph.

[44]   *Free university education will also benefit the country as a whole. I mean our country needs people who are literate to be able to run it, so if people are deprived a chance to*

study, our country will have a high rate of unskilled people which might decrease our economy. **In addition,** **[the link is captured by the pronoun use (*that*) making CE redundant/unnecessary]** *that will lead to …* (MC7H)

While the connector *also* has its place, the students were inclined to over-rely on it when other options were available, or they used it redundantly, as in the example below. *And* has already signalled the connection.

[45] *I conclude that University education should be free and easily accessible to all learners who are able to pass their matric very well. This would bring unity and **also** empower our citizens to become better in their lives.* (DIET48H)

3.3.2.2 (e)   No break (NB)

When a new sentence is formed when there should be no break, this constitutes what is referred to as a NB, which is indicated in square brackets.

[46] *These fees cover many learning things.* **[NB]** *These learning things, like paper, electricity bills and water bills, the meals and the internet.* **[… learning things, like paper …]** (MC11H)

The writer of the text below was inclined to begin new sentences with the relativiser ***which*** instead of continuing since "the ***which*** meaning unit" (relative clause) provides information that is directly related to the earlier information.

[47] *However, we must take into consideration that students tend to go astray when they are spoon feed.* **[NB]** ***Which*** *is why the free education must come with discipline and lots of it.* **[spoon fed, which is why …]** (MS39H)

[48] *Many children think that if they drink alcohol or take drugs they will forget all their problems at home.* **[NB – home, such as problems of …]** *Problems of not having money or their parents not [being] able to pay for them university education.* (MS66H)

3.3.2.2 (f)   New sentence (NS)

Obviously new sentences require the use of the full stop between sentences. But unless students understand meaning units and their relationship with one another, they will not grasp how punctuation marks are used to signal these relationships. Addressing both (relationships between meaning units and concomitant use of punctuation marks) simultaneously is, therefore, necessary in writing instruction.

[49]   *It is the same with Education,* **[full stop & NS]** *Students would just enjoy University life because they have nothing to loose.* **Which [NS using This]** *will there on affect their studies negatively, that* [**which**] *will lead to many drop-outs because of not delivering;* **[no semi-colon]** *(Not meeting University standards of study)* **[P full stop]** (INF1H)

[50]   *The last grade of high school, grade 12, is the hard year for many students in South Africa because they have to work hard to get admitted to University to study for their dream **carrers,*** [**full stop & NS - However, unfortunately** …] ***unfortunately*** *not all student are able to go to University because of the tuition fees.* (DIET9H)

3.3.2.2 (g)   Punctuation (P)

The role of punctuation in written communication, particularly academic writing, cannot be over-emphasised. From the student writing overall, it appears that the students have limited insight into the functions of punctuation markers in creating meaningful text units, and how the available markers can be used. Clearly this area deserves attention and regular practice.

The comma use before *but* in the example below is unnecessary (rather than incorrect).

[51]   *South Africa is said to be a democratic Country**, but** one can say we live in the Apartheid era under democracy.* (COMM35H)

In the subsequent excerpt, the comma before **but** is functional whereas the comma use before **so that** is inappropriate (in the sense that the connection between meaning units should not be split).

[52]   *It should be a must that all students who are admitted in the universities should be given financial intervetions**, but** it should also be checked wheather a student will not manage on his/her own**, so that** government resources do not go to waste.* (COMM35H)

Students avoid semi-colon use or use it wrongly probably because they are not alerted to how this marker joins main clauses (ideas with equal rank) in writing.

[53]   *We live in a world plagued with poverty, where crime is rapidly on the increase and new strains of diseases are discovered each day**,*** **[semi-colon use is necessary before however]** *however, if people are determined …* (BDS17H)

[54]   *Free varsity education can also provide or promote good health for many**;*** **[the semi-colon is inappropriate – a comma is necessary, followed by the determiner *these* and verb *are*/followed by *namely*]** *people living in rural areas and who are not able to afford good treatment (medication) for their sicknesses.* (COMM65H)

In this study, numerous students over-relied on the comma to do the work of punctuating text (illustrated in the extract below). Often this use is illogical, or dispreferred. Similarly, dashes were resorted to as a more effortless solution.

[55]   *Every person has a right to education regadless of wheather they have money or not, every person has the right to further their studies – so money should not be a wall between education and poor people, people cannot better themselfs when they need money to do so, education should be about fulfilling your destiny and using all the energy you have into making your life and the lives of fellow brothers and sisters better instead some learners end up performing badly in their studies as they are stressed about how will they get money to continue with their studies.* (BCURB14H)

3.3.2.2 (h)   Incoherent use (INC)

[56]   *Some of the students come from destitute low socio-economic background. Just because they are driven and passionate about education.* (OH5L)

Chapter 3: Part One has set out the research design of the current study and has provided a detailed description of the analytical framework for appropriate and inappropriate connector use.

Chapter 3 Part Two follows providing a description of the analytical frameworks for appropriate and inappropriate use of verb phrases.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY: PART TWO

Here, the framework that was adopted for the analysis of verb phrases will be described.

3.3.2.3 Framework for appropriate uses of verb phrases

Like the noun, the verb is an essential element in sentence-making. Both capture and convey important information (commonly referred to as the main ideas in writing pedagogy) in sentences. Mastery of verb forms and constructions is, therefore, necessary to ensure the writer's intended message is understood.

The extract below taken from a student text serves to show a well-formulated introduction that not only conveys the writer's thesis, but also displays insight into the form-function relationship in VPs. The student also employs ellipsis, which helps in creating economical text, which eases processing.

[57]   *University education should be free for students who are admitted." The above statement* **might seem** [modal subjunctive use signalling a hypothetical] *spectacular* **when read** [meaning **when it is read** – passive in present tense ellipsis] *but* **having to materialize** [semi-auxiliary indicating obligation – non-finite uses participle VVG and infinitive] *this* **would lead** [modal subjunctive hypothetical] *to much conflict and disaster.* (BDT2H)

Next, the framework that was used for the verb phrase analysis is provided (Table 3.16). This, too, is based on the work of Biber, et al. (1999).

Table 3.16: Framework for appropriate verb phrase uses

VP type	Discourse functions / Frequency in registers	Examples (forms/constructions)
Verbless	Sometimes it is not necessary to include a VP in a clause or sentence, if this can clearly be inferred from the co-text.	*What about equipment?*
Tensed Verb Phrases (refer to verb phrases marked for tense but not modality)	Relate primarily to past & present time orientation (refer to distinction between tense & aspect below)	
Simple present	Refers to present time to describe a state existing at the present time, or present	*Free education makes life easier, reduces stress and produces more*

	habitual behaviour (Biber, et al., 1999:453) Is also used to refer to either past or future events in special cases, such as the historic present tense referring to past time; common in conversational narratives (ibid. p.454) When referring to future time, this is usually alongside a time adverbial referring to the future, or in a conditional or temporal adverbial clause having a future time reference (Biber, et al., 1999:455)	*qualified proffessions.*
Simple past	Refers to situation that no longer exists OR event occurred at particular time in past Both simple past & present perfect refer to event/state in the past	*One would expect better from the government as they promised a better life for all after taking over the country after apartheid.*
Aspect	A stage of progress of an event/activity Both perfect and progressive aspects can combine with either present or past tense (refer to distinction between tense & aspect below)	
Distinction between tense & aspect	Semantically, both tense & aspect relate mainly to time distinctions in the VP. While tense refers mainly to past & present time orientation, aspect refers to considerations such as the completion or lack of completion of events / states described by a verb (Biber, et al., 1999:460).	
Perfect aspect present	Describes situation that continues to exist up to present time Common in ACAD (Biber, et al., 1999:460;467)	*Our government has promised people free education, but it seems as if their words are not followed by actions.*
Perfect aspect past	Difference between simple past & perfect aspect past (Biber, et al., 1999:470) When the past perfect VP occurs in a dependent clause, the main clause assists in interpreting the time reference. In ACAD, past perfect VP uses commonly occur in relative clauses (Biber, et al., 1999:470)	*Had attempted /proven*
Progressive aspect	The progressive aspect occurs with both dynamic & static verbs. With static verbs, the progressive expresses the meaning of a temporary state that exists for a period of time (Biber, et al., 1999:471)	*The majority of South African university students are living in/are coming from rural areas.*

	Most common in CONV & FIC	
Progressive aspect present tense	Refers to events/states in progress, or continuing, or about to occur in the near future, usually for a limited period. The time frame is usually indicated by the rest of the VP (Biber, et al., 1999:460;470)	*Many people are now sitting at home*
Progressive aspect past tense	Describes events that were in progress or were about to take place at some earlier time (Biber, et al., 1999:470)	*Was studying*
Passive voice forms	A major function of the passive is to demote the agent of the verb (regularly the person doing the action of the verb), while giving status to the entity being acted on (Biber, et al., 1999:476-477) The short passive is the most common, & is widely used in ACAD to "convey an objective detachment from what is being described, as required by the Western scientific tradition", or simply to as conventional style of much academic writing (Biber, et al., 1999:477) Also common in NEWS (but with a different purpose) Common in registers having the fewest total number of finite verbs The get passive is a recent innovation in English, and is found mainly in conversation (ibid. p.477)	Most passive constructions are formed with the auxiliary be followed by an -*ed* participle (Biber, et al., 1999:475) Constructions can be with or without a *by*-phrase (long/short passive or agentless passive) *Can* also be formed with the verb ***get*** in the role of auxiliary (ibid. 475) What was relevant in the analysis of get use was to determine how students used *get* (as a *be* use to simply to describe a state, or a become use, to describe the process of becoming)
Passive simple present		*Are admitted*
Passive simple past		*Were sponsored*
Passive & Aspect	The perfect passive is the only complex combination that is moderately common. All other combinations of aspect & passive are generally rare (Biber, et al., 1999:482)	
Present perfect passive	Is common in ACAD & NEWS The time orientation (past with present relevance) is retained (Biber, et al., 1999:482)	*Has been denied* *After so much work has been put into basic education, do we really want to end up with unqualified people?*
Past perfect passive	Is quite common in FIC (ibid. p.483)	*Had been denied*
Present progressive passive	The progressive combinations are very much less common occurring in FIC	*Has been ignoring/is being investigated*

	Occasionally used in NEWS & ACAD (ibid. p.483)	*If the money that is being given to young mothers was being used to pay for fees for hard working students …*
Past progressive passive	As above	*Has been ignoring/was being investigated*
Progressive forms (-ing participle use/ VVG/ VHG) as verbs		*(rather) than sitting* (VVG) *at home /without worrying/having* (VHG) *money helps*
Progressive form as gerund	Functions as a noun/verbal noun/noun equivalent This was included in the analysis since it is believed to be an important use in academic / expository prose – also requiring student writers to be able to make the distinction between *–ing* Verb versus Gerund use	*Succeeding is important at university*
Infinitive use	Infinitive uses were not analysed according to clausal constructions but rather as separate verb phrases within clauses Overall, infinitive clauses are much more common in written registers than CONV (partly due to the much greater range of verbs that can control *to*-clauses) (Biber, et al., 1999:699)	*To study for free is a privilege.*
Present infinitive in active voice	Commonest pattern in all four registers (Biber, et al., 1999: 698)	*Globally speaking skilled and educated people are required to better and make life easier.*
Present infinitive in passive voice	Occurs with moderate frequencies in NEWS & ACAD (ibid. p.698)	*To be achieved/are to be assisted* (Biber, et al., 1999:937) *Many learners should work hard to be admitted.*
Past infinitive (referred to as Perfect infinitive) in active voice	As for present infinitive in PV above	*To have achieved*
Past infinitive in passive voice	As for present infinitive in PV above	*To have been achieved*
Conditionals / Mood		
Subjunctive mood	*IF* – traditionally, when the condition after IF (or *IF*-meaning) cannot/is very unlikely to be fulfilled, the subjunctive (SM) is appropriate	*If all admitted university students were to receive free education, there would be a higher throughput rate.*
Indicative mood	*IF* – when a condition might be fulfilled, the indicative mood is appropriate	*If all admitted university students receive free education, they will*

	Today, indicative mood (IM) is no longer regarded inappropriate	*have lower stress levels.*
Hypothetical conditional clauses marked by inversion rather than subordinator		*Were all admitted students to be assisted financially, ...* *Had admitted students ...* *Should admitted students...*
Primary verbs with main verb function	Counted separately when not functioning as auxiliaries or operators When functioning as auxiliaries primary forms were counted in terms of tense, aspect and/or voice combinations *Be* – as a main verb is the most important copular verb in English, linking the subject noun phrase with a subject predicative or obligatory adverbial As a transitive main verb, have is most common in CONV and least in ACAD, although more common than any of the lexical verbs (Biber, et al., 1999:429) *Do* has several functions: As simple main verb; As pro-verb (substituting for a lexical verb); As emphatic verb; As auxiliary verb in negative & interrogative constructions with a lexical main verb The primary auxiliary do is obligatory in many questions and negative clauses (Biber, et al., 1999:359; 430-435) Primary auxiliary verbs are more frequent than modal verbs as they express basic grammatical meanings of aspect & voice (refer to Aspect & Voice in this table)	*Be ; have; do* *There are maintenance teams which ...*
Modal auxiliary verbs (refer to Sequences of modals and semi-modals below)	For analysis purposes, the Central, Marginal & Semi-modals were grouped together (cf. Biber, et al., 1999:6.6 for uses/meaning) Each modal can have two meanings: Intrinsic/deontic modality – refers to actions and events that humans or other agents directly control (permission / obligation /	9 central modals: *can; could; may; might; shall; should; will; would; must* With respect to the pairs of central modals, the tentative/past time member is less frequent than its partner in all cases except shall/should (Biber, et al., 1999:486)

	volition/intention)	
	Extrinsic modality – refers to the logical status of events or states, usually relating to assessments of likelihood / meanings relating to stance (possibility / necessity / prediction) (Biber, et al., 1999:359; 485)	Marginal auxiliary verbs (these verbs behave like modals in taking auxiliary negation and yes-no question inversion) (Biber, et al., 1999:484): *need/to; ought to; dare/to*
	Modal & semi-modals most common in CONV; least common in NEWS & ACAD (ibid. p.486)	
	Semi-modals more common in CONV than written expository registers (ibid. p.486)	Semi-modals (fixed idiomatic phrases with functions similar to those of modals) (Biber, et al., 1999:484): *had better; have to; have got to; be supposed to; be going to; used to* (to mark past habitual behaviour or a past state)
	Biber, et al., (1999:487) attribute the greater frequency of modals & semi-modals in CONV to their stance-marking characteristic, and to their historical use, in the sense that modals were identified prior 14h00, with semi-modals much later 1650-1800. Given that language innovation first establishes itself in CONV before spreading to written registers, the lower occurrence of especially semi-modals is not unusual.	
Sequences of modals & semi-modals	The 1st form was counted in the analysis (*will have to fund*)	
	Generally, these complex verb phrases are least common in CONV	
	Modal + semi-modal sequences with have to are the most common in all the registers, especially in combination with volition / prediction modals (CONV; FIC; NEWS; ACAD)	
	Sequences of modal + need to are less common and are restricted to ACAD & NEWS (Biber, et al., 1999:502)	
Permission/ possibility/ability	Are more common than modals marking obligation/necessity	*Can; could; may; might*
	Can & could are relatively common in all registers	*This may lead to the University itself losing so much money at the risk of the student themselves.*
	Can is very common in CONV & ACAD	
	In ACAD can commonly marks both ability & logical possibility	
	In ACAD could / may / might are almost used exclusively to mark logical possibility	
	Could / might are much more common in expressing logical possibility than permission	

	or ability	
	Could / might can also signal past time	
	May is very common in ACAD (Biber, et al., 1999:487)	
	Permission is rarely expressed in ACAD (Biber, et al., 1999: 491)	
Obligation/necessity	Lower frequency of these modals ascribed to two phenomena: avoidance of face threatening force of obligation meaning expressions, and semi-modals being better established in the semantic domain, and replacing modals to a greater extent (Biber, et al., 1999:489-490)	*Must; should; marginal auxiliaries: need to; ought to;* semi-modals*: have to; be supposed to* *... everything about finance must be free.*
	Except for *must*, all of these forms are mostly used to mark personal obligation rather than logical necessity	
	Must & should are relatively common in ACAD	
	Must is commonly used for both logical necessity & personal obligation	
	Should in CONV & ACAD is relatively common in marking personal obligation (provides a hedged expression that is typically regarded as more polite)	
	Should can also signal past time	
	Have to is the only semi-modal that is relatively common in written expository registers / ACAD & CONV / FICTION	
	Ought to is generally rare (marginal auxiliary) (Biber, et al., 1999:484)	
	Had better / have (got) to / used to are relatively common in CONV (Biber, et al., 1999:487)	
Volition/prediction	*Will* use may also mark a kind of epistemic stance – to predict that a proposition will be true at some future time (instead of a simple assertion)	*Will; would; shall; semi-modal: be going to*
	Will & would are very common in all registers / shall is rare (Biber, et al., 1999:486)	
	Would can signal past time	
	Will, shall & be going to typically mark	

	future time *Be going to* is the most common in CONV (including *gonna*)	
Modal verbs with marked aspect or voice	For overlapping functions refer to Modal auxiliaries; Aspect & Passive Voice in this table	
Modal with passive voice	PV with modals is rare in CONV & FIC, but relatively common in ACAD (Biber, et al., 1999:497; 938; 499) Can & should are especially common; Could & must are also fairly common; The volition/prediction modals, particularly shall, are rare even in ACAD	*Only learners with good marks must be admitted.* *When the university admit students, there should be a formative test that should be written to assess the potential and the non-potential ones.* *Has to be provided* (semi-modal) *Needs to be implemented* (marginal auxiliary) *Used to be excluded*
Modal with perfect aspect	Most common in FIC & NEWS *Might & may* and *must & should* are most common modals verbs with the perfect (Biber, et al., 1999:499) In all registers, three modals with present/future time connotations: *can / will / shall* rarely occur with the perfect aspect The two past time forms *could & would* do occur with perfect (ibid. p.499)	*Would have been* *Must have been* *... parents can encourage them to take their studies seriously because it will be paid for their hard earned cash which could have been used for something else.*
Modal with progressive aspect	Generally rare Obligation/necessity modals in CONV Volition/prediction modals in NEWS (Biber, et al., 1999:499)	*... you will be doing it for yourself.* *Will be trying out* *Has got to be adjusting* *(of) being received by* (Biber, et al., 1999:937)

In order to identify the forms in verb phrases, student texts were also tagged using the CLAWS7 POS tagger. Although tagging was not entirely necessary, the tags helped to identify the forms used in the constructions of verb phrases. The forms are indicated in Table 3.17 below.

Thereafter, examples of appropriate uses are provided. It should be noted that the examples are not arranged very systematically; this is done in **Chapter** 4.

Table 3.17: CLAWS7 codes (taken from the International Corpus of Learner English, Version 2, by Granger, Dagneaux, Meunier & Paquot, 2009:71-72)

V*be*		V*have*	
VB0	*Be*, base form (finite, i.e. imperative, subjunctive)	**VH0**	*Have*, base form (finite)
VBDR	*Were*	**VHD**	*Had* (past tense)
VBDZ	*Was*	**VHG**	*Having*
VBG	*Being*	**VHI**	*Have*, infinitive
VBI	*Be*, infinitive (*to be or not …; it will be*)	**VHZ**	*Has*
VBM	*Am*	**Vlex**	
VBN	*Been*	**VV0**	Base form of lexical verb (*give; work*)
VBR	*Are*	**VVD**	Past tense of lexical verb (*gave; worked*)
VBZ	*Is*	**VVG**	*-ing* participle of lexical verb (*giving; working*)
V*do*		**VVGK**	*-ing* participle catenative (*going in 'be going to'*)
VD0	*Do* base form (finite)	**VVI**	Infinitive (*to give; it will work*)
		VVN	Past participle of lexical verb (*given; worked*)
VDD	*Did*	**VVNK**	Past participle catenative (*bound in 'be bound to'*)
VDG	*Doing*	**VVZ**	-s form of lexical verb (*gives; works*)
VDI	*Do*, infinitive (*I may do; to do*)	**Vmod**	
VDN	*Done*	**VM**	Modal auxiliary (*can; will; would*)
VDZ	*Does*	**VMK**	Modal catenative (*ought; used*)
		TO	Infinitive marker (*to*)

Examples of appropriate verb phrase uses

- **Ellipsis**

Although instances of VP ellipsis were not analysed, it was observed that occasionally students demonstrated appropriate ellipsis. This phenomenon is a feature of more accomplished writing,

and should be pointed out to students. Recognising ellipsis would further aid reading comprehension.

[58]   *South Africa does not have enough money to help the poor so where will it get money for free education to all admitted students? Maybe countries like the USA and others can* [ellipsis – access/find the funds]. (BDT12H)

- **Verbless**

[59]   *By investing in education, I can assure you is not money down the drain.* **In fact for** **[But rather]** *the best of* **[for]** *your future and the country's future*. (MS69L)

- **Simple present uses**

[60]   *It* **makes you realise** *who you* **are** *and where you* **stand.** (PHYSIO11H)

[61]   *Many learners* **pass** *their matric well but they* **cannot afford to pay** *the university fees.* (DIET48H)

The imperative use below was quite common in the student texts, and may be attributed to students' exposure to this construction in both lectures and perhaps church sermons. While some may view this use as inappropriate in academic writing, this was considered acceptable in this study.

[62]   ***Let us explore*** *some of these typical perceptions*. (MC30H)

- **Simple past uses**

[63]   *University education should be free for the students who* **met** [ACC - have met] *the minimum requirements to be admitted because they* **proved** [ACC – have proved / proven] *that they are keen on furthering …* (MS22H)

- **Perfect aspect present tense**

[64]   *The poverty level in our country* **has disallowed** *many individuals to afford education.* (MB14H)

- **Perfect aspect past tense**

[65]   *Our government would not want to repeat what* **had happened** [this use is awkward but ACC] *in previous years when our parents could not further their studies because they were financialy unbalanced.* (COMM54H)

- **Perfect infinitive in active voice** (**Past infinitive**)

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[66]   *Pupils who are believed **to have achieved** the results required for university admsion must practise this right without any stress.* (DIET43H)

- **Gerunds (verbal nouns)**

In general, students appeared to use gerunds appropriately. These related to the primary purpose of the university in society – to impart knowledge and develop higher order thinking, to produce professionals.

[67]   *Free education in varsity can lead to **overcrowding** at the school premises.* (DIET33H)

- **Progressive aspect uses**

[68]   *With poverty **being** one of the problems that our society is facing, **offering** a free higher education to hardworking students and deserving students would help **in decreasing** poverty and hunger in the near future.* (OT15H)

[69]   ***Having to pay** fees [obligation function] [OM - and] at the same time buy textbook[s] that are considerably costly is nothing easy.* (DIET33H)

[70]   *Another advantage is that the pass rate will increase as student **will be working** hard to retain free education.* (INF25H)

[71]   *Parents wouldn't have to worry about borrowing alot of money as loans in banks, this also prevents them **from being blacklisted** if they can't pay back which was made so that you can continue with your course.* (PHYSIO31H)

[72]   *But throughout the years, we have witnessed a lot of incompetence, mismana-gement of funds and the commitment from the student **is disappointing**.* (MS52H)

Passive uses

- **Simple present/past passive uses**

[73]   *It is only fair that students pay so that this privilege **is carried onto [over to]** the next generation.* (MA48H)

The following are good examples of use of **anticipatory *it*** alongside simple present passive use:

[74]   ***It is also known** that all children have rights to education …* (BCURA22H)

[74]   ***It is** usually **said that …*** (COMM49H)

[76]   *Years ago many people could not go to school because of financial issues but now things have changed. **Gone are** [inversion – idiomatic use] those days.* (BDT12H)

- *Get* and *become* **in passive constructions**

The Black student writers regularly used *get* and *become* in passive constructions. These instances were not counted as wrong, although the *get* use may be considered by some as unacceptable in academic prose.

[77] *The youth makes up more than sixty percent of our population. Imagine twenty percent of that population **been [being] sent** away from school because they do not have money. Parents **will** also **get frustrated by** this, and they will have to support their children even when they are adults.* (BDS18H)

[78] *Gone are the days when colour used to be an entry requirement for gaining admissions into higher education institutions. During those days when only the financially stable citizens became [were] the academically **enriched**.* (MC3H)

[79] *We are a developing country and before it **becomes [is] developed**, we need highly trained proffesionals.* (MB14H)

- **Present infinitive in passive**

[80] *This is **to be pondered upon** because our government has more than enough funds to sponsor willing students in their university education.* (MB14H)

- **Present / past progressive passive**

[81] *But that [denied university access due to lack of finances] **is still being done** regardless no matter how deserving the student might be.* (OH8H)

- **Present perfect passive uses**

[82] *Students who **have been admitted** to study further at a University are very priviledged.* (MA30H)

- **Present perfect progressive passive uses**

[83] *The nation **has been crying about** youngsters who have babies at a young age.* (OT15H)

[84] *During the past years, many students **have been experiencing** the same problem of being admitted in Universities, but also [of] not being able to enroll there.* (PHYSIO31H)

- **Modal progressive passive uses (predictive OR obligatory meanings)**

[85] *On the other hand, I believe that if students are admitted for free, things like taxes and products will go high, because the government **will be using** a lot of money on*

universities for every child and therefore will have to demand more from the community. (MC35H)

[86] *Another advantage is that the pass rate will increase as student **will be working** hard to retain free education.* (INF25H)

[87] *We as a nation **should be working** hard together in order to reach those high tides to develop our country further and not destroy it.* (SPEECH1H)

- **Modal passive uses in simple present tense (to mark future prediction, signal obligation or recommendation, and the subjunctive to signal hypothetical meaning)**

[88] *The cost of tertiary education **needs to be reviewed**.* (MB14H)

[89] *We **need** our understanding **to be sharpened**.* (SPEECH1H)

[90] *Therefore offer free school tuition to qualified learners, especially those who can't afford the cost of living on campus. They will indeed not dissapoint. Students **will be motivated by** the state of the family at home.* (MC35H)

- **Modal passives with perfect aspect**

[91] *… there are most people who **would've been educated** but due to the fees in university they are distracted and they end up without any qualification.* (MC15H)

[92] **Modal passives with progressive aspect**

[93] *This means that the student **might not be taking** his education seriously and drop out.* (PHYSIO24H)

- ***if** in subjunctive mood*

[94] ***If** this law **had to be passed** it **could better** the literacy rate in South Africa because learners in highschool will work extra hard so they meet University Requirements for them to obtain a free education.* (COMM45H)

- ***if** in indicative mood*

- **Using simple present**

[95] *Universities would have hardworking students because they would know that they may lose their places in university **if they under perform**, which would result in a very great opportunity being lost.* (MS32H)

- **Using simple past**

[96]   *If the situation **was** different, if education **was** free at tertiary, ...* (DIET44H)

- **Present infinitive uses**

[97]   *... the country should grant free education. ... This can motivate them young or old **to strive for** education and **create** better lives for themselves.* (COMM57H)

- **Primary verb uses**

What was especially noticeable was the students' tendency to contract the negated forms of the primary verbs and modal auxiliaries. Similarly, it appeared that students were more comfortable using the contracted form **who's** for **who is**. Contractions were also used with pronouns. These contractions are most likely due to lecture talk which students then view as being exemplary of academic conventions in general.

In this study, primary verb uses mainly occurred in the simple present tense.

- **Primary verbs on their own as main verbs**

[98]   *... I think it may be a good business deal to invest in student who really need to study but **do not have** the money to continue.* (OT24H)

- **Primary verbs and existential *there***

[99]   ***There is** a high rate of unemployment in South Africa ...* (MS21H)

- **Primary verbs and anticipatory *it***

[100]   *That is why education at varsity level should be free and **it is the responsibility of** the overnment and varsities to ensure that happens.* (OH8H)

- **Primary verbs as operators/for emphasis**

[101]   *Those type of learners **do have** potential but cannot do anything about it because of their financial plights.* (BCUR20H)

- **Primary verb form marking past tense (operator)**

[102]   *Many people in our country are not educated because they **did not have** money to go to universities ... .*(DIET43H)

- **Primary verbs in formulating interrogatives**

[103]   *But who **do we blame for** poor performance?* (MS52H)

- **Primary verbs and contraction**

[104] *It is very rare to find pregnant ladies in universities because they value the opportunity* ***they've [they have] been given***. (OT15H)

- **Modal auxiliaries and Marginal auxiliaries**
  (are treated as one group given their overlapping functions)

  - *Can/not*

[105] *... parents **can be rest assured** that their children will be afforded an education.* (COMM45H)

[106] *If students do not pay, we **cannot be** certain how much the government would give to tertiary*

  - **Modal use in formulation of questions**

It is observed that, generally, students have difficulty in formulating questions using either primary verb full forms or modal auxiliary full forms. They find the contracted forms more manageable (see example below). This is understandable given the fact that full form construction is more complex. Nevertheless, awareness of alternative expressions and concomitant constructions should be created.

[107] *The right to an education has to be earned and deserved. With that in mind you **can't expect** someone to teach you everything in the course for free*. (PHYSIO25H)

  - *Could –* **hypothetical possibility**

[108] *Communities that are poor **could be taught about** the school fees and what they do. The light **could be shed on** the importance of having these fees paid.* (MC11H)

  - *May* **- possibility**

[109] *It gives those that can't afford a chance to go to Universities and **may one day increase** the number of Educated Adults.* (COMM45H)

  - *Might*

[110] *Tuition fees are the main reason why people fail to go to university. They **might** **[Awkward but ACC – might be able to]** **afford to pay** tutition fees but will not have money for food, accomodation and books.* (DIET43H)

  - *Shall*

Shall in the excerpt below is used in a personification of South Africa, and this makes it acceptable rather than technically inappropriate.

[111] *Things that should be focused on is shaping young minds, giving them opportunities to learn without stressful payments. If that is done then South Africa* **shall rise** *as a country through their youth.* (COMM54H).

- ***Should* - obligation**

[112] *This however does not mean that all learners will behave in the same manner and therefore free university education* **should be put into place**. (MB33H)

- ***Have to***

[113] *NSFAS is doing a brilliant job by providing the study loans to those students who don't have enough money to pay for their tuition fees* **and hence** *they will* **have to pay it back** *once they are independent and have their own jobs.* (SPEECH1H)

- ***Ought to***

[114] *They [universities]* **ought to see** *that all students are safe and are in good health.* (MC5H)

- ***Must***

[115] *University education* **must be** *free for students who are admitted because they will make a better South Africa for the next generation.* (DIET43H)

- ***Need to***

[116] *The minute universities accept students according to their marks, payment should'nt be the main focus, they* **need to** [ACC – the institutional focus should be on] *concentrate on the future of these student's and making them the next doctors …* (OT17H)

- ***Will* (marking volition)**

[117] *I* **will elaborate** *more* **on** *how and why I disagree with free education as I go on.* (INF1H)

- ***Will* use with interrogatives**

[118] *South Africa does not have enough money to help the poor so* **where will it get money for free education to all admitted students?** (BDT12H)

- ***Will* as marking predictive certainty**

[119] *Making university education free for students who are admitted **will boost** the economy of the country. I am saying this because there **will be** many qualified persons in almost every field. This **will obviously help** the economy of our country.* (DIET43H)

- ***Will** when certainty of claims may be questionable*

At undergraduate level, lecturers in specialist disciplines usually make allowances for the use of *will* in statements when, in fact, the use is inappropriate. This practice, along with the frequency of *will* in casual conversation, may well explain the students' overuse of *will* in academic writing. In order to address this, teaching all the modal auxiliary forms and functions is necessary, for students to be able to use modal auxiliaries optimally in communicating information reliably and accurately.

[120] *Free education **will** provide success to all people. Free education **will** improve our economy. IT **will** bring responsibility and healthy lives. It **will** improve our way of thinking **will** improve our working material.* (OT30L)

- ***Would** – hypothetical use*

[121] ***If** an individual has worked hard it **would** only **seem** fair to reward them.* (MB50H

- ***Should** – obligation*

[122] *There **should** also **be** more awareness of student loans in all tertiary institutions.* (MB48H)

- ***Should** – inversion marking hypothetical use*

[123] ***Should that happen** there could be unsatisfied staff who might go on strike or decide that working is not worth the effort.* (MB48H)

3.3.2.4 Framework for inappropriate uses of verb phrases

Inappropriate verb phrase uses were divided into five categories which were also

specially formulated as was the case for analysing idiosyncratic use of connectors, namely:

3.3.2.4 (a)   Omission

3.3.2.4 (b)   Wrong form

3.3.2.4 (c)   Dispreferred uses

3.3.2.4 (d)   Problematic verb phrase construction OR incoherent

3.3.2.4 (e)   Incomplete verb phrase

The framework for the inappropriate use of verb phrases is provided in Table 3.18 below.

Table 3.18: Framework for inappropriate uses of verb phrases

TYPES OF INAPPROPRIATE USES	DESCRIPTION
Omission (OM)	No verb phrase at all
Wrong form (W) There were 4 types: Form (F) Misspelling (MIS) Lexical Choice (LC) Agreement (A) (commonly called concord)	A form within the VP is wrong
Dispreferred (DP)	More appropriate options are available (in terms of context/communicative purpose)
Problematic verb phrase construction / Incoherent (PVP/INC)	Confused and requires reformulation / meaning cannot be inferred
Incomplete verb phrase (IVP)	A verb form is missing in the phrase

Examples of inappropriate verb phrase uses in terms of the categories above are provided next.

3.3.2.4 (a) Omission (OM)

[124] *You can even stay unemployed your whole life if you* **[OM – *are*]** *in possession of* [only a] *matric certificate.* (DIET6H)

[125] **[OM – here both existential *There* + *is* as the verb form are necessary]** *No denying the unfortunate people out there who are not financially stable to pay for the demands of universities, but if education is free, where will the university get the money to maintain its resources and pay their workers?* (SPEECH1H)

3.3.2.4 (b) Wrong (W)

Wrong uses were divided into four sub-categories, namely Form (F), Misspelling (M), Agreement (A), commonly termed Concord and Lexical Choice (LC). With respect to primary verbs and modal auxiliaries, correctly spelt contracted forms were not counted as wrong, although strictly speaking, contractions of these would not be acceptable in academic writing. The examples are arranged in the same order as listed.

Examples of Wrong <u>Form</u>:

[126] *There **will** definitely **arouse** complications with finance, ...* **[F – Financial complications *will arise*]** (BDS4H)

[127] *Imagine twenty percent of that population **been sent away** [F - **being**] because they do not have money.* (BDS18H)

[128] *Paying university fees ensures that the institution you are **enrolled in** [at] or **admitted in** [to] [F – **prepositional verbs**] ...* (MA37H)

[129] *The university is a big body and consists of many people who **have been employed** [F - **are employed**].* (MC5H)

[130] *... people need to be given a chance to further their studies so that they **can be able to** [F – **can/are able to**] **reach** their goals and serve the nation.* (MC7H)

[131] *Many people **do not** [F - **cannot**] **afford** University education.* (MC7H)

[132] *Paying for fees **makes** people **to be** serious [F - **makes people serious**] about their school work ...* (MC14H)

[133] *As They would keep on saying that they would do it next year or in a few weeks time because they know they **are not paying** [F - **would not be paying**] for the education they **are going to be receiving** [F - **would be receiving**] it for free [F - **would be** free].* (PHYSIO20H)

[134] *... some they depend on social grants which the recieve every month and which is also not enough **to can pay** [F - **to pay**] for tuition and also for them to satisfy their needs.* (PHYSIO31H)

*... many children **are engaging them selves to learning** [F - are learning / are actively involved in learning] and **going to** [F - **attending**] school for free.* (BCUR22H)

[135] ***If** everyone **would be** equal [F – **were/is**] then we **would have to lose** [**would lose**] a lot of things.* (BCURB16H)

[136] *I therefore strongly support the idea **of** varsity education **to be free** [F – **being** free – **preposition+VVG construction**] to those who are admitted.* (COMM65H)

[137] *South African tertiary education is highly expensive and most of the youth **end up not going to** [F - **do not go** to] universities because of their financial backgrounds, ...* (MS39H)

[138] *This will definitely **be** [F - **have**] a huge **impact to** [on] the country.* (MS67H)

In the following example, ellipsis (leaving out verb forms/phrases that are already present, and do not necessitate repetition) is preferable to rewriting verb phrases. Students also need to be made aware of the function of ellipsis in academic prose.

[139] *Therefore, Universities should be free so that all the young people rich to poor, disabled and those who are not disabled* **should be able to** **[F - are able to/can]** *further their studies, acquire good jobs and* **be able to work** **[ellipsis here is preferable – work – as a noun, not verb]** *for their families.* (MS23H)

[140] *Education can make the world a safe place for everyone, meaning the crime rate* **will be decreased** **[F - will decrease]** *as well as the unemployment.* (MS80H)

Examples of <u>Misspelling</u>:

[141] *The university* **can not** **[M – cannot]** *be run for free.* (MA13H)

[142] *... if university education is free they* **wont** **[M – will not/won't]** *be left behind with their studies.* (BCURA22H)

If **your** **[F and M - you're/you are]** *lucky enough you might even get an allowance of cash (pocket money).* (COMM48H)

In the example below, the writer uses existential *there* with the contracted, negated form (also wrongly spelt) *isnt.* This use is most likely attributed to being vaguely familiar with the expression *there is no hope.*

[143] *They are sidelined, they end up giving up on their dreams because* **there isnt** **[M - isn't and F – there is no]** *hope of them going to university.* (DIET44H)

[144] *If we look at what child grants, democracy and rights* **has lead to** **[A & M – have led to/ LC – have contributed towards]** *teenage fall* **[F – falling – the participle form/VVG form is necessitated by the preposition use]** *pregnant because they know they will get grants, and other many things that come along with our rights – then we would think twice before approving such a law.* (DIET3H)

Students when things do not go well for them they stop to attend **[they F - stop attending]** *their class which again detoriates their performance* **[M & Word Order their performance deteriorates.]** (MC14H)

Examples of Wrong <u>Agreement</u>:

[145] *The power and responsibility* **is** **[A – are]** *in our own hands.* (MC37H)

Examples of Wrong <u>Lexical Choice</u>:

[146] *For example, every year statistics are that the country is in need of more doctors. If qualified people who are at home not knowing what to do, were admitted, the stats of less doctors available **would had been eradicated** [**F & LC - *would be addressed***]. (MC35H)*

[147] *To have free university education **will come after** [**F and LC – *may/will* only *materialise after***] an extensive series of meetings that will take time and might not even raise the required amount of money or funders. (BCURA6H)*

[148] *... private companies **may find it fulfilling** [**LC - *rewarding***] by sponsering [**F - *to sponsor***] their university education. (BCURB20H)*

[149] *That rule **will make us to read and be dedicated to** our books [**F and LC - *will encourage us to study***]. (MS21H)*

[150] *The students **would be supposed to get** [**F and LC - *would have to/need to obtain***] a certain pass rate **for themselves** [**F - unnecessary – not a reflexive verb**] to be able to get [**ACC – *have/obtain / qualify for***] free university education. (MS32H)*

[151] *University education should be free not to spoonfeed students, but to make a world a better place for every one, whether you come from a poor or rich family. It **is satisfying** [**F – *satisfies/addresses***] our needs as students and **showing** [**F and LC – *demonstrates/displays***] honesty from the governments pledge of free education for all. (DIET32H)*

[152] *The rate of poverty **will go down** [**DP and LC- *may decrease***] as people will be **equiped** [**M – equipped**] to be independent and **doing** [**F - *be able to do***] it for themselves **not** [**rather than**] waiting [**OR *not wait***] for the government to redeem them from their misfortunes. (DIET33H)*

[153] *If the situation was different, if education was free at tertiary level, it **would drive them into triumphant route** [**F and LC - it *would encourage/motivate/liberate* them**]. (DIET44H)*

3.3.2.4 (c) Dispreferred VP use (DP)

[154] *So education must be free at universities so that life **can be** [**is**] easy for everyone and so that everyone has an equal chance to fulfil his or her dream. (MB43H)*

[155] ***But looking at the way our economy is standing the money wont be enough. [Considering our economic standing, the money *won't/ will not be* sufficient/*will be* insufficient.]** (INF24H)*

[156] *Another disadvantage is that some students* **will tend not to perform** *according to the University requirements …* [**might not perform**]. (INF25H)

[157] *University education should be free for students who are admitted, this* **can** [**may**] *decrease the amount of crime, abuse and unemployment in the countries. There* **can** [**would**] *be many qualified people and maybe there* **can** [**would**] *be more ideas that* **can arive to solve** [**might assist in solving**] *the economy problems we have and poverty crisis might decrease too.* (DIET24H)

[158] *Free University education* **would turn** [**LC – transform**] *our developing country into a developed country.* (DIET48H)

The problem in the example below resides in the lack of alignment between subjunctive

and indicative uses.

[159] **If** *all these students* **had to have** *free education at tertiary level, one* **cannot** [**could not**] *even begin to describe the massive amount of money that the government* **would have to pay** *each and every year.* (BDT2H)

3.3.2.4 (d) Problematic verb phrase/Incoherent (PVP/INC)

Addressing a problematic verb phrase is seldom easy to repair since this involves not only clarifying meaning but also considering the use and order of other words (word classes and position), besides verbs. Although this makes the task more demanding for the learner, exposure to and practice in recognising and repairing complex verb uses/constructionss are, nevertheless, necessary.

[160] *… there* **must be maintenance involved** [**awkward use of existential** *there* **and** *must -* **maintenance is necessary**] (BDS7H)

[161] *Furthermore, if crime decreases,* **less prisoners at a young age will appear to exist** [**fewer youths** *will be* **in prison/***there will be* **fewer young prisoners***].* (MC6H)

[162] *The sponsors are here* **to take the load of money off from your shoulders** *…* [**to lessen one's financial burden**] (MC11H)

[163] **When coming to where is the University going to get money** *if education is free, that shouldn't be a problem that students should adhere to but an issue which should be tackled by the govern-ent and some of the sponsors*. [**When coming to the issue of how the university/universities** *will be funded* **if education is free** *should not be/become* **the students' problem/concern, but should be tackled by …**] (PHYSIO31H)

The improvement in the extract below involves making better lexical choices to express the idea.

[164] *Our government would not want to repeat what had happened in previous years when our parents could not further their studies because they were financialy unballanced. **It should not be like that with these generation of ours**. **[The current generation** should **not suffer** the same injustice]*. (COMM54H)

[165] *All well deserving students **should not be treated differently to make other students feel inferior** **[INC - meaning is difficult to infer and requires reformulation]***. (MS3H)

3.3.2.4 (e) Incomplete verb phrase (IVP)

[166] *... **had** the school's cafeteria **not** **[IVP - been] built***. (MC11H)

[167] *When you get admitted to the university it shows you **have the potential to** **[IVP – do]** whatever course you want to do, so you do not have to be kicked out of the university because you cannot afford to pay. They **[IVP - had] better let you finish** your course and if you finish **you can pay when you** **[IVP - are] working***. (DIET24H)

[168] *Free university education is a great investment for the country because the government **will not** **[IVP - need to] employ** people from other countries ... .* (DIET32H)

3.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter (Parts One and Two) has set out the research aims and questions, including a detailed description of the study design, sample collection, and analytical frameworks for connectors and verb phrases. In addition, text examples of connector and verb phrase with respect to appropriate and inappropriate uses have been provided.

In chapter 4 that follows, the results and interpretation thereof will be presented.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

PART ONE: CONNECTORS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the findings pertaining to the use of connectors and verb phrases in the student essays will be presented and thereafter interpreted, and compared with the literature review findings.

This chapter is divided into two parts. Part One is devoted to connectors and Part Two is devoted to verb phrases.

4.1 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The research aims of the study are set out in § 1.3 of chapter 1.

The overall aims of this study were:

1. To compare connector use between the two achievement groups.
2. To compare verb phrase use between the two achievement groups.

4.2 COMPARISON OF USE OF CONNECTING EXPRESSIONS BY UL STUDENTS

Here, the findings that are presented are those relating to research questions 1 and 2 (restated below). The two research questions that are relevant are:

- **Research question 1**

Is there a difference in the frequency of appropriate connector use by the Lows, relative to the frequency of appropriate connector use by the Highs?

- **Research question 2**

Is there a difference in the frequency of inappropriate connector use by the Lows, relative to the frequency of inappropriate connector use by the Highs?

In order to answer research question 1, the results relating to how the two achievement groups compared with respect to appropriate connector use will be presented first.

4.2.1 Overall appropriate use of connecting expressions by UL students

The subsequent Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 give the raw score counts, for the overall appropriate (APP) use of connecting expressions (CEs). It should be noted that all the tables in this chapter (Part One: connector use and Part Two: verb phrase use) also indicate the relative frequecy of use by the Highs and Lows (indicated in brackets; see * below) and the Log Likelihood values (see ** below). Under- or overuse is indicated beneath the Log Likelihood value (see *** below). Differences lay in the use of particular expressions, which is discussed with respect to CE categories and sub-categories.

Table 4.1: Overall APP CE use: No of Occurrences LOWS & HIGHS

	LOWS Total no of words 59702	HIGHS Total no of words 60524
No of Occurrences	3561 (5.96)*	3492 (5.77)
Log likelihood – Lows compared to Highs	LL 1.95 ** (overuse) ***	

*relative frequency given in brackets underneath

**The Log likelihood calculation compared the LOWS to the HIGHS.

***Overuse or underuse (is indicated in brackets below the LL value) and refers to the LOWS either overusing or underusing a particular language feature in relative to use by the HIGHS.

The Log Likelihood value is given in the all the tables in chapter 4 to show how the Lows compared to the Highs in terms of the use of a particular connector or verb phrase category or sub-category. The critical values necessary for interpreting the LL are as follows:

The higher the G2 value, the more significant is the difference between two frequency scores. A G2 of 3.8 or higher is significant at the level of $p < 0.05$ and a G2 of 6.6 or higher is significant at $p < 0.01$.

- 95th percentile; 5% level; $p < 0.05$; critical value = 3.84
- 99th percentile; 1% level; $p < 0.01$; critical value = 6.63
- 99.9th percentile; 0.1% level; $p < 0.001$; critical value = 10.83

- 99.99th percentile; 0.01% level; p < 0.0001; critical value = 15.13

(ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/wizard.html)

Next, the findings pertaining to how the two achievement groups used underlined particular types (in terms of the categories described in Chapter 3 in § 3.3.2.1, namely: Co-ordinators; Relativisers; Circumstance Adverbials; Linking Adverbials) of connecting expressions appropriately will be presented in relation to research question 1 above.

To determine whether frequencies (meaning number of occurrences) of particular CE features in relation to the total number of words in each sample across the two cohorts revealed none or significant differences, Log Likelihood calculations were done. In this regard, only highly/significant differences will be pointed out. (It is also important to point out that only those forms of CEs which appeared in the student writing are reflected in the subsequent tables, and that the forms/expressions that feature here do not represent the full range of expressions that can be used to make connections between ideas (at the clause level and inter-sententially in English).

Table 4.2 below indicates the CE categories and concomitant frequencies in this regard for each of the student cohorts.

Table 4.2: Overall APP CE use per category: No of Occurrences LOWS & HIGHS

Student cohort	Co-ordinators	Relativisers	Circumstance Adverbials	Linking Adverbials	Total no of occurrences
LOWS Total no of words 60524	806 (1.35)	994 (1.66)	1366 (2.29)	395 (0.66)	**3561** (5.96)
HIGHS Total no of words 59702	777 (1.28)	917 (1.52)	1359 (2.25)	439 (0.73)	**3492** (5.77)
Total no of occurrences per CE category	1583	1911	2725	834	
Log likelihood – Lows compared to Highs	LL 1.00 (overuse)	LL 4.25 (overuse)	LL 0.24 (overuse)	LL 1.76 (underuse)	LL 1.95 (overuse)

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Overall, with respect to appropriate CE use, the incidence for the LOWS (3561) is higher than the HIGHS (3492), but with a very minimal difference. With respect to the overall use of CEs by the UL student cohort, Circumstance Adverbials have the highest number of cases (2725), followed by Relativisers (1911), thereafter Co-ordinators (1583), and lastly, Linking Adverbials (834) (cf. Table 4.2 above).

4.2.2 Differences in appropriate use of connecting expressions between achievement groups

Both achievement groups employed Circumstance Adverbials to the same extent, with a minimally higher number in the LOWS (1366; 2.29 – the latter value indicates the relative frequency) compared to the HIGHS (1359; 2.25). The high incidence of Circumstance Adverbials in the UL student writing, generally, is not surprising given the fact that they are reported to be the most commonly used class of adverbials by English NSs (Zareva, 2009, in § 2.6.2.1 (c)). Similarly, the LOWS had higher frequencies for both Relativisers (994; 1.66) and Co-ordinators (806; 1.35) in comparison with the HIGHS (917; 1.52 and 777; 1.28 respectively), but again with a minimal difference for Co-ordinator use, and Relativiser use. The higher frequencies for these three CE categories in the LOWS are most probably due to the repeated (but still within acceptable parameters) use of specific forms, a phenomenon that was observed during the CE analysis. There was a higher overall incidence of Linking Adverbials in the HIGHS (439; 0.73) compared to the LOWS (395; 0.66). <u>In terms of significant differences between the two student cohorts, Log Likelihood calculations revealed a significant difference in the use of Relativisers between the two groups (LL = 4.25, p<0.05).</u>

The findings relating to CE use will be organised and presented in terms of overall frequency of occurrence, namely: Circumstance Adverbials, followed by Relativisers, then Co-ordinators, and lastly, Linking Adverbials.

4.2.2.1 Circumstance adverbials

The results pertaining to the use of the appropriate use of Circumstance Adverbials (CAs) are presented here.

As indicated in Chapter 3, Circumstance Adverbials (CAs) were divided into several sub-categories. Table 4.3 shows to what extent the six types of CAs were used by the two achievement groups.

Table 4.3: APP Circumstance Adverbials use: No of Occurrences LOWS & HIGHS

CIRCUMSTANCE ADVERBIALS (CA)	LOWS Total no of words 59702	HIGHS Total no of words 60524	TOTAL NO OF OCCURRENCES
Contingency Reason (1)	578 (0.97) LL 1.86* (overuse)	540 (0.89)	**1118**
Contingency Conditional (2)	515 (0.86) LL 0.09 (underuse)	532 (0.88)	**1047**
Contingency Purpose (3)	167 (0.28) LL 6.33 (overuse)	126 (0.21)	**293**
Time (4)	58 (0.10) LL 5.45 (underuse)	87 (0.14)	**145**
Contingency Concession (5)	29 (0.05) LL 2.22 (underuse)	42 (0.07)	**71**
Contingency Result (6)	19 (0.3) LL 3.18 (underuse)	32 (0.05)	**51**
OVERALL NO OF OCCURRENCES	**1366 (2.29) LL 0.24 (overuse)**	**1359 (2.25)**	**2725**

The sub-categories of Circumstance Adverbials with the highest overall occurrences for both achievement groups are contingency reason (1118) and contingency conditional (1047) with a

minimal difference in use between the two types; contingency purpose expressions follow, with a substantially lower occurrence (293). In comparison, time adverbials are twice as few as contingency purpose expressions, with only 145 instances overall. These are followed by contingency concession with 71 items in total, and finally, the sub-category, contingency result has only 51 uses. Regarding overall use of the category, Circumstance Adverbials by the UL student cohort, Log Likelihood calculations revealed a significant difference in the use of time adverbials (LL = 5.45, p<0.05) and contingency purpose adverbials (LL = 6.33, p<0.05).

In comparison, Zareva's (2009) study on oral academic presentations showed that for NSs, the most common CAs were Place and Time, followed by Contingency, and for the NNSs, Contingency and Time, followed by Place CAs were the most common (§ 2.6.2.1 (c)). The difference in choices by the two cohorts is attributed to the former group's desire for a more conversational, interactive presentational style. The NNS group, on the other hand, was more concerned with relaying information, and in this respect, frequently used Reason/Cause and Condition adverbials, which aid in building arguments.

The extent to which the achievement groups employed CAs in terms of the sub-categories will now be presented in the same order as above.

4.2.2.1 (a) Circumstance adverbials contingency reason

The sub-category of Circumstance Adverbials contingency reason had the highest frequency of use (1118) among all the CA uses in the student writing. In comparison with the overall use of Co-ordinators (1583 counts) and Relativisers (1911 instances), CA contingency reason expressions were employed to a much lesser extent (1118 occurrences). Nevertheless, CA contingency reason has the fourth highest frequency among the connecting expressions that students used in their essays, alongside CA contingency conditional expressions which ranked fifth (1047 items).

A Contingency CA "shows how one event or state is contingent upon another" (Biber, et al., 1999:779). Six expressions for Contingency CAs were identified, namely: Cause; Reason; Purpose; Concession; Condition, and Result. Contingency CAs are important devices in the two most prevalent types of writing at university, namely exposition and description. In the case of exposition, these resources aid in unveiling the writer's logical reasoning (cf. Just & Carpenter,

1987, in § 2.6.2.1). Stotsky (1983:430) describes the cohesive quality of an expository text as a network of semantic relationships linking together sentences or paragraphs or units of discourse that are structurally independent of each other, helping to create texture (§ 2.6.2.1 (b)).

Findings pertaining to their uses will be described in terms of their distribution in the two achievement groups.

Table 4.4 below reflects the number of occurrences and relative frequencies for the HIGHS and LOWS for the use of CA contingency reason expressions. This is an important sub-category within the CA category since the essay task comprised substantiating a personal opinion on a controversial topic. While justification for a viewpoint essentially relates to content, the language used in conveying this content is as important, more particularly, within the academe. This finding accords with that of Biber, et al. (1999:774) who indicate that in academic writing purpose is most common, followed equally by cause/reason, and condition. Gardezi and Nesi's (2009) study similarly revealed that the two student groups, British and Pakistani who shared the same L1 but were exposed to different local discourse communities, preferred to use causal and adversative expressions to temporal ones in their economics writing. By contrast, Carrió-Pastor's (2013) study showed that the Spanish writers used fewer listing, inferential and contrastive connectors than the English writers in engineering research papers (§ 2.6.2.1 (c)).

Table 4.4: APP CA contingency reason expressions: No of Occurrences LOWS & HIGHS

Connector categories & expressions	Function/analysis	NO. OCC LOWS Total no of words 59702	NO. OCC HIGHS Total no of words 60524	TOTAL NO OF OCCURRENCES
CA CONTIN-GENCY: REASON (CAUSE)	A Contingency adverbial "shows how one event or state is contingent upon the other" (Biber, et al., 1999:779) Reason (associated with subjective assessments) is closely related to Cause (associated with objective assessments) (Biber, et al.,1999:779) In ACAD, Cause / Reason expressions follow Purpose			

	(most common) (Biber, et al., 1999:784)			
Because	Can signal Reason or Cause	486 (0.81) LL 11.17 (overuse)	393 (0.65)	**879**
Since		16 (0.03) LL 0.61 (underuse)	21 (0.03)	**37**
As		50 (0.08) LL 7.83 (underuse)	83 (0.14)	**133**
In this way		0 (0.00) LL 4.12 (underuse)	3 (0.00)	**3**
Due to		15 (0.03) LL 1.24 (underuse)	22 (0.4)	**37**
For	Can signal Reason or Purpose	11 (0.02) LL 1.61 (underuse)	18 (0.03)	**29**
TOTAL NO OF OCCURRENCES		**578 (0.97)** **LL 1.86 (overuse)**	**540 (0.89)**	**1118**

With respect to CA contingency reason adverbials, there was a minimal difference between the two achievement groups, with the LOWS having higher frequencies (578; 0.97) than the HIGHS (540; 0.89). The fact that contingency reason CAs had the highest frequency in this category, and showed a similar distribution in both achievement groups is to be expected given the nature of the essay topic, which required students to provide justification for their opinion on whether university education should be free for all admitted students.

Predictably, the expression with the highest occurrences is *because* (having an overall frequency of 879) with 486 (0.81) and 393 (0.65) of uses by the LOWS and HIGHS respectively, and for which Log Likelihood calculations indicated a highly significant difference in use between these two groups (LL = 11.17, p<0.001). The higher frequency for the LOWS may be their not being familiar with appropriate alternatives for providing reasons for propositions either by way of single expressions or more complex phrases and/or syntactic constructions. The substantially high number for *because* by both achievement groups in comparison with the other expressions that were employed in this sub-category (listed in the table), may suggest an over-reliance on this form to signal a reason relationship between propositions. The high incidence of *because* expressions is similarly observed in Brostoff's (1981) study which shows that learners tend to either over co-ordinate, or over-rely on *because*, or an equivalent in subordinate structures as a result of limited lexical knowledge.

As follows on *because* with a much higher frequency for the HIGHS (83; 0.14) in comparison with 50 (0.08) uses by the LOWS. In this regard, Log Likelihood calculations revealed a significant difference (LL = 7.83, p<0.01). While this occurrence is substantially less frequent in comparison to *because*, this is at least evidence that this form is part of the students' productive use.

Example of *as* use:

[1]   *Yes we agree that most of the economy is grown by the citizens who have higher education **as** they will be working and paying tax, but that does not necessarily mean that their education should be free.* (INF24H)

The difference in use between the HIGHS and LOWS for the expressions, *since* and *due is* negligible, with 21 counts for *since* and 22 counts for *due to* by the former, compared to 16 and 15 counts respectively for the LOWS. This is followed by *for*, with a slightly bigger difference in counts for the HIGHS (18; 0.03) compared with the LOWS (11; 0.02).

[2]   ***For** a University to function properly, money is an enormous requirement.* (BDS16H)

The expression, *in this way*, used to indicated a contingency reason relationship featured in the HIGHS only (3 occurrences), which may suggest that the LOWS were unacquainted with this form/function relationship. A significant difference regarding the use of this feature by the

HIGHS, and non-use by the LOWS was shown by Log Likelihood calculations (LL=4.12, p<0.05).

The findings pertaining to student use of CA contingency conditional expressions follow.

4.2.2.1 (b) Circumstance adverbials contingency conditional

CA <u>contingency conditional</u> expressions comprised the second highest frequencies (1047) in the CA category.

Table 4.5 below indicates the number of occurrences and relative frequencies for both student cohorts for CA contingency conditional expressions.

Table 4.5: APP CA contingency conditional expressions: No of Occurrences LOWS & HIGHS

Connector categories & expressions	Function/analysis	NO. OCC LOWS Total no of words 59702	NO. OCC HIGHS Total no of words 60524	TOTAL NO OF OCCURRENCES
CA CONTINGENCY: CONDITIONAL	A Contingency adverbial "shows how one event or state is contingent upon the other" (Biber, et al., 1999:779) Conditional adverbials express "the conditions which hold on the proposition of the main clause, including both positive and negative conditions" (Biber, et al., 1999:779). **Conditions** can be either open (**real**, where it is not stated whether the condition is fulfilled or not) or **closed** (unreal, where fulfilment is specified) (Biber, et al., 1999:819) Notably common in ACAD to introduce or develop arguments (Biber, et al., 1999:824)			
With/without/within	Conditional AND / OR Reason	30 (0.05) LL 3.95 (underuse)	48 (0.08)	**78**
Provided /given that (VVN /+that)		0 (0.00)	2 (0.00)	**2**

		LL 2.75 (underuse)		
By making (*By* + -*ing*/VVG)		12 (0.02) LL 13.04 (underuse)	37 (0.06)	**49**
Unless		3 (0.01) LL 1.07 (overuse)	1 (0.00)	**4**
In/ as far as		0 (0.00) 4.12 (underuse)	3 (0.00)	**3**
As long as		3 (0.01) LL 0.13 (underuse)	4 (0.01)	**7**
If / then	Both *if* on its own & *if then* counts were done *If / then* combination signals Conditional & Reason / Inference relationship	367 (0.61) LL 1.01 (overuse)	345 (0.57)	**712**
Whether/or not		3 (0.01) LL 1.07 (overuse)	1 (0.00)	**4**
When		85 (0.14) LL 0.63 (overuse)	76 (0.13)	**161**
Once		10 (0.02) LL 0.57 (overuse)	7 (0.01)	**17**
Hypothetical inversion structure (subjunctive verb form in initial position)		0 (0.00) LL 6.86 (underuse)	5 (0.01)	**5**
TOTAL NO OF OCCURRENCES		**515 (0.86) LL 0.09 (underuse)**	**532 (0.88)**	**1047**

The overall difference in the extent to which the student writers employed CA contingency conditional expressions is minimal, with 532 (0.88) instances in the Highs and 510 (0.86) occurrences in the Lows. As was pointed out in the previous section on CA contingency reason expressions, CA contingency conditional expressions are similarly important in developing one's argument, in the sense that particular conditions (both real and unreal, cf. the above Table 4.5 for an explanation of these notions), are deliberated, which was certainly the case in the essay task. The student writers had to consider the realities of the South African past, how this has impacted on the present situation, and how state/government decisions on uplifting and enabling the youth would further impact the future. Warchal (2010:141) describes the function of contingency conditional adverbials as linguistic structures that enable "the dynamic negotiation of meanings rather than a unidirectional transfer of propositions", which characterises the dialogic view of communication. Warchal (2010) distinguishes several types of conditional adverbials, each with their own specific function (refer to § 2.6.1.2 (c) for a description of each).

Of the expressions that were employed by the student writers, *if/then* expressions comprised the most, with an overall frequency of 721, with 367 (0.61) for the LOWs, and 345 (0.57) for the HIGHs, with a minimal difference between the two groups. This finding is not surprising given the popularity of *if*-clauses in speech and writing (Warchal, 2010). In Warchal's (2010) study, content-conditionals signalled by *if*-clauses were the most frequent functional category (57%) compared to *if*-clauses with an interpersonal component (43%) (§ 2.6.1.2 (c)).

When had the second highest (161) number of occurrences with 85 (0.14) for the LOWS, and 76 (0.13) for the HIGHS, with virtually no difference between the two cohorts. *If* and *when* uses were shown to be frequent in the journal article research abstract writing in economics, which Bondi (2004) ascribes to the hypothetical reasoning based on the mathematics model in economics (§ 2.6.1.2 (c)). If these are conventional uses in the sciences, this may, in part, explain the relatively high occurrence in the UL cohort, in the sense that the Medunsa students, all of whom have a secondary school science background, are most likely familiar with hypothetical reasoning and some concomitant language use.

Examples of **if/then** and **when** uses

[3]   *If that keep on happening and the number of people with matric certificates who were not able to go to university keep on increasing,* **then** *this country will face a crisis of lacking skilled labour force.* (INF20H)

[4]   **When** *people are educated, they are knowledgabable, meaning they can stand up for themselves. They are not ignorant, but they are open minded to new ideas.* (COMM57H)

The forms with the third highest frequencies (78 uses in total) are *with/without/within*, with a fair difference in use between the HIGHs (48 uses; 0.08) and LOWs (30 uses; 0.05), for which Log Likelihood calculations indicated a significant difference (LL=3.95, p<0.05).

Using a verb phrase construction (preposition + the *–ing* participle) to create/introduce a conditional is quite complex, as the writer is required to use a finite verb form in the adjoining or main clause. Nevertheless, the HIGHS did so effectively having three times as many instances (37 items; 0.06) as the LOWS which had only 12 (0.02) occurrences. In this respect, Log Likelihood calculations indicated a significant difference (LL=13.3, p<0.001).

Example of preposition + the *-ing* participle use:

[5]   **By giving** *them a goal it will make them work harder to attain it.* (PHARM3H)

Although the LOWS (10; 0.02) had slightly more occurrences of *once* as a conditional marker than the HIGHS (7; 0.01), the former's use tended to be awkward.

Of note, there were five instances (0.01) of the hypothetical inversion structure to signal contingency condition among the HIGHS only, and none among the LOW peers (0.00), for which Log Likelihood calculations revealed a significant difference (LL = 6.86, p<0.01). The lack among the LOWS is not surprising. Not only does this not appear to be a common use in conversation among first or home language users of English in South Africa, this is also a more complex construction, involving the subjunctive form of the verb phrase, in initial position.

Example of **hypothetical inversion** use:

[6]   **Should it happen** *that university is free, this would mean that now students would be able to study what they want to study and not study what they can afford to study, …* (PHARM4H)

Similarly, while the HIGH student cohort employed the expression *in/as far as* to convey a condition three times (0.00), the LOWS did not use this feature (0.00). <u>Here, too, Log Likelihood calculations showed a significant difference between the two achievement groups (LL = 4.12, p<0.05).</u>

How the two student groups employed CA contingency purpose expressions to make connections will be presented next.

4.2.2.1(c) Circumstance adverbials contingency purpose

The CA <u>contingency purpose</u> sub-category had the third highest frequencies (with an overall number of 293) among the CA category.

Table 4.6 below reflects the frequency for CA contingency purpose expressions for the two student groups.

Table 4.6: APP CA contingency purpose expressions: No of Occurrences LOWS & HIGHS

Connector categories & expressions	Functions/analysis	NO. OCC LOWS Total no of words 59702	NO. OCC HIGHS Total no of words 60524	TOTAL NO OF OCCURRENCES
CA CONTINGENCY: PURPOSE	A Contingency adverbial "shows how one event or state is contingent upon the other" (Biber, et al., 1999:779) Purpose expressions can be paraphrased as "for the purpose of" (Biber, et al., 1999:779) Purpose expressions "in academic prose corresponds to explicit identification of the purpose of certain procedures or passages of text" (Biber, et al., 1999:786) Most common in ACAD, followed by Cause / Reason, and Condition (Biber, et al., 1999:784)			
So that		92 (0.15) LL 4.66 (overuse)	66 (0.11)	**158**

So as to		4 (0.01) LL 0.00 (overuse)	4 (0.01)	**8**
In order to/for/that		71 (0.12) LL 1.99 (overuse)	56 (0.09)	**127**
TOTAL NO OF OCCURRENCES		**167** **(0.28)** **LL 6.33** **(overuse)**	**126** **(0.21)**	**293**

CA contingency purpose expressions, likewise, are to be expected in the student essays given the nature of the task, argument (where the purpose is to defend a perspective on a usually controversial topic, or stated differently, to persuade the audience of the validity of the writer's stance). Regarding the essay topic, the student writers would need to explain the purpose/aim of either providing, or not providing free funding to admitted university students. Overall, there was a fairly large difference in the use of contingency purpose expressions between the HIGHS (126; 0.21) and LOWS (167; 0.28), for which Log Likelihood calculations revealed a significant difference (LL = 6.33, p<0.05).

The higher incidence among the LOWS is attributed to substantially higher occurrences of two particular expressions, namely *so that* (92 items for the LOWS; 0.15) and *in order to/for/that* (71 items; 0.12) in comparison with the HIGHS which had 66 (0.11) and 56 (0.09) respectively. Log Likelihood calculations indicated a significant difference regarding the employment of *so that* between the two student groups (LL = 4.66, p<0.05).

A possible explanation for the above finding regarding the use of *so that* by the LOWS could relate to *so that* being a fairly common occurrence in everyday language making it a familiar expression.

Example of *in order for* use:

[7]   In conclusion, *in order for* every students to be educated and obtain their degrees, government, communities, provinces and other parties involved must come together and make education at university free for every student admitted at any university. (MS80H)

The lack of range of expressions in this sub-category, and a tendency towards an over-reliance on these two expressions suggests a need to explore the range of expressions that can be employed to signal this relation in writing instruction.

Next, the findings pertaining to how the students used Circumstance Adverbial Time expressions will be presented.

4.2.2.1(d) Circumstance adverbials time

Circumstance Adverbials (CAs) with a <u>time</u> reference had the fourth highest occurrence (a total of 145 counts for the two achievement groups combined) out of the six sub-categories of CAs.

Table 4.7 below indicates the frequency for appropriate use of CA time expressions by the two achievement cohorts.

Table 4.7: APP CA time expressions: No of Occurrences LOWS & HIGHS

Connector categories & expressions	Function/analysis	NO. OCC LOWS Total no of words 59702	NO. OCC HIGHS Total no of words 60524	TOTAL NO OF OCCURRENCES
CIRCUMSTANCE ADVERBIALS (CA)				
TIME	Time adverbials can indicate position in time; duration; frequency and a temporal relationship between 2 events/states (Biber, et al., 1999:777) The student use comprised temporal relationships			
While		7 (0.01) LL 2.28 (underuse)	14 (0.02)	**21**
As		6 (0.01)	21 (0.03)	**27**

		LL 8.62 (underuse)		
Since		1 (0.00) LL 4.98 (underuse)	7 (0.01)	**8**
As long as		0 (0.00) LL 5.49 (underuse)	4 (0.01)	**4**
During		1 (0.00) LL 0.00 (overuse)	1 (0.00)	**2**
Throughout		0 (0.00) LL 1.37 (underuse)	1 (0.00)	**1**
After		11 (0.02) LL 0.03 (underuse)	12 (0.02)	**23**
Thereafter		1 (0.00) LL 1.02 (underuse)	3 (0.00)	**4**
Afterwards		1 (0.00) LL 0.00 (overuse)	1 (0.00)	**2**
When		29 (0.05) LL 0.78 (overuse)	23 (0.04)	**52**
Where		1 (0.00) LL 1.40 (overuse)	0 (0.00)	**1**
TOTAL NO OF OCCURRENCES		**58 (0.10)** **LL 5.45 (underuse)**	**87 (0.14)**	**145**

In comparison with the other categories of CA use, time adverbials were employed relatively infrequently by both achievement groups (with an overall count of 145), with the HIGHS, nevertheless, employing substantially more (87; 0.14) than the LOWS (58; 0.10). Despite the relatively overall infrequent use of time adverbials by the UL student cohort, Log Likelihood calculations, nevertheless, indicated a significant difference in use between the two student cohorts (LL = 5.45, p<0.05).

The generally limited use by the UL student writers is in line with the finding by Biber, et al. (1999:820) that time clauses are very common in fiction and news, and feature less in academic registers. Gardezi and Nesi's (2009) study similarly revealed that time adverbials were the least preferred by both the British and Pakistani student cohorts, who showed a preference for causal and adversative expressions in their economics writing (§ 2.6.2.1(c)).

Four time-related meanings are signaled by time Circumstance Adverbials, namely: position in time, indicating when an event took place; duration, indicating how long an event lasted; frequency, which describes how often an event occurs, and a temporal relationship between two events or states. The UL student use comprised the latter.

When time references were made in the student essays, these were in relation to the apartheid regime which made upward mobility for non-whites (the term used by the apartheid government to designate people of colour) near impossible, or to the responsibility of the present democratic government to ensure growth opportunities for the youth of South Africa.

The time expressions that featured the most were: *when* (total occurrences 52); *as* (total 27 items); *after* (total 23 items); and *while* (21 items). There was virtually no difference of *when*-use by the LOWS (29; 0.05) compared to the HIGHS (23; 0.04).

The time expression *as* was employed to a very great extent by the HIGHS (21; 0.03) compared to the LOWS (6; 0.01). Log Likelihood calculations in this regard showed a significant difference (LL = 8.62, p<0.01).

Example of **as** use:

[8] *As more and more people study at university, it means more and more people will be successful and creat a better nation.* (OT30L)

Similarly, *since* occurred 7 times (0.01) in the HIGHS compared to only one use (0.00) by the LOWS, <u>with Log Likelihood calculations indicating a significant difference in use between the two student cohorts (LL = 4.98, p<0.05).</u>

Example of a *since* use

[9] *University education is the most needed thing in one's life **since** well most of the job opportunities available are the ones that needs the qualifications.* (OH2L)

After was used to a very similar extent by the two achievement groups, with 12 instances (0.02) in the HIGHS, and 11 (also 0.02) in the LOWS. *While* was used twice as much by the HIGHS (14; 0.02) than the LOWS (7; 0.01).

The slightly higher counts for *when* in the LOWS is perhaps a reflection of this group's tendency to employ connecting expressions in formal writing that are common in conversation. This finding may explain the substantially higher numbers for the uses of the more formal expressions *as* (almost four times as many uses) and *while* (twice as many uses) appearing in the HIGHS in comparison with the LOWS.

Example of *while* use:

[10] *If the study fee is free, then a lot of people will be encouraged to study harder **while** they are still in school because they will know that they are going somewhere after completing their matric.* (PHARM16H)

With respect to infrequent expressions, *as long as* to signal a time connection only occurred in the HIGHS (4 items; 0.01), with none in the LOWS, <u>for which Log Likelihood calculations revealed a significant difference (LL = 5.49, p<0.05).</u>

Whereas *thereafter* was only used once (0.00) by the LOWS, there were 3 occurrences in the HIGHS (0.00). *Throughout* only featured once in the HIGHS.

Next, the findings pertaining to the sub-category of CA contingency concession expressions will be presented.

4.2.2.1(e) Circumstance Adverbials contingency concessive

CA <u>contingency concessive</u> connectors constituted the second lowest use (an overall frequency of 71) by the UL students, with 42 (0.07) occurrences for the HIGHS, and 29 (0.05) for the LOWS.

Table 4.8 below shows the generally low frequency for the two student groups, which is a matter of concern given the important role of CA contingency concessive expressions in argument. They are useful in mitigating strong claims, in that by making concessions, one's views are more easily accepted, or at least, tolerated by what may be opposition. Making concessions is also important in the reasoning process where one takes into account various or multiple likelihoods or circumstances that may obtain. It would appear that students, generally, do not understand the concept of concession, which therefore merits attention in writing pedagogy.

Table 4.8: APP CA contingency concessive expressions: No of Occurrences LOWS & HIGHS

Connector categories & expressions	Functions/analysis	NO. OCC LOWS Total no of words 59702	NO. OCC HIGHS Total no of words 60524	TOTAL NO OF OCCURRENCES
CA CONTINGENCY: CONCESSIVE	A Contingency adverbial "shows how one event or state is contingent upon the other" (Biber, et al., 1999:779) Concessive expressions often "show the limitations of certain facts, events, or claims" (Biber, et al., 1999:825) "A Concessive expresses an idea / information that runs counter to either the rest of the meaning unit or clause, or main clause" (Biber, et al., 1999:779) Concessive uses are notably more common in the written registers, especially NEWS & ACAD than in the other registers (Biber, et al., 1999:821; 824)			
Though		3 (0.01) LL 0.48 (underuse)	5 (0.01)	**8**

Although		11 (0.02) LL 0.14 (underuse)	13 (0.02)	**24**
Even though		6 (0.01) LL 0.00 (overuse)	6 (0.01)	**12**
Yet		0 (0.00) LL 1.37 (underuse)	1 (0.00)	**1**
Regardless / of		5 (0.01) LL 1.63 (underuse)	10 (0.02)	**15**
Irrespective of		1 (0.00) LL 0.33 (underuse)	2 (0.00)	**3**
No matter		1 (0.00) LL 1.40 (overuse)	0 (0.00)	**1**
Whilst		0 (0.00) LL 1.37 (underuse)	1 (0.00)	**1**
As ... as		2 (0.00) LL 0.00 (overuse)	2 (0.00)	**4**
Along with		0 (0/00) LL 2.75 (underuse)	2 (0.00)	**2**
TOTAL NO OF OCCURRENCES		**29 (0.05) LL 2.22 (underuse)**	**42 (0.07)**	**71**

The forms that predominated were: *although* (with an overall frequency of 24); followed by *regardless/of* (15 items in total); *even though* (with 12 items overall); and *though* (totaling 8 items).

Example of ***although*** use

[11]   ***Although*** *many people will disagree with the idea of free education it is still the best option for everybody, but mostly students and their parents.* (BDS25H)

Example of ***even though*** use:

[12]   *There are bursaries but unfortunately not all students get it, because you can get them only if you can meet the needed requirements. This can lead students to stay at home **even though** they have passed their matric.* (DIET24H)

Example of ***regardless of*** use:

[13]   *They should all be given a fair chance to study whatever course they want **regardless of** the price.* (MA23H)

As can be seen from the number of occurrences and relative frequencies in Table 4.8 above for the various CA contingency concessive expressions, the two achievement groups used these sparsely and to a similar extent, with no significant differences for any of the expressions.

Sparsely used expressions, namely: *as … as* (total 4 uses); *irrespective of* (total 3 uses), and *along with* (total 2 uses) were employed as follows. *As … as* was used to the same extent by the two student cohorts; the HIGHS used *irrespective of* twice as much as the LOWS; whereas *along with* was employed only by the HIGHS.

Possible explanations for the above may be the students' not needing to make concessions, or not making these when required, or doing so inappropriately. However, since the use of connectors in discontinuative functional relations relating to Truth/Validity (particularly Concession/Contraexpectation, for example: *but; although; however; nevertheless; despite this*) and Amplification were found to be most closely associated with high coherence ratings in Hubbard's (1993) study (§ 2.6.2.1(c)), and what Hubbard (ibid.) argues are vital to expository writing, students should be made aware of this resource for academic writing purposes. The importance of concessive clauses in academic argumentation rests on two functions they serve: "[to] highlight information which supports the position of the speaker/writer on the topic at hand

and, simultaneously to extenuate the importance of conflicting information which may not support his/her position" (Wiechmann & Kerz, 2013:3).

Finally, the findings relating to students' use of Circumstance Adverbial contingency result expressions will be presented.

4.2.2.1(f) Circumstance Adverbial contingency result

Circumstance Adverbial <u>contingency result</u> expressions were the least used (only a total of 51 occurrences) by the student writers in the CA category.

A Contingency adverbial "shows how one event or state is contingent upon the other" (Biber, et al., 1999:779). Here, the result is contingent upon an event/state.

Table 4.9 below displays the frequency for the appropriate use of CA contingency result expressions in the two student cohorts.

Table 4.9: APP CA contingency result expressions: No of Occurrences LOWS & HIGHS

Connector categories & expressions	Functions/analysis	NO. OCC LOWS Total no of words 59702	NO. OCC HIGHS Total no of words 60524	TOTAL NO OF OCCURRENCES
CA CONTINGENCY: RESULT	A Contingency adverbial "shows how one event or state is contingent upon the other" (Biber, et al., 1999:779) Here, the result is contingent upon an event/ state			
As a result		7 (0.01) LL 0.00 (overuse)	7 (0.01)	**14**
Due to		12 (0.02) LL 4.49 (underuse)	25 (0.04)	**37**
TOTAL NO OF OCCURRENCES		**19 (0.13) LL 3.18 (underuse)**	**32 (0.15)**	**51**

The frequencies for the student cohort in the CA contingency result sub-category constitute the lowest incidence with overall frequencies of 32 (0.15) for the HIGHS and 19 (0.13) for the LOWS. A possible reason for the slightly higher use by the HIGHS may be that they, unlike the LOWS, were able to recognise results/outcomes associated with certain states/events, or that they felt confident in marking results/outcomes explicitly, which the LOWS may have chosen to avoid stating results too openly in order to save face. In addition, the students' employment of Linking Adverbials result/inference expressions (in total, there were 217 instances, (cf. Linking Adverbials result/inference expressions in § 4.3.2.4) may have contributed towards the low frequency of CA contingency result expressions in the essays generally.

Only two expressions were employed, with *due to* having the highest frequencies (25) in the HIGHS (0.04) compared to almost half the number (12) in the LOWS (0.02). Log Likelihood calculations indicated a significant difference between the use of due to by the two student cohorts (LL = 4.49, p<0.05).

Example of *due to* use:

[14]   *If we have the right to education let us not be excluded at the Varsities **due to** financial challenges that we might be facing.* (PHARM29H)

This was followed by 7 occurrences (0.01) each for both the achievement groups for the expression *as a result.* What may shed some light on these findings is that other forms may have been used to convey propositions involving contingent result relations, or the students' uses may be have been inappropriate (cf. CE Inappropriate uses, § 4.3.3).

What follows is the presentation of findings pertaining to students' use of relativisers.

4.2.2.2 Relativisers

The overall frequencies (1911 occurrences) for Relativiser (REL) use between the two achievement groups differs substantially with the HIGHS having a total of 917 occurrences and the LOWS having a total of 994 occurrences. In this regard, Log Likelihood calculations revealed significant differences in the use of Relativisers between the two cohorts (LL = 4.25, p<0.05).

Relativisers can be either a relative pronoun or relative adverb. The Relativiser anaphorically refers to the same person or thing as the head noun (often referred to as the antecedent). Across the four main registers, namely: Conversation (CONV); Fiction (FICT); Academic (ACAD) and News (NEWS), *who, which* and *that* are especially common (Biber, et al., 1999:608-9). *Which*, followed by *that*, is most frequent in ACAD. In CONV, *which* is relatively rare, whereas *that* is moderately common. Relativiser omission (also termed ZERO use) is most frequent in FICT, but also a common feature of CONV (ibid.).

The remaining five (*whom/whose/where/when/why*) are considerably less common, with *where* having the most use and *why* being rare.

The relative pronoun *who* is used almost exclusively with animate (human) heads, rather than *which* or *that*; however, *that* is as common as *who* in CONV (Biber, et al., 1999:612-3).

The Relativiser *whose* "has a syntactic role comparable to the possessive determiners (my; your; etc.) and is typically used to mark a possessive relationship between a human head noun and some other noun phrase" (Biber, et al., 1999:617). In addition, *whose* can "mark possessive relations with collective entities, such as corporations, government agencies, clubs, societies, and committees" (ibid.).

Whose can also signal genitive relationships with inanimate, and/or abstract nouns (its main use in ACAD) (Biber, et al., 1999:617-8); an alternative for this use is *of which*, and although the latter is considerably less common than *whose*, *of which* occurs almost as often as *whose* in ACAD (Biber, et al., 1999:618). This *of which* use did not appear in the students' writing. This lack will be pointed out in the consideration of inappropriate (INAPP) CE uses, which follows on the discussion of appropriate CE uses.

The following Table 4.10 shows the frequency for appropriate Relativiser use by the two student cohorts.

Table 4.10: APP Relativiser use: No of Occurrences LOWS & HIGHS

Connector categories & expressions	Function/analysis	NO. OCC LOWS Total no of words 59702	NO. OCC HIGHS Total no of words 60524	TOTAL NO OF OCCURRENCES
RELATIVISERS	Identify reference of Head Noun (HN)/add some description *Who / which / that* are the most common REL			
Who/m	Occurs almost exclusively with human heads (Biber, et al., 1999:613) Relatively common in FICTION (Biber, et al., 1999:611)	570 (0.95) LL 8.25 (overuse)	484 (0.80)	**1054**
Whose	Moderately common in all registers More common than either *which* and *that* in NEWS (Biber, et al., 1999:611) Marks possessive relations between a human head noun and another noun OR with collective entities (Biber, et al., 1999:617) Can also mark other genitive relationships with inanimate, or abstract head nouns (ibid.)	3 (0.01) LL 0.48 (underuse_	5 (0.01)	**8**
Which	Is the most common REL overall, with different distributions across registers (Biber, et al., 1999:609) Is the most frequent in ACAD (Biber, et al., 1999:611) Rare in CONV (ibid.)	127 (0.21) LL 0.07 (underuse)	133 (0.22)	**260**
That	Occurs freely with animate heads, especially in CONV (Biber, et al., 1999:613) Also common in ACAD, but follows *which* (Biber, et al., 1999:611) Moderately common in CONV (ibid.)	239 (0.40) LL 0.32 (overuse)	230 (0.38)	**469**
Where / when	Sometimes both forms can be used interchangeably to indicate times, periods, cases (Biber, et al., 1999:628) Used to mark logical rather than physical locations (Biber, et al., 1999:626), even when the head noun refers to a physical location, *where* is often used to signal a knowledge domain (ibid.) Counts for *where* only	19 (0.03) LL 1.96 (underuse)	29 (0.05)	**48**

	Where is common in all registers (*when* is much less common) (Biber, et al., 1999:626)			
Wherein (in which respect)	To signal the manner in which / not strictly a place adverbial Used to mark logical rather than physical locations (Biber, et al., 1999:626)	0 (0.00) LL 1.37 (underuse)	1 (0.00)	**1**
Whereby (by what/which means; by consequence of which)	To signal the means by which / not strictly a place adverbial Used to mark logical rather than physical locations (Biber, et al., 1999:626)	1 (0.00) LL 0.33 (underuse)	2 (0.00)	**3**
Whether	Used interrogatively to express indirect questions / used as a substitute for *if* (Biber, et al., 1999:683; 690) *Whether* interrogative uses more common in ACAD and *if* interrogative more common in CONV (Biber, et al., 1999:691) Also used to signal CA Contingency & Condition relations (Biber, et al., 1999:844)	3 (0.01) LL 0.98 (underuse)	6 (0.01)	**9**
Why	*Why* is particularly rare in all registers (Biber, et al., 1999:609) Commonly occurs with only one head noun – reason (Biber, et al., 1999:628) Commonly used in the fixed expression *reason why* (Biber, et al., 1999:629)	32 (0.05) LL 0.50 (overuse)	27 (0.04)	**59**
Zero use OR REL OMISSION	Although common in NEWS & ACAD registers (Biber et al., 1999:621) Zero use was not counted in this study Omitting the relativiser is seen as contributing towards a more colloquial tone to informative prose / expository text			
TOTAL NO OF OCCURRENCES		**994 (1.66)** **LL 4.25 (overuse)**	**917 (1.52)**	**1911**

The two Relativisers which were used most by both achievement groups were *who* with an overall total of 1054 uses and *that* (used as a pronoun for both human and non-human entities) with an overall total of 469 items.

Who-uses by the LOWS (570; 0.95) are substantially higher than the HIGHS (484; 0.80) for which Log Likelihood calculations reveal a highly significant difference in use (LL = 8.26, p<0.01). One explanation for the high incidence in the LOWS is that this student cohort tended to repeat the phrase, *students who are admitted*, instead of treating this as old information that could safely be omitted, and which, in fact, became tedious for the reader.

The relatively frequent (an overall total of 469 uses) and similar use of *that* for humans by both groups of student writers with the HIGHS having 230 instances (0.38) compared to 239 (0.40) for the LOWS can most likely be attributed to its frequency in conversation, which the students transfer to their writing practice. However, this use might be viewed as colloquial as is the case with the Medunsa campus EAP staff, and therefore inappropriate when referring to persons in academic texts.

The relativiser *which* constituted the third highest frequency (260 instances), with a negligible difference between the HIGHS (133; 0.22) and LOWS (127; 0.23). These uses introduced relative clauses qualifying new ideas/previous information. Overall, when *which* was employed, the use was appropriate; however, as will be indicated in the treatment of inappropriate uses of CEs, there were several instances where, instead of using *which* to introduce a relative clause to signal a connection, other devices were employed either wrongly, or clumsily.

Example of ***which*** use:

[15]   … *first and fore-most, in our country there's a high poverty rate **which** is constantly raising on a daily basis, ...* (CEMS3L)

The minimally higher number of cases (32; 0.05) of *why* use by the LOWS compared to the HIGHS with 27 instances (0.04) could probably be attributed to the fact that *why* as a connector, which is structurally relatively simple, provides the writer with a quick, compact reason/result explanation resource.

Regarding *where*-uses, there were 29 instances in the HIGHS (0.05) which is slightly higher than the LOWS, who had 19 cases (0.03). The HIGHS appeared more at ease with using *where* to refer to situations/circumstances than the LOWS.

Example of ***where*** use:

[16]   *It is a way to fight poverty aswell as crime by taking our children off the streets into lecture rooms **where** they get initiated to become great leaders of tomorrow …* (DIET33H)

The overall distribution of *whose* (a total of 8 items) and *whether* (a total of 9 items) by both student cohorts is virtually the same. *Whether* and *whose* are used almost twice as much by the HIGHS than the LOWS, with 3 cases (0.01) of *whether* in the LOWS and 6 cases (0.01) in the HIGHS. *Whose* occurred 3 times (0.01) in the LOWS and 5 times (0.01) in the HIGHS. The limited use of both these connectors by the UL cohort may be that these words are not yet part of their productive use in writing. Notwithstanding, they would very probably be understood in speech and in their reading of texts (i.e. the student's passive language reservoir).

Next, the findings relating to appropriate co-ordinator use between the two student groups will be presented.

4.2.2.3 Co-ordinators

Although *and* is the most common co-ordinator in all the registers (conversation; fiction; news; academic), its frequency in CONV is comparatively low (attributed to the high frequency of verbs in this register, and therefore more clauses, requiring clause-level connectors; and the general simplicity of phrases in CONV, not requiring co-ordination at the phrase-level, as is the case in academic prose, where a high degree of phrase-level co-ordination is necessitated in developing concepts and their relationships (Biber, et al., 1999:82-3). While *and* is typically used as a phrase-level connector in ACAD, it is generally used as a clause-level connector in CONV and FICT, though to a lesser extent (Biber, et al., 1999:81). The connector *but* is more frequent in CONV and FICT and least frequent in ACAD. An explanation for this by Biber, et al. (1999:82) is that the interactive nature of CONV often requires constant negotiation between participants involving modification of statements; expression of contrary opinions; refuting or rejecting statements, etc. *But* can fulfil these "hands-on" communicative needs/functions. Biber, et al., (1999:82) point out that the low frequency of *but* in ACAD may be that contrast is expressed rather by concessive expressions, such as *although; however; nevertheless*, which are more frequent in academic prose than the other registers. *Or* is by far the most common in ACAD than in the other registers, given the nature of academic discourse that considers alternative modes of explanation. *Nor* rarely appears in any of the registers.

Table 4.11 below indicates the frequency of appropriate co-ordinator use by the two achievement groups.

Table 4.11: APP Co-ordinator use: No of Occurrences LOWS & HIGHS

Connector categories & expressions	Function/analysis	NO. OCC LOWS Total no of words 59702	NO. OCC HIGHS Total no of words 60524	TOTAL NO OF OCCURRENCES
CO-ORDINATORS /CO-ORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS	Build phrase and clause structures that are co-ordinate (equal). For the current study, mainly clausal co-ordination was analysed. Phrasal co-ordination was considered when 2 new ideas were being linked.			
ADDITION				
And	Typically used as a phrase-level connector Only counted when 2 new (as opposed to the extension of the same idea) ideas were being linked	544 (0.91) LL 5.07 (overuse)	479 (0.79)	**1023**
CONTRAST				
But	Chiefly connects clauses	191 (0.32) LL 0.58 (underuse)	209 (0.35)	**400**
ALTERNATIVE				
Or/nor	Counts combined with *nor*	58 (0.10) LL 0.14 (underuse)	63 (0.10)	**121**
CORRELATIVE CO-ORDINATORS				
ALTERNATIVE				
Either/or		1 (0.00) LL 0.00 (overuse)	1 (0.00)	**2**
Neither/nor		0 (0.00) LL 1.37 (underuse)	1 (0.00)	**1**
CONTRAST				
On the other hand		0 (0.00)	2 (0.00)	**2**

		LL 2.75 (underuse)		
Not only/but also		12 (0.02) LL 2.85 (underuse)	22 (0.04)	**34**
TOTAL OCCURRENCES		**806 (1.35)** **LL 1.00 (overuse)**	**777 (1.28)**	**1583**

The difference between co-ordinator use by the HIGHS (with a total of 777 occurrences; 1.28) and LOWS (with a total of 806 occurrences; 1.35) is minimal.

With respect to the types of co-ordinators that were employed, for both groups, the highest numbers were for *and* (with an overall total of 1023), with the LOWS (544; 0.91) having substantially more than the HIGHS (479; 0.79). Log Likelihood calculations indicated a significant difference in the use of *and* between the two achievement groups (LL=5.08, p<0.05).

Example of ***and*** use:

 [13] *These children want to change the situations at their homes, they also want to [pave] the way for the brothers and sisters that come after them **and** therefore they should not be sent home because they don't have money.* (BDS18H)

The co-ordinator with the second highest overall counts was *but*. There were 400 instances of *but* in the student writing. The HIGHS (209; 0.35) had minimally higher frequencies than the LOWS (191; 0.32). The co-ordinator *or* was used by both student cohorts to a similar extent with 63 instances (0.10) in the HIGHS and 58 cases (0.10) in the LOWS. The expression *not only/but also* occurred 22 times (0.04) in the HIGHS compared to 12 cases (0.02) in the LOWS. In the study by Gardezi and Nesi (2009), both student cohorts (having the same L1, English, but belonging to different local discourse communities: English versus Pakistani) used *but* frequently in their economics writing, with significantly higher uses by the Pakistani students (§ 2.6.2.1 (c)). What is noteworthy is that expert writers were found to use *but* in sentence-initial position (Shaw, 2009, cited in Gardezi & Nesi, 2009). In the current study, the student cohorts tended to

avoid using co-ordinators in sentence-initial position, most probably due to being taught not to do so.

The generally high frequencies for the expressions *and* (to add ideas) and *but* (to signal contrast or concession) in the student writing is some indication that students do not realise that *and* conveys a very weak link between ideas, and that there may be far better options for *and* and *but* uses. Also, students may be resorting to these expressions because they do not present major challenges in terms of construction in generating text.

Finally, the findings pertaining to how the two student cohorts employed Linking Adverbials as connectors will be presented.

4.2.2.4 Linking adverbials

Linking adverbials (LAs) are relevant to academic prose for "developing arguments or signalling the connection between specific information and an author's point" (Biber, et al., 1999:881).

The main function of Linking Adverbials is to "make explicit the relationship between two units of discourse. They are important devices for creating textual cohesion, alongside co-ordinators and subordinators" (Biber, et al.1999: 765; 875). Five types of LAs were identified in the student texts. A study by Shaw (2009) revealed that students used LAs more frequently than professional writers (§ 2.6.1.2 (c)). Commonly used expressions were: *however; thus; therefore; for example* and *then*, with students overusing *though* and *then*. While the professional writers did not employ *again*, this use featured in the student writing. Although LAs clearly serve an important transitional function in discourse, they are also frequently overused by less skilled writers, who, as Lei (2012:268) indicates, tend to use Linking Adverbials "for surface logicality and to disguise their poor writing". Lei (ibid.) suggests several reasons for this problem (§ 2.6.1.2 (c)). In this regard, Charles (2011) points out the importance of addressing both the phraseology and semantics of the LA in order not to create the impression that adverbials are freely interchangeable, which would obscure the considerable differences between them (§ 2.6.1.2 (c)).

Table 4.12 below reflects the frequency of the appropriate (APP) uses for the five types of Linking Adverbials by the two achievement groups.

Table 4.12: APP use of Linking Adverbials: No of Occurrences LOWS & HIGHS

LINKING ADVERBIALS (LA)	NO. OCC LOWS Total no of words 59702	NO. OCC HIGHS Total no of words 60524	TOTAL NO OF OCCURRENCES
Apposition (3)	91 (0.15) LL 2.09 (underuse)	113 (0.19)	**204**
Result/Inference (2)	102 (0.17) LL 0.61 (underuse)	115 (0.19)	**217**
Concessive (5)	24 (0.04) LL 0.80 (underuse)	31 (0.05)	**55**
Contrast (4)	33 (0.06) LL 3.28 (underuse)	50 (0.08)	**83**
Addition (1)	145 (0.24) LL 1.04 (overuse)	130 (0.21)	**275**
TOTAL NO OF OCCURRENCES	**395 (0.66)** **LL 1.76 (underuse)**	**439 (0.73)**	**834**

For the current study, five sub-categories of Linking Adverbials (LA) were applicable. Neither the sub-category Transition Linking Adverbials nor a component of the sub-category, Enumerative Linking Adverbials were considered. The overall differences in use between the two achievement groups are presented below.

Linking adverbials <u>addition</u> expressions had the most uses (overall 275 occurrences) in the LA category. The LOWS had a minimally highenumber (145; 0.24) than the HIGHS (130;

0.21). Only additive and not enumerative LAs were counted in this study. Additive expressions are used to mark the next unit of discourse as being added to the previous one (Biber, et al., 1999:876). Additive linking adverbials may also show explicitly that the second item is similar to the first. In Lei's (2012) study, both the doctoral Chinese students and the professional writers used additive LAs to a similar extent, and used this category most frequently (§ 2.6.1.2 (c)).

The second highest use was for <u>result/inference</u> (217 occurrences overall), with a minor difference between the HIGHS (115 instances; 0.19) and LOWS (102 instances; 0.17).

In academic registers, the result/inference category is the most common (Biber, et al., 1999:881), functioning to mark the conclusions that the writer expects the reader to draw.

The relatively high incidence of result/inference expressions suggests that the students, in general, were able to make or recognise either practical or conceptual links between ideas, or that they believed it necessary to state these links explicitly to develop ideas, and/or support their argument. The relatively high occurrence in the LA result/inference sub-category may, in part, explain the relatively infrequent use of CA contingency result connectors by both achievement groups (§ 4.3.2.1 (f)). In a similar vein, the doctoral Chinese students in Lei's (2012) study used more causal/resultive LAs than the professional writers who used more contrast LAs (§ 2.6.1.2 (c)).

The sub-category comprising the third highest use was <u>apposition</u> (204 occurrences overall), with a minimal difference between the HIGHS (113; 0.19) and the LOWS (115; 0.17). This finding is perhaps not unexpected since the expressions that were employed by the student writers (cf. sample extracts in Chapter 3) are widespread in lectures, where examples are often helpful in making new information accessible to students. This is possibly an indication of the students' awareness of the need to provide illustrations to clarify ideas, or to make abstract concepts concrete, which are useful strategies in developing ideas.

<u>Contrast</u> expressions follow on (in fourth place) result/inference uses (with an overall frequency of 83), with the HIGHS having fairly higher numbers (50 uses; 0.08) than the LOWS with 33 counts (0.06).

In the essays, contrast forms were used to compare the current situation of the majority of learners/students in South Africa with the envisaged change that could occur if they were afforded educational opportunities at universities. The slightly higher frequency of contrast expressions among the HIGHS is possibly attributed to their choosing to explicitly signal comparisons between the benefits of higher education and the problems associated with a lack thereof, or they were able to identify and explore the advantages and disadvantages in this regard, all of which the LOWS may have had difficulty with. This is, of course, not only a language but also a content issue. Lei's (2012) study showed that the professional writers used more contrast LAs than the doctoral Chinese students (§ 2.6.1.2 (c)).

<u>Concessive</u> uses comprise the sub-category in last position regarding extent of use (the lowest frequencies, with an overall count of 55), with 31 (0.05) occurrences in the HIGHS and 26 (0.04) in the LOWS. A possible explanation for the relative paucity of concessive expressions has already been suggested in the section above on CA contingency concessive uses.

The findings pertaining to how the two achievement groups employed specific types of Linking Adverbials and expressions in their essays will be presented next.

4.2.2.4 (a) Linking adverbials addition

<u>Addition Linking Adverbials</u> add items of discourse to one another, or indicate explicitly how a second item is similar to the first (Biber, et al., 1999:875-6). Enumerative (not counted in this study), Additive LAs and Appositional LAs are more common in academic prose than in the other registers (Biber, et al., 1999:880).

Table 4.15 below indicates the LA addition frequency of use for the two student groups.

Table 4.15: APP LA addition expressions: No of Occurrences LOWS & HIGHS

Connector categories & expressions	Functions/analysis	NO. OCC LOWS Total no of words 59702	NO. OCC HIGHS Total no of words 60524	TOTAL NO OF OCCURRENCES
LA ADDITION	Additive expressions are used to mark the next unit of discourse as being added to the previous one (Biber, et al., 1999:876)			

	Additive linking adverbials may also show explicitly that the second item is similar to the first Occur more commonly in academic prose than other registers (Biber, et al., 1999:880) Enumeration expressions were not counted in the analysis			
Also	To signal that a current proposition is being added to a previous one Is more common in expository registers (Biber, et al., 1999: 795)	129 (0.22) LL 4.38 (overuse)	99 (0.14)	**228**
Further/more		1 (0.00) LL 4.98 (underuse)	7 (0.01)	**8**
As well as		6 (0.01) LL 0.06 (underuse)	7 (0.01)	**13**
Moreover		3 (0.01) LL 0.48 (underuse)	5 (0.01)	**8**
In addition to		1 (0.00) LL 1.02 (underuse)	3 (0.00)	**4**
Another		0 (0.00) LL 4.12 (underuse)	3 (0.00)	**3**
Similarly		0 (0.00) LL 1.37 (underuse)	1 (0.00)	**1**
Likewise		1 (0.00) LL 0.00 (overuse)	1 (0.00)	**2**
Besides		3 (0.01)	3 (0.00)	**6**

		LL 0.00 (overuse)		
Too		0 (0.00) LL 1.37 (underuse)	1 (0.00)	**1**
On top of		1 (0.00) LL 1.40 (overuse)	0 (0.00)	**1**
TOTAL NO OF OCCURRENCES		**145 (0.24)** **LL 1.04 (overuse)**	**130 (0.21)**	**275**

Five forms (*also; further/more; as well/as; moreover; besides*) featured the most in the UL student cohort.

Also had by far the highest occurrence, with the LOWS having 129 counts (0.22) compared to the HIGHS with 99 counts (0.14). Log Likelihood calculations revealed a significant difference in use (LL = 4.38, p<0.05). While corpus research has shown that LA additive expressions are common in academic prose (Biber, et al., 1999:885), the student use of *also* was often redundant, rather than appropriate (cf. inappropriate CE uses in § 4.3.3).

Example of ***also*** use:

[14] *In developing countries there is a great shortage of proffessions who may serve the community (doctors; nurses). The lack of these educated people leads to a lack of healthcare and many other public services. This **also** means that scientific breakthroughs are less likely to occur or be implemented.* (MA34H)

While the spread for *as well as* between the achievement groups was virtually the same, with 7 occurrences (0.01) in the HIGHS and 6 (0.01) for the LOWS, the extent of the difference for the expression, *further/more*, was just slightly higher, with 8 instances (0.01) in the HIGHS, and for which Log Likelihood calculations indicated a significant difference (LL = 4.98, p<0.05).

Likewise and *besides* were used to the same extent by both student cohorts, with 1 case each (0.01) for *likewise*, and 3 cases in each cohort (with relative frequencies of 0.00 for the HIGHS and 0.01 for the LOWS) for *besides*. Both the expressions *similarly* and *too* occurred once in the

HIGHS. In some genres or text types, the use of *too* may be viewed as having colloquial overtones, and may therefore be dispreferred.

Only the HIGHS employed the expression *another* as a Linking device three times (0.00), with no uses by the LOWS (0.00), <u>for which Log Likelihood calculations showed a highly significant difference (LL = 4.12, p<0.01).</u>

Findings pertaining to the use of Linking Adverbial Result/Inference connectors will be considered next.

4.2.2.4 (b) Result/Inference linking adverbials

Result/inference Linking Adverbials explicitly indicate that the second unit of discourse states the result or consequence, whether logical or practical, of the preceding discourse. In conversation (CONV), so is a common expression marking a resultive relationship (Biber, et al., 1999:877). (The correct interpretation of *so*, however, depends on context and co-text).

This category also includes inferential LAs which mark one idea as an inferred result of another (Biber, et al., 1999:878). Whereas many resultive linking adverbials are overt markers of a resultive relationship, inferential linking adverbials are not as overt (ibid.).

Table 4.16 below displays the frequency of use for the two achievement groups.

Table 4.16: APP LA result/inference expressions: No of Occurrences LOWS & HIGHS

Connector categories & expressions	Functions/analysis	NO. OCC LOWS Total no of words 59702	NO. OCC HIGHS Total no of words 60524	TOTAL NO OF OCCURRENCES
LA RESULT /INFERENCE	**In academic registers, the Result / Inference category is the most common (Biber, et al., 1999:881)** Inferential linking adverbials are used to mark one idea as being an inferred result of another (Biber, et al., 1999:878) Used to connect the writer's claim to supporting facts (Biber, et al., 1999:881) Used to mark the conclusions that the writer expects the reader to			

	draw.			
Then (on its own)	Signals consequence Notably common in CONV LL 3.32 (overuse)	21 (0.04)	11 (0.02)	**32**
So (was used to signal Result /Inference	Commonly used in conversational discourse Has 2 uses (therefore / as a result to signal Result/Inference OR in order that to signal Purpose)	47 (0.08) LL 4.02 (overuse)	30 (0.05)	**77**
As such (NOT to be confused with *such as*)		5 (0.01) LL 0.53 (overuse)	3 (0.00)	**8**
In turn		3 (0.01) LL 2.29 (underuse)	8 (0.01)	**11**
Therefore	Very common in academic prose (Biber, et al., 1999:886; 889)	16 (0.03) LL 18.75 (underuse)	51 (0.08)	**67**
Thus	Very common in academic prose (ibid.)	5 (0.01) LL 1.63 (underuse)	10 (0.02)	**15**
As a result		2 (0.00) LL 0.35 (overuse)	1 (0.00)	**3**
Hence		3 (0.01) LL 1.07 (overuse)	1 (0.00)	**4**
TOTAL NO OF OCCURRENCES		**102 (0.17) LL 0.61 (underuse)**	**115 (0.19)**	**217**

The <u>Linking Adverbial result/inference</u> category had the third highest frequency of expressions (an overall occurrence of 140), with the HIGHS (115; 0.19) having a slightly higher incidence than the LOWS (102; 0.17).

According to Biber, et al. (1999, cited in Charles, 2011:49), LAs of result "are the most frequent semantic group in academic writing and are used to carry out the key roles of indicating the writer's conclusions and linking claims to supporting data". Charles (2011) found that in the thesis writing of politics and materials science by NSs of English, the materials science corpus had a slightly higher frequency of result adverbials than the politics corpus, but within each group, there were large differences in the frequencies of individual adverbials (as is the case in the present study). Jones' (2010) description of current scientific discourse as embracing a discourse of conditioned, interdependent and emergent processes, rather than a discourse of causation, is relevant in the sense that modern day scientists are shown to prefer a more sparing use of logical connectives (§ 2.6.1.2 (c)).

Of all the LA result/inference expressions, *so* had the highest overall frequency (77) with the LOWS having a substantially higher incidence (47 instances; 0.08) than the HIGHS (30 items; 0.05). Log Likelihood calculations indicated a significant difference between the use of this feature by the two achievement groups (LL = 4.02, p<0.05). An explanation for this finding may be the LOWS not being sufficiently aware of levels of formality, in the sense that *so* uses may not always be considered appropriate use within formal contexts, or they lack knowledge of alternative options for expressing these links or relations, whereas the HIGHS are perhaps more aware of formality distinctions, and have a broader linguistic repertoire to draw on. *So* uses were also frequent in the doctoral Chinese writing described by Lei (2012) and Charles (2011) with respect to materials science thesis writing (§ 2.6.1.2 (c)). Here, *and so* (combination) uses were prevalent.

Example of *so* use:

[15] *But most of them who worked hard to meet the requirements were not granted the opportunity because they can not afford the fees. **So** [ACC - Therefore] what should they do because they have proved that they really want to study at universities through their hard work.* (INF20H)

The expression *therefore* was the second most frequently used, with 51 occurrences (0.08) in the HIGHS and only a mere 16 (0.03) instances in the LOWS, yielding a substantial difference between the two achievement groups. In this regard, Log Likelihood calculations revealed a highly significant difference (LL = 18.74, p<0.0001). The greater occurrence of *therefore* in the

HIGHS may, as is the case with the use of *so*, be similarly explained in terms of the more proficient writers being able to discern levels of formality, and having knowledge of a fairly wider range of expressions to signal this relationship. Shaw (2009, cited in Gardezi & Nesi, 2009) similarly found that *therefore* was relatively common in the British Academic Written English (BAWE) corpus. *Therefore* was also a frequent use by the English and Spanish writers of research papers in engineering in Carrió-Pastor's (2013) study, with a higher occurrence in the Spanish (NNS) writing than English (NS) writing, with *as a result* and *altogether* being more common in the English writing. Overall, the NNSs used fewer connectors than their counterparts, which Carrió-Pastor (ibid.) explains as the Spanish writers believing that the context was sometimes sufficient for the reader to be able to infer meaning relationships among sentences. As this points to what may be a cultural perception which may be in conflict with reader expectations in the target language, it would be important to address this matter in writing pedagogy. Jones' study (2010) revealed that expert writers preferred using *therefore* in a thematized sense to introduce a conclusion where the reasoning itself is presented as an epideictic display rather than open to interpretation (§ 2.6.1.2 (c)).

Example of a ***therefore*** use:

[16]   *The economic growth of the country will **therefore** reach an excellent level because of high percentage of employment and low percentage of criminal rate of the country.* (INF32L)

Therefore was followed by *then* (on its own) with 11 uses by the HIGHS (0.02) and approximately twice as many uses (21; 0.04) by the LOWS. What appears to be a tendency among less skilled writers regarding the (over)use of *then* is commented on by Carrió-Pastor (2013) whose Spanish writers used the summative connector *then* quite repeatedly, compared to the English writers who did not employ summative connectors as frequently, preferring listing and contrastive categories (§ 2.6.1.2 (c)).

The findings pertaining to the occurrence of *therefore* and *then* uses are relevant for writing instruction in the sense that the HIGHS were employing a more appropriate expression (*therefore*) than the LOWS who were using a common, but less elegant form (*then*) (Biber, et al., 1999: 886) in their essays to signal Result/Inference relations. The slightly higher incidence of *then* uses by the LOWS could perhaps be attributed to its prevalence in the Medunsa campus

prescribed materials pertaining to laboratory work, where *then* is commonly used to signal a result that obtains following *x* within a science context, such as chemistry, biophysics or biology. *If* and *then* uses were similarly attested in the thesis writing of materials science and politics students in the study by Charles (2011, in § 2.6.1.2 (c)).

Thus and *in turn* were employed to a similar extent. There were 10 uses by the HIGHS (0.05) and 5 by the LOWS (0.02). *In turn* was employed 8 times by the HIGHS (0.01) and only 3 times by the LOWS (0.01). Gardezi and Nesi (2009) indicate that in their study of L1 English and Pakistani students' writing in economics, *thus* had a wider scope than *therefore*, where a conclusion arrived at rather than simply a logical consequence of the preceding proposition was being signaled (§ 2.6.2.1 (c)).

As such was also used by the students to indicate a Result/Inference relation. In total, there were 8 instances, with the LOWS having slightly higher counts (5 items; 0.01) than the HIGHS (3 items; 0.00). Although the use of this expression was appropriate, some may consider this colloquial in academic prose.

With respect to this sub-category of LAs, it was found that there were several instances where the students tended to use certain forms inappropriately (cf. § 4.3.3 CE Inappropriate uses).

The findings pertaining to the use of Linking Adverbial Apposition connectors are presented next.

4.2.2.4 (c) Linking adverbials apposition

Linking Adverbials of <u>apposition</u> "show that the second unit of text is to be treated either as equivalent to or included in the preceding unit" (Biber, et al., 1999:876). An appositive LA can be employed to indicate that the second unit is to be considered as a restatement of the first, either as reformulation of the information, or stating it more explicitly. Often, the second unit of text is an example, which is therefore presented as information that is in some sense included in, rather than exactly equivalent to, the previous text (Biber, et al., 1999:876-7).

The frequency of use for the two student cohorts is provided in the Table 4.17 below.

Table 4.17: APP LA apposition expressions: No of Occurrences LOWS & HIGHS

NO	Connector categories & expressions	Functions /analysis	NO. OCC LOWS Total no of words 59702	NO. OCC HIGHS Total no of words 60524	TOTAL NO OF OCCURRENCES
5.1	LA APPOSITION(AL) RELATIONSHIP	**Are used as connectors for examples that support more general claims, and with restatements that clarify previous statements (Biber, et al., 1999:881)** Commonly prepositional phrases or syntactic forms (ACAD, 10.4.2.1) **Appositional expressions are by far the most common in ACAD (Biber, et al., 1999:881)**			
5.1a	*Such as*		19 (0.03) LL 1.96 (underuse)	29 (0.05)	**48**
5.1b	*Like*	Associated with colloquial style	38 (0.06) LL 0.84 (underuse)	47 (0.08)	**85**
5.1c	*For instance*	Common in ACAD (Biber, et al., 1999:884)	8 (0.01) LL 0.05 (underuse)	9 (0.01)	**17**
5.1d	*For/an example*	By far the most common in academic prose (Biber, et al., 1999:886; 889)	20 (0.04) LL 0.12 (overuse)	22 (0.03)	**42**
5.1e	*In other words*	common in ACAD for reformulation (Biber, et al., 1999:884)	5 (0.01) LL 1.37 (overuse)	2 (0.00)	**7**
5.1f	*That is*		1 (0.00)	1 (0.00)	**2**

			LL 0.00 (overuse)		
5.1g	*Namely*		0 (0.00) LL 4.12 (underuse)	3 (0.00)	**3**
	TOTAL OCCURRENCES		**91 (0.15)** **LL 2.09 (underuse)**	**113 (0.19)**	**204**

As mentioned earlier, the high occurrence of <u>Linking Adverbial apposition</u> expressions (with an overall frequency of 204, constituting the second highest occurrence in the LA category) most probably relates to students' regular exposure to these forms being explicitly used by teachers/lecturers in the teaching environment as a means of linking old and new information for learning purposes. Appositional linking adverbials also feature to a great extent in prescribed academic texts.

Overall, the HIGHS (113; 0.19) had a slightly higher frequency of LA apposition expressions than the LOWS (91; 0.15).

Like has the highest occurrence in both groups, with 47 instances (0.08) for the HIGHS, and 38 (0.06) instances for the LOWS. While this indicates that the HIGHS were providing more examples, and/or restatement for clarification than the LOWS, *like* is also viewed as a more conversational or colloquial use, rather than a formal expression, which is some evidence of the students' not distinguishing sufficiently between registers, and a tendency to employ conversational features in formal writing. Different registers and concomitant stylistic choices should therefore be part of writing instruction, to assist student writers in making appropriate linguistic choices.

Like is followed by *such as*, with a slight difference in use of almost 21% between the HIGHS with 29 instances (0.05), and 19 uses (0.03) by the LOWS. The expressions *for example/an example* have the fourth highest frequency occurring 22 (0.03) and 20 (0.04) times in the HIGHS and LOWS respectively. This is, in turn, is followed by *for instance* (probably also viewed as more colloquial than strictly formal by some), with virtually the same occurrence, 9 (0.01) and 8 instances (0.01) for the HIGHS and LOWS respectively. The expression *that is* was employed to

the same extent (one occurrence in each cohort; with a relative frequency of 0.00). In Gardezi and Nesi' (2009) study, the British subcorpus made greater use of the expressions *for example* and *for instance*, which signalled an exemplifying role for subsequent information than the Pakistani cohort, which made greater use of markers such as *furthermore* indicating a sequence of propositions of equal status, including *and* in sentence-initial position. *For example* was also the most frequently used connector by the writers of research papers in engineering in Carrió-Pastor's (2013) study. Other common apposition LAs among the NSs were: *finally; furthermore; in addition*. LAs of apposition were common in the methodology sections.

Examples of **for example, for instance** and **like** uses:

[17]   *Students have different backgrounds. **For example,** some are wealthy while other's are poor. It is a stressful process for financially unstable families, to pay university institution a large sum of money. **For instance,** you find that the mother is not work, the father only has piece jobs and his net income every year, does not even amount to the quarter of the varsity fees. Therefore, how could a disadvantaged family **like** this who can barely provide for its own needs, pay expensive fees to ensure a good future for their child.* (MC35H)

The expression *namely* was only employed by the HIGHS, with 3 instances (0.00), <u>for which Log Likelihood calculations revealed a significant difference (LL = 4.12, p<0.05).</u> The relatively low frequency among the HIGHS (0.00) and the lack of use by their LOW counterparts (0.00) points to creating awareness of the function of this form in extended writing.

Next, the findings pertaining to the use of Linking Adverbial contrast expressions will be presented.

4.2.2.4 (d) Linking adverbials contrast

Table 4.18 below indicates the frequency for Linking Adverbial contrast expressions for the two student groups.

Table 4.18: APP LA Contrast expressions: No of Occurrences LOWS & HIGHS

Connector categories & expressions	Functions/analysis	NO. OCC LOWS Total no of words 59702	NO. OCC HIGHS Total no of words 60524	TOTAL NO OF OCCURRENCES

LA CONTRAST	Both Contrastive and Concessive linking adverbials "highlight contrasting information which often lead to main points that academic authors want to make" (Biber, et al., 1999:881) Contrast adverbials clearly mark contrasts, alternatives, or differences (Biber, et al., 1999:878) Common in ACAD (Biber, et al., 1999:885) Similar frequency in CONV, FICTION & ACAD (less common in NEWS) (Biber, et al., 1999:880)			
Instead/of		14 (0.02) LL 0.69 (underuse)	19 (0.03)	**33**
Rather/than	Moderately common in ACAD (Biber, et al., 1999:886)	6 (0.01) LL 0.06 (underuse)	7 (0.01)	**13**
Than		0 (0.00) LL 2.75 (underuse)	2 (0.00)	**2**
Contrary to		0 (0.00) LL 1.37 (underuse)	1 (0.00)	**1**
By contrast		0 (0.00 LL 1.37 (underuse)	1 (0.00)	**1**
Compared to		2 (0.00) LL 2.04 (underuse)	6 (0.01)	**8**
Unlike		3 (0.01) LL 1.07 (overuse)	1 (0.00)	**4**
Whereas		4	3	**7**

		(0.01)	(0.00)	
		LL 0.16 (overuse)		
While/st		4 (0.01) LL 2.58 (underuse)	10 (0.02)	**14**
TOTAL NO OF OCCURRENCES		**33 (0.06)** **LL 3.28 (underuse)**	**50 (0.08)**	**83**

<u>Linking Adverbial contrast</u> expressions had the fourth highest frequency (83 counts in total) in the LA category. Overall, the frequency of use was slightly higher for the HIGHS (50; 0.08) than the LOWS (33; 0.06).

The form having the highest occurrence *was instead/of* with 19 instances in the HIGHS (0.03) versus 14 items in the LOWS (0.02).

The two expressions with a similar spread were *rather/than* and *while/st*

Although *rather/than* had a similar occurrence with 7 cases (0.01) among the HIGHS and 6 cases (0.01) among the LOWS, the HIGHS employed the expressions *while/st* and *compared to* to a greater extent than the LOWS, with 10 instances (0.02) for *while/st* in the HIGHS in comparison to 4 instances (0.01) in the LOWS. For *compared to*, there were 6 occurrences (0.01) in the HIGHS versus only 2 uses (0.00) in the LOWS.

Example of ***compared to*** use:

[18]　*For instance, the individual not paying for any university fees would not appreciate the education they are receiving, as they would not understand how important education really is, **compared to** the one who does pay, he/she will try their best to pass every year, knowing that a lot of money was spent on them.* (MA4H)

Overall, there were 7 instances of *whereas*, with a slightly higher incidence among the LOWS (4 counts; 0.01) than the HIGHS (3 items; 0.00). The connector *unlike* was employed slightly more by the LOWS (3 occurrences; 0.01) compared with the HIGHS (1 item; 0.00).

Next, the findings relating to students' use of the sub-category of LA concessive expressions will be presented.

4.2.2.4 (e) Linking adverbial concessive connectors

Table 4.19 below shows the frequency for LA concessive expressions for the HIGHS and LOWS.

Table 4.19: APP LA concessive expressions: No of Occurrences LOWS & HIGHS

Connector categories & expressions	Functions /analysis	NO. OCC LOWS Total no of words 59702	NO. OCC HIGHS Total no of words 60524	TOTAL NO OF OCCURRENCES
LA CONCESSIVE	Both Contrastive and Concessive linking adverbials "highlight incompatible / contrasting information which often lead to main points that academic authors want to make" (Biber, et al., 1999:881) Concessive adverbials show that the subsequent discourse expresses some reservation about the idea in the preceding meaning unit / clause (Biber, et al., 1999:878) Common in ACAD (Biber, et al., 1999:885) Similar frequency in CONV, FICTION & ACAD (less common in NEWS) (Biber, et al., 1999:880)			
However	Common in academic prose (Biber, et al., 1999:886)	12 (0.02) LL 3.37 (underuse)	23 (0.04)	**35**
Nevertheless	Also moderately common in ACAD (ibid.)	0 (0.00) LL 2.75 (underuse)	2 (0.00)	**2**
Yet	Also moderately common in ACAD (ibid.)	5 (0.01) LL 0.53 (overuse)	3 (0.00)	**8**
In spite of		1	0	**1**

		(0.00)	(0.00)	
		LL 1.40 (overuse)		
Despite		1 (0.00)	1 (0.00)	**2**
		LL 0.00 (overuse)		
On the other hand/side (BSAE use – moderately acceptable)	Moderately common in ACAD (Biber, et al., 1999:886)	5 (0.01)	1 (0.00)	**6**
		LL 2.97 (overuse)		
Otherwise		0 (0.00)	1 (0.00)	**1**
		LL 1.37 (underuse)		
TOTAL NO OF OCCURRENCES		**24 (0.04)**	**31 (0.05)**	**55**
		LL 0.80 (underuse)		

Linking Adverbial concessive expressions had the lowest frequency (only 59 occurrences) in the LA category. There were 31 cases (0.05) in the HIGHS compared to the LOWS (24 instances; 0.04).

A possible reason for the students' generally limited use of concessive expressions has already been suggested in the section on CA contingency concessive expressions (§ 4.3.2.1 (e)).

Overall, the single most frequent expression was *however*, accounting for 23 (0.04) uses in the HIGHS, and 12 (0.02) uses in the LOWS. The slightly lower incidence among the LOWS indicates that this form should be attended to in writing instruction, alongside the meaning/semantics of concessive relations in developing argument, and/or exposition of complex notions. Punctuation with the use of *however* use is also important (§ 4.5). In Gardezi and Nesi's (2009) study comparing two student cohorts with the same L1 (English) but in different local discourse communities (English versus Pakistani), it was found that *however* was the most frequent, and overused expression by both student groups. These cohorts also tended to use *however* in sentence-initial position, which, is viewed as a marker of less skill in comparison with delayed use, which allows for more manipulation of thematic structure of the text

depending on the perspective the writer wishes to take. Carrió-Pastor (2013) similarly reports that *however* constituted the most frequently used contrastive connector by both English and Spanish writers of engineering research papers in the introduction section, where scientists seek to establish their research niche (§ 2.6.2.1 (c)). Bondi's (2004) study similarly revealed the preference for *however* in history to signal a counter-claim rather than a concession (§ 2.6.1.2 (c)). In the current study, it was observed that both achievement groups used *however* mainly in medial position, although counts of sentence-position were not undertaken.

Example of ***however*** use:

[19] *We live in a world plagued with poverty, where crime is rapidly on the increase and new strains of diseases are discovered each day,* ***however****, if people are determined and goal-oriented to make our world a better place, they would be focused on ensuring that they receive proper education.* (BDS17H)

There were similarly slightly more uses (5 counts; 0.01) of *yet* in the LOWS, compared to 3 (0.00) uses by the HIGHS. This finding is not completely unexpected given its appearance in conversational and academic registers (Biber, et al., 1999:887). The students would most likely be more acquainted with its conversational use rather than its use in academic texts.

By far the greater use of on *the other hand/side* by the LOWS (5 occurrences; 0.01) compared to only 1 instance (0.00) in the HIGHS is in line with its use in conversation and academic prose (Biber, et al., 1999:887). The expression *on the other side* echoes the often heard Black South African English expression *on my side* to mean *in my opinion*. In writing instruction, students should be made aware of both uses but should also be aware that the "*side*" use may be unwelcome in some circles.

Next, a summary with respect to how the two achievement groups used connectors appropriately will be presented.

4.2.3 Summary of findings for appropriate connector use

In order to answer research question 1 regarding whether there was a difference in appropriate connector use between use between the Highs and Lows, a summary of the key findings with respect to appropriate connector use as revealed by Log Likelihood calculations is provided in Tables 4.20 and 4.21 below.

Table 4.20: Summary of key findings relating to appropriate connector use: highly significant differences

Findings Appropriate CE uses	Highly significant differences	Relative use between LOWS & HIGHS
LA Result/inference: *therefore*	LL = 18.74, p<0.0001	L<H underuse
CA Contingency Reason: *because*	LL = 11.17, p<0.001	L>H overuse
CA Contingency Conditional: preposition+ *-ing* participle	LL = 13.04, p<0.001	L<H underuse
Relativiser: *who*	LL = 8.25, p<0.01	L>H overuse
CA Time:*as*	LL = 8.62, p<0.01	L<H underuse
CA Contingency Reason: *as*	LL = 7.83, p<0.01	L<H underuse
CA Contingency Conditional: hypothetical inversion	LL = 6.86, p<0.01	L<H underuse

Table 4.21: Summary of key findings regarding appropriate connector use: significant differences and non-significant differences

Findings: Appropriate CE use	Significant difference	Relative use between LOWS & HIGHS
Relativisers	LL = 4.25, p<0.05	L>H overuse
CA Time	LL = 5.45, p<0.05	L<H underuse
CA Time: *since*	LL = 4.98, p<0.05	L<H underuse
CA Time: *as long as*	LL = 5.49, p<0.05	L<H underuse
CA Contingency Result: *due to*	LL = 4.49, p<0.05	L<H underuse
CA Contingency Reason: *in this way*	LL = 4.12, p<0.05	L<H underuse
CA Contingency Conditional: *with/without/within*	LL = 3.95, p<0.05	L<H underuse
CA Contingency Conditional: *in/as far as*	LL = 4.12, p<0.05	L<H underuse
CA Contingency Purpose	LL = 6.33, p<0.05	L>H overuse
CA Contingency Purpose: *so that*	LL = 4.66, p<0.05	L>H overuse
Co-ordinators: *and*	LL = 5.08, p<0.05	L>H overuse
LA Addition: *also*	LL = 4.38, p<0.05	L>H overuse
LA Addition: *further/more*	LL = 4.98, p<0.05	L<H underuse
LA Addition: *another*	LL = 4.12, p<0.05	L<H underuse
LA Result/inference: *so*	LL = 4.02, p<0.05	L>H overuse
LA Apposition: *namely*	LL = 4.12, p<0.05	L<H underuse
Findings: Appropriate CE use	**Non-significant difference**	**Relative use between LOWS & HIGHS**
CA Contingency Reason		L>H overuse
CA Contingency Conditional		L<H underuse
CA Contingency Concessive		L<H underuse
CA Contingency Result		L<H underuse
Co-ordinators		L>H overuse
LA Addition		L>H overuse
LA Result/inference		L<H underuse
LA Apposition		L<H underuse
LA Contrast		L<H underuse
LA Concessive		L<H underuse

In response to Research Question 1 (restated below),

- **Research question 1**

Is there a difference in the frequency of appropriate connector use by the Lows, relative to the frequency of appropriate connector use by the Highs?

the results (as shown in Tables 4.20 and 4.21 above) pertaining to appropriate use of connectors, in overall reveal differences, although not all are significant. Significant differences occurred with respect to specific forms that students used rather than connector types (categories). However, where differences were non-significant as in the case of categories and sub-categories of connectors, what should be kept in mind for teaching purposes is overuse (indicated in blue) and underuse by the LOWS relative to the HIGHS, since this may suggest a gap in students' connector repertoire, and/or understanding of the types of functional relations that connectors perform, which may influence writing quality. Overall, the results indicate that the HIGHS had better control over verb phrases than the LOWS. Results indicate that for most of the connector categories and for many of specific connector forms, the LOWS were underusing verbs relative to the HIGHS. Overuse by the LOWS (indicated in blue) occurred to a lesser extent.

In order to answer Research Question 2, the findings relating to students' inappropriate use of connecting expressions will be presented next.

4.2.4 INAPPROPRIATE USE OF CONNECTING EXPRESSIONS

The findings pertaining to the students' inappropriate use of connecting expressions (Research Question 2, restated below) will be presented here.

- **Research question 2**

Is there a difference in the frequency of inappropriate connector use by the Lows, relative to the frequency of inappropriate connector use by the Highs?

Here, it is important to keep in mind that not all non-standard uses were counted as errors; rather levels of acceptability (ACC) and intelligibility guided interpretation, which is more in line with

the Varieties paradigm (§ 2.1, cf. Makalela, 2013). What follows is first a description of overall CE Inappropriate (INAPP) uses, and thereafter, how the two student groups compared with respect to inappropriate uses within sub-categories, will be presented. Table 4.22 indicates the frequency of inappropriate CE use by the two achievement groups.

Table 4.22: INAPP CE USE: No of Occurrences LOWS & HIGHS

STUDENT COHORT	NO OCC LOWS Total no of words 59702	NO OCC HIGHS Total no of words 60524	TOTAL NO OCCURRENCES
INAPP CE USE	1477 (2.47) LL 139.99 (overuse)	917 (1.52)	2394

Table 4.23 below indicates the frequency for the HIGHS and LOWS with respect to inappropriate (INAPP) CE use in the identified eight sub-categories. A description of the sub-categories constituting inappropriate CE uses is also provided.

Table 4.23: INAPP CE use: No of Occurrences LOWS & HIGHS

Categories of Inappropriate CE uses	Description	NO OCC LOWS Total no of words 59702	NO OCC HIGHS Total no of words 60524	TOTAL NO. OCCURRENCES
DISPREFERRED (DP)	While use is not grammatically/technically incorrect, there are better options/or form is overused in text creating a sense of awkwardness (more than 5 uses of a particular form were considered; however, not all instances necessarily meant form was dispreferred; rather a sense of awkwardness was the criterion)	442 (0.74) LL 13.91 (overuse)	343 (0.57)	**785**
WRONG (W)	The form is incorrect – does not sufficiently signal the intended relationship between meaning units	354 (0.59) LL 39.78	209 (0.35)	**563**

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	/spelling is incorrect OR use is simply out of place / misfit	(overuse)		
OMISSION (OM)	A necessary CE is missing /the connection should be indicated explicitly	252 (0.42) LL 52.42 (overuse)	117 (0.19)	**369**
NEW SENTENCE (NS)	A new sentence is required /would be better in this case	150 (0.25) LL 49.63 (overuse)	53 (0.09)	**203**
PUNCTUATION (P)	The punctuation mark used with the CE is either missing or incorrect	93 (0.16) LL 0.21 (overuse)	88 (0.15)	**181**
REDUNDANT (RED)	It is not necessary to signal the connection explicitly or another appropriate CE has already been used making this use unnecessary	50 (0.08) LL 6.99 (underuse)	81 (0.13)	**131**
INCOHERENT (INC)	The textual/meaning unit is beyond comprehension and cannot be easily inferred, analysed or repaired. This requires reformulation	92 (0.15) LL 84.03 (overuse)	8 (0.01)	**100**
NO BREAK (NB)	Break has been inserted when there should not be a break/break is illogical/disrupts unity /connection between the ideas	44 (0.07) LL 11.61 (overuse)	18 (0.03)	**62**
TOTAL NO OF OCCURRENCES		**1477** (2.47) LL 139.99 (overuse)	**917** (1.52)	**2394**

Overall, there were 2394 occurrences of Inappropriate CE uses in the UL student cohort, with the LOWS having a much higher occurrence (1477 instances; 2.47) than the HIGHS (917 instances; 1.52), for which Log Likelihood calculations revealed a highly significant difference (LL = 139.99, p<0.0001).

One explanation for the overall high occurrence of Inappropriate CE uses may, in part, relate to the findings by Brostoff (1981:279) who points out that it is the writer's inability to perform three operations to be able to build coherent text, where failure in any of them will result in the opposite. Briefly, these are: failure to make or sustain logical relationships; failure to put together

a series of relationships in a consistent way; failure to reveal relationships adequately to the reader by means of key words (collocations) and transitional expressions. This involves first, working at the abstract level of thought, to making syntactic and logical relations within the sentence using superordinates and subordinates intra-sententially, and then building a complex hierarchic structure in the paragraph, and throughout making considered language choices to express thoughts (§ 2.6.2.1 (a) and (b)). The latter demonstrates the importance of lexical knowledge necessary for "composing or comprehending academic discourse" (Stotsky, 1983:430).

Inappropriate CE uses were divided into eight sub-categories. The three sub-categories with the highest incidence, overall, were Dispreferred (DP), with 785 instances, Wrong (W) having 563 cases, and Omission (OM) with 369 occurrences. Following these, were New Sentence (NS) with an overall count of 203, Punctuation (P) with 181 items, and Redundancy (RED) having 131 instances. The last two sub-categories were Incoherent (INC) which had 100 occurrences overall and No Break (NB) with a total of 62 occurrences.

Of significance, is that for seven of the sub-categories, except for Redundancy (RED), the LOWS had a higher number of INAPP uses compared to the HIGHS.

How the HIGHS and LOWS compared with respect to the different types of INAPP uses will be described next.

What is noteworthy is that, generally, Log Likelihood calculations revealed significant and highly significant differences for the inappropriate use of CEs between two achievement groups. Log Likelihood values are indicated in Table 4.21 above.

4.2.4.1 Dispreferred

With respect to Dispreferred (DP) uses the LOWS had a substantially higher occurrence (442; 0.74) compared to the HIGHS with 343 instances (0.57). Here, the Log Likelihood calculations indicated a highly significant difference between the two student cohorts (LL = 13.91, p<0.001). The implication of this finding is that DP CE uses should be pointed out and alternatives should be explored or proposed in relation to the task (context; co-text) at hand. Several instances of DP use related to repetition of the same item, instead of using suitable alternatives, for example

repetition of the connectors *and* and *because*. This tendency was similarly observed in the low-rated essays by Witte and Faigley (1981:197, § 2.6.2.1(c), which they described as "conceptual and lexical redundancy".

Example of **dispreferred *and*** use:

[20]   *The youth makes up more than sixty percent of our population. Imagine twenty percent of that population been [being] sent away from school because they do not have money. Parents will also get frustrated by this, **and** [since] they will have to support their children even when they are adults.* (BDS18H)

Example of **dispreferred *because*** use:

[21]   ***Because [Due to]** of the high fees at these institutions many learners find themselves with a problem when they are in matric **because** they don't know what they will do the following year **because** [as] they don't have the money to pay at tertiary institutions.* (BDS25H)

4.2.4.2 Wrong

There was a substantial difference in frequency regarding Wrong (W) CE uses between the HIGHS and LOWS, with the latter having substantially more uses (354; 0.59) than the former (209; 0.35); in this regard Log Likelihood calculations revealed a highly significant difference in between the two achievement groups (LL = 39.78, p<0.0001). The substantially higher incidence of W uses in the LOWS is relevant, indicating the need to attend to linguistic resources in writing instruction, such as connecting expressions, including those which were analysed in this study, and alternatives (language strategies that can function to connect meaning units besides the connectors examined in the current study). Often, Wrong uses constituted what Hubbard (1993, in § 2.6.2.1 (c)) refers to as Zero-relation, which means that a connector had been inserted when there was, in fact, no such logical relation within the semantic/meaning unit.

Examples of **wrong** uses:

[22]   *In addition many families who [not required] have children who are enrolled they [not required] have financial problems, **so this** [which] motivates the child to study and make sure that he/she doesn't fail …* (MC14H)

[23]   *A university is a place **whereby** [where] people learn about the professions they want to follow.* (OT28H)

[24]   *... **so as** [**therefore since**] university education will be free that will change and even the poor person's child will be able to have a degree, get a better job, earn well and change the family's challenges/problems, **so that** [**which**] is progress.* (COMM49H)

[25]   *... most parents can only afford the registration fee and there after students are left stranded and faced with a lot of stress (financially) **hence** [**which has**] a negative impact on their overall performance in their academic studies.* (MD9H)

While the use of *so* as a connector may be dispreferred by some as an informal choice, in the example below, its use is incorrect.

[26]   *The government already have enough on its shoulder and I donnot believe it needs much more **so** [**as/since**] this will lead the university to be poor managed.* (SPEECH1H)

4.2.4.3 Omission

With respect to Omission (OM), the LOWS had 252 items (0.42) compared to 117 items (0.19) in the HIGHS, and for which Log Likelihood calculations showed a highly significant difference in use between the student cohorts (LL = 52.42, p<0.0001). Instances of omission are particularly problematic for the reader when relations between ideas are discontinuative, or less expected In this regard, Fahnestock (1983) suggests that in order to develop students' insight into how cohesive devices function, a paired semantic relations approach be adopted (§ 2.6.2.1(b)).

Examples of **omission**:

[27]   *If we do not pay for university sturdies, it will mean that the government will have to take a lot of money and invest it in university education. And they will have to pay for books, the lecturers and not forgetting the computers and buildings.* **[A CE is necessary here to indicate how the earlier information: the discrepancy between the expense of funding students relates to the subsequent notion: low throughput].** *Only to find out that people who graduate at the end of the year are very few.* (DIET27H)

Because the ideas in the two paragraphs below are closely related in terms of access, it would be better to provide a connecting expression at the beginning of the second paragraph. Also, in the second paragraph, it would be preferable to make the reason-result relationship explicit.

[28]   *There should be 2 universities in each province. Some learners pass well but when they should get admitted problems arraise. It is either the space is full for admission or they cannot get to the University because it is very far from them.*

[In addition,] *Fewer international students should be admitted at South African Institutions. Acceptance of more 'international' students would lead to a chaotic situation. More jobs would be taken by international student **and** **[as a result]** our own student would suffer from getting jobs in their own country.* (DIET48H)

Similarly, a suitable relativiser connection would be preferable in the next excerpt.

[29]   *Learners end up in the streets selling whatever they can make money out of. They end up working in places* **[where]** *they should not work.* (DIET48H)

4.2.4.4 New sentence

Not knowing when to begin with a New Sentence (NS) was also identified as a problem among the LOWS who had substantially more instances (150; 0.25) than the HIGHS (53 occurrences; 0.09), <u>and for which Log Likelihood calculations indicated a highly significant difference in use between the two achievement groups (LL = 49.64, p<0.0001).</u> This finding points to the importance of including sentence study in a writing course.

Examples of **new sentences** being necessary:

[30]   *... people are starving and need food on their tables **because** **[awkward – rather omit & use NS]** they do not have jobs because they are not qualified for the jobs available on the market ...* (PHARM29H)

[31]   *The issue of University education being free will also prevent students from striking during a period at which they should have been in classes,* **[NS or semi-colon]** *it also prevents the University's equipments or important things from being vandalised by furious students during strike.* (PHYSIO31H)

[32]   *Universities should negotiate with their selecting team the criteria they use for selecting students and* **[omit and & use NS]** *only students that are academically good should be allowed to study in universities –* **[full stop & NS]** *those who are not accepted in universities should enrol at FET colleges /* **[full stop & NS]** *universities should help FET colleges in providing education so that it can be of very high quality,* [full stop] ***like in*** **[As & NS]** *universities FET colleges should be free for all students who wish to further their studies.* (BCURB14H)

4.2.4.5 Punctuation

The difference in Punctuation (P) in relation to CE use between the two achievement groups was minimal, with 93 instances (0.16) in the LOWS, and 88 instances (0.15) in the HIGHS. In this regard, the punctuation mark alongside particular connector expression use was either incorrect,

or missing. Ward-Cox's (2012) study on the writing of distance education first-year students revealed that students' punctuation use was erratic (§ 2.6.3.2). In this regard, Zamel (1984) points out the need to teach students the appropriate punctuation for each connector, and cites Shaughnessy (1977:22), who argues that this is the only way to teach punctuation since "the study of punctuation should not begin with the marks themselves, but with the structures that elicit these marks".

At this point, it is important to point out that the inappropriate punctuation counts do not include other instances of problematic punctuation use or omissions in the student essays; only those used alongside connectors were examined.

Examples of **punctuation** misuses:

[33] *One of the challenges our country is facing is the pass rate of matriculants which is not improving,* **[full stop & NS]** *this challenge might be because poor students dont [don't] see the reason why they should work hard because they know that even if they work hard and pass with flying colours [P] they will not have money to go to universities* **[full stop & NS]** *so if University education was free, many students would want to work very hard and obtain outstanding results so that they can be admitted in universities and [which] would eventually improve our country's pass rate.* (PHARM26H)

University should not be free when it comes to education because atleast now the government has made it easy for students who have passed matric with qualification to get to a university, **[comma use is wrong; a semi-colon is necessary to indicate that a co-ordinate idea/an idea having equal status follows/another main clause follows]** *they have introduced sectors like NSFAS loans, we have bursaries ... .* (INF36H)

4.2.4.6 Redundancy

Regarding Redundant (RED) uses, the HIGHS had 81 cases (0.13) compared to the LOWS (50 cases; 0.08). Log Likelihood calculations revealed a highly significant difference uses between the two student cohorts (LL = 6.99, p<0.01). The HIGHS' use may be due to a perception, based on instruction at school level, that explicit links are always necessary for ensuring coherence. However, since redundant use does not necessarily improve meaning, and could detract from efficient style, this aspect deserves attention in writing instruction.

Examples of **redundant** use:

[34]   *The number of people of have obtained matric certificates but who have not went to*
         *university will also increase, **therefore** [CE not required – idea captured in verb*
         leading] *leading to poor education rating.* (INF20H)

[35]   *In turn this may **also** [CE redundant – idea captured in use of in turn] act as a reward*
         to those that work hard in their studies. (COMM45H)

[36]   *Not all parents can afford to pay that money, **resulting in** a student dropping out of*
         *university **due to that reason** [due to and reason are RED – they mean the same as*
         resulting in]. (DIET9H)

4.2.4.7 Incoherent

Incoherence between meaning units/propositions, making it impossible to decipher meaning and
analyse connector use/or the lack thereof among the LOWS is disturbing. This group had a
substantially higher occurrence (92; 0.15) than the HIGHS (8; 0.01), with Log Likelihood
calculations revealing a highly significant difference regarding incoherence between the two
achievement groups (LL = 84.03, p<0.0001). An implication of this finding is that both
incoherent text "chunks" or rather units need to be identified in writing classes, with "repair"
(improvement) suggestions being explored or suggested. This, of course, may well require more
than a connector focus, since several language dynamics are at play in discourse, and would have
to be considered. Hubbard's (1993) classification of this problem as Interpretation Not
Achievable helps to underline the complex nature of this type of error, which may require the
student writer to re-examine her line of thinking in addition to language use (§ 2.6.2.1 (c)).

Example of **incoherence:**

[37]   *The fact that said, learners or student should have free education is just for joy, some of*
         the people are poor and some are rich. There are many people who are poor and has
         experience. Those people must get help. (PHYSIO10L)

4.2.4.8 No break

There was a much higher incidence of No Break (NB) items among the LOWS (44 instances;
0.07) compared to the HIGHS (18 instances; 0.03), for which Log Likelihood calculations
showed a highly significant difference for No Break occurrences between the two student
cohorts (LL = 11.61, p<0.001). In some way, this phenomenon relates to that of the New
Sentence (NS) category in the sense that students do not know when NOT to insert a break,

instead they tend to use a punctuation mark within the sentence when this is not necessary, or use a full stop, indicating a new (unrequired) sentence. This finding suggests the need to deal with this aspect in writing, since inserting breaks when these are not required tends to hinder communication.

Examples of **inserting a break when this is unrequired**:

[38]   *The residence are clean because the university hire people to clean them.* **[NB – simply continue with CE so that]** *So that the students may stay in a conjusive environment.* (DIET23H)

[39]   *It should be free because the apartheid had a large strain towards people particularly black and coloured people.* **[NB – the proposition should continue with No Break]** ***Which*** **[who]** *are the races that have a high rate of unempl-oyment and illiteracy.* (DIET32H)

[40]   *It would be better if education is made free for students who are less fortunate.* **[NB – continue the proposition using the co-ordinator or]** *Students that can not afford the expenses* **[P – a comma is necessary here]** *at least that would help in decreasing the number of uneducated people because of not having enough money to persue their studies.* (BDT12H)

Next, a summary with respect to how the two achievement groups used connectors inappropriately will be presented.

4.2.5   Summary of findings for inappropriate use of connecting expressions

In order to answer research question 2 regarding whether there was a difference in inappropriate connector use between use between the Highs and Lows, a summary of the findings with respect to inappropriate connector use as revealed by Log Likelihood calculations is provided in Table 4.24 below.

Table 4.24: Key findings of inappropriate use of connecting expressions by the HIGHS and LOWS

Findings: Inappropriate CE use	Highly significant difference	Relative use between LOWS & HIGHS
Incoherent	LL = 84.03, p<0.0001	L>H overuse
Omission	LL = 52.42, p<0.0001	L>H overuse
New sentence	LL = 49.64, p<0.0001	L>H overuse
Wrong	LL = 39.78, p<0.0001	L>H overuse
Dispreferred	LL = 13.91, p<0.001	L>H overuse
No break	LL = 11.61, p<0.001	L>H overuse
Redundancy	LL = 6.99, p<0.001	L<H underuse
Findings: Inappropriate CE use	Non-significant difference	Relative use between LOWS & HIGHS
Punctuation		L>H overuse

As a response to Research Question 2 (restated below),

- **Research question 2**

Is there a difference in the frequency of inappropriate connector use by the Lows, relative to the frequency of inappropriate connector use by the Highs?

the results show that differences in inappropriate connector use between the two achievement groups in terms of seven of the eight categories used for the analysis of inappropriate use were highly significant as revealed by Log Likelihood calculations (as shown in Table 4.24 above). Differences in use for the category Punctuation was found to be non-significant. Overall, the results show that the HIGHS had better control over connector use than the LOWS; for whom the results reveal overuse (indicated in blue) of inappropriate uses relative to the HIGHS. These results have clear implications for writing instruction course design which will be considered in chapter 5.

Part Two of chapter 4 follows in which the findings pertaining to verb phrase use and the interpretation thereof are provided.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

PART TWO: VERB PHRASES

4.3 COMPARISON OF USE OF VERB PHRASES BY UL STUDENTS

Here, the findings that are presented are those relating to research questions 3 and 4. The findings will be interpreted and compared to literature review findings.

The research aims of the study are set out in § 1.3 of chapter 1.

1. To compare connector use between the two achievement groups.
2. To compare verb phrase use between the two achievement groups.

The aims regarding verb phrase use were addressed in the course of investigating the following research questions:

- **Research question 3**

Is there a difference in the frequency of appropriate verb phrase use by the Lows, relative to the frequency of appropriate verb phrase use by the Highs?

- **Research question 4**

Is there a difference in the frequency of inappropriate verb phrase use by the Lows, relative to the frequency of inappropriate verb phrase use by the Highs?

The results pertaining to research question 3 (above) are presented first. These are in relation to the use of appropriate verb phrases by the two achievement groups.

4.3.1 Overall use of appropriate verb phrases

Table 4.25 below indicates the overall appropriate use of verb phrases for the HIGHS and LOWS.

Table 4.25: Overall APP VP use: No. Occurrences for LOWS & HIGHS

	LOWS Total no of words 59702	HIGHS Total no of words 60524
No of Occurrences	7001 (11.73)	7978 (13.18)
Log likelihood – Lows compared to Highs	LL 51.11 (underuse)	

There was a substantial difference in Appropriate (APP) Verb Phrase (VP) use between the two achievement groups, with the HIGHS having a higher number of occurrences (7978; 13.18) than the LOWS (7001; 11.73). How, and the extent to which the two student cohorts employed particular VPs will be described in next.

To assist with understanding how VPs were understood and analysed in this study, Table 3.16 (in chapter 3, Part Two) provides a summary of the framework (based on the corpus research undertaken by Biber, et al., 1999) that was used to analyse VPs in the student essays. Here, information on the VP types (forms/constructions) and concomitant discourse functions; and their frequency in the four registers according to Biber, et al. (1999) namely: conversation (CONV); fiction (FIC); news (NEWS); academic (ACAD), and some examples taken from the student essays, are provided.

Table 4.26 below indicates the overall occurrences of appropriate verb phrase use in terms of particular forms/constructions by the two achievement groups. In addition, the total number of occurrences in the UL student cohort is provided.

Table 4.26: Appropriate verb phrase uses: No of Occurrences LOWS & HIGHS

VP use (Form/Construction)	NO. OCC LOWS Total no of words 59702	NO. OCC HIGHS Total no of words 60524	TOTAL NO OCCURRENCES
Verbless (no verb in phrase)	2 (0.00) LL 0.65 (underuse)	4 (0.01)	**6**
Tensed Verb Phrases			
Simple present	1290	1480	**2770**

	(2.16) LL 10.57 (underuse)	(2.45)	
Simple past	94 (0.16) LL 0.30 (underuse)	103 (0.17)	**197**
Aspect			
Perfect aspect present	48 (0.08) LL 25.46 (underuse)	112 (0.19)	**160**
Perfect aspect past	1 (0.00) LL 1.40 (overuse)	0 (0.00)	**1**
Progressive aspect present tense	243 (0.41) LL 6.71 (overuse)	192 (0.32)	**435**
Progressive aspect past tense	1 (0.00) LL 1.02 (underuse)	3 (0.00)	**4**
Passive Voice & Tense			
Passive simple present	474 (0.79) LL 0.38 (underuse)	500 (0.83)	**974**
Passive simple past	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	
Passive & Aspect			
Present perfect passive	17 (0.03) LL 7.32 (underuse)	37 (0.06)	**54**
Present progressive passive	26 (0.04) LL 0.00 (overuse)	26 (0.04)	**52**
Past progressive passive	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	
Progressive forms (-ing VVG / VHG) as verbs & gerund uses	532 (0.89) LL 46.53	788 (1.30)	**1320**

	(underuse)		
Infinitive use			
Present infinitive in active voice	554 (0.93) LL 14.08 (underuse)	695 (1.15)	**1249**
Present infinitive in passive voice	54 (0.09) LL 5.41 (overuse)	33 (0.05)	**87**
Past infinitive or perfect infinitive in active voice	1 (0.00) LL 1.02 (underuse)	3 (0.00)	**4**
Past infinitive in passive voice	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	
Conditionals / Mood			
Subjunctive mood (excluding *would* uses)	30 (0.05) LL 7.63 (underuse)	56 (0.09)	**86**
Indicative mood	234 (0.39) LL 0.14 (overuse)	229 (0.38)	**463**
Hypothetical clauses marked by inversion	6 (0.01) LL 7.76 (underuse)	20 (0.03)	**26**
Primary verbs with main verb function	1286 (2.15) LL 0.37 (underuse)	1335 (2.21)	**2621**
Modal auxiliary verbs (without marked aspect or voice)	1835 (3.07) LL 4.28 (underuse)	1989 (3.29)	**3824**
Modal verbs with marked aspect or voice			
Modal with passive voice	219 (0.37) LL 13.91 (underuse)	308 (0.51)	**527**
Modal with perfect aspect	3 (0.01)	17 (0.03)	**20**

	LL 10.63 (underuse)		
Modal with progressive aspect	51 (0.09) LL 0.14 (overuse)	48 (0.08)	**99**
Overall No of Occurrences	**7001 (11.73)** **LL 51.11 (underuse)**	**7978 (13.18)**	**14979**

The overall distribution in terms of number of occurrences of appropriate verb phrase use by the UL students is depicted in Figure 4.1 below.

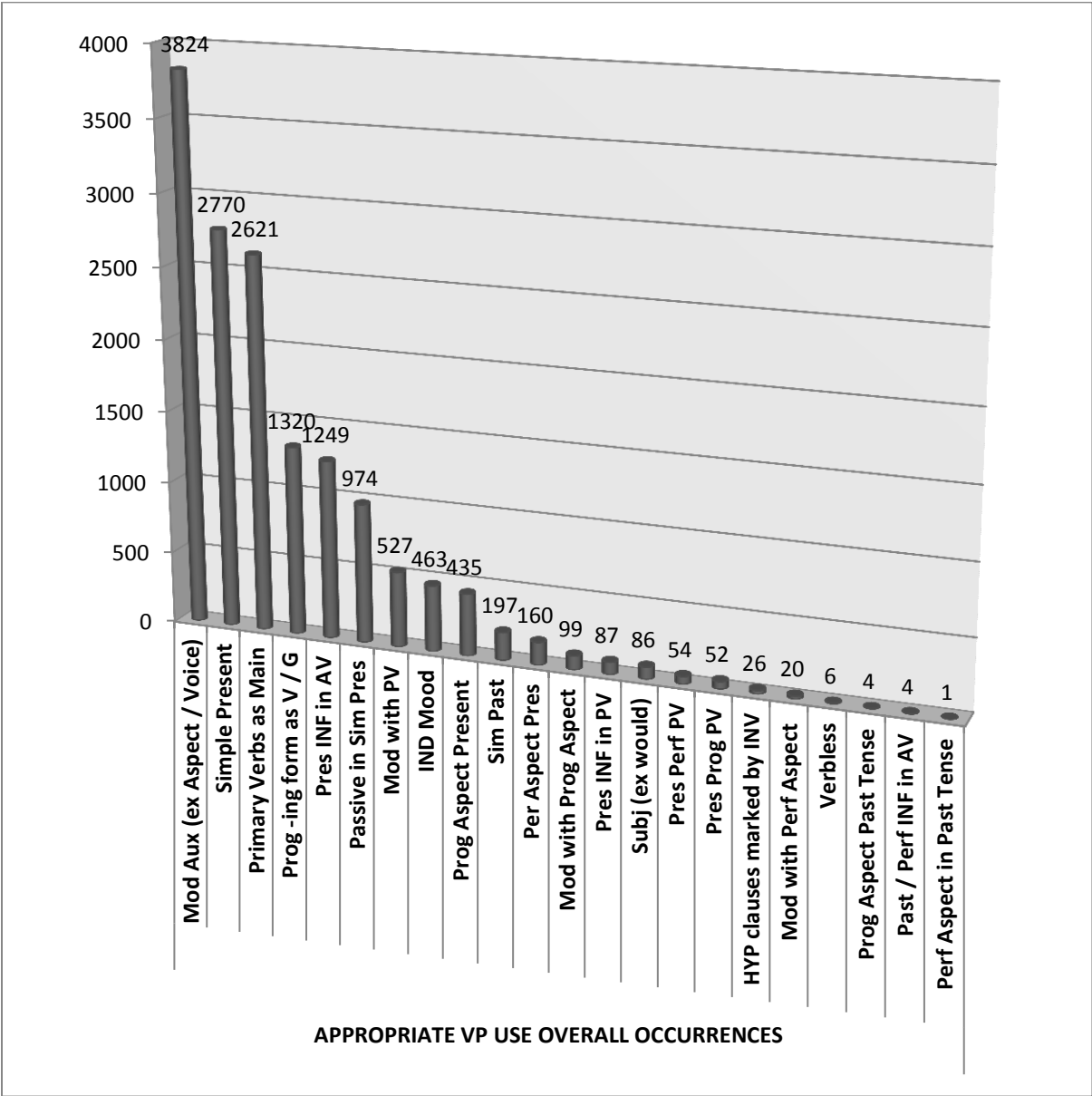*Figure 4.1: Overall No. of Occurrences of APP VP use in UL cohort*

Figure 4.2 below shows the difference in frequencies between the two student achievement groups for the VP uses with the <u>highest</u> occurrences.
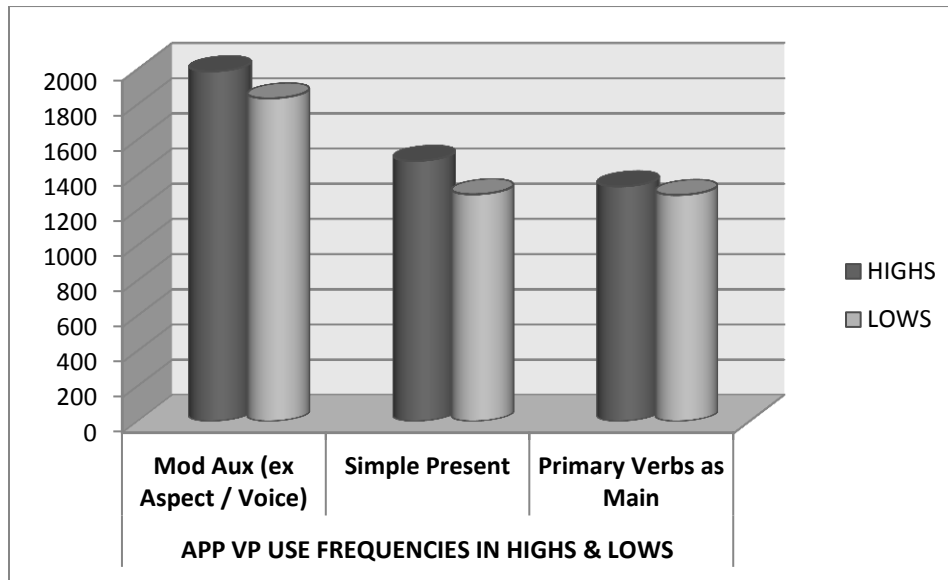
Figure 4.2: APP VP use: Sub-categories with highest frequencies in HIGHS & LOWS

As can be seen in both the Table 4.26 and Figure 4.12 above, the VPs with the highest number of occurrences overall, are Modal Auxiliaries (without Aspect or Voice) (3834 instances), Simple Present (2770 cases), and Primary verbs as Main verbs (2621 instances), in this order. In the Modal Auxiliary sub-category, both achievement groups used these forms to a large extent, with the HIGHS having a higher occurrence (1989; 3.29) than the LOWS (1835; 3.07). <u>Log Likelihood calculations revealed a significant difference in the use of Modal Auxiliaries (without Aspect or Voice) by the two achievement groups (LL = 4.28, p<0.05).</u> The high incidence of Modal Auxiliary use by both student groups is, perhaps, not surprising in the light of the finding by Aijmer (2002) whose NNS cohorts were found to overuse the category of Modal Auxiliaries as a whole (§ 2.6.1.2). How the two achievement groups specifically used Modal Auxiliaries will be described in a later section.

The Simple Present Tense was also used to a large extent by the two student groups, with 2770 occurrences in total. As for Modal Auxiliaries (without Aspect or Voice), there were higher occurrences in the HIGHS (1480; 2.45) than the LOWS (1290; 2.16). <u>In this regard, Log</u>

Likelihood calculations showed a highly significant difference between the HIGHS' and LOWS' use of the Simple Present Tense (LL = 10.57, p<0.01).

Example of **Simple Present** use:

[41]   *Free education **makes** life easier, **reduces** stress and **produces** more qualified proffessions.* (DIET32H)

Similarly, Primary verbs with Main verb function were employed to a great extent, with the HIGHS having slightly higher instances (1335; 2.21) compared to the LOWS (1286; 2.15).

Example of **Primary verb with Main verb** function:

[42]   *University education should be free for the students who are admitted because they proved that they **have what it takes** to perform well at tertiary level.* (MS22H)

The next Figure 4.3 depicts those VP constructions that had the second highest occurrences overall following Modal Auxiliaries (without Aspect or Voice), Simple Present Tense, and Primary verbs as Main verbs, namely: the Progressive –*ing* form used either as a verb (V) or gerund (G) (1320 occurrences in total), the Present Infinitive in Active Voice (overall 1249 cases) and the Passive in Simple Present (a total of 974 uses).
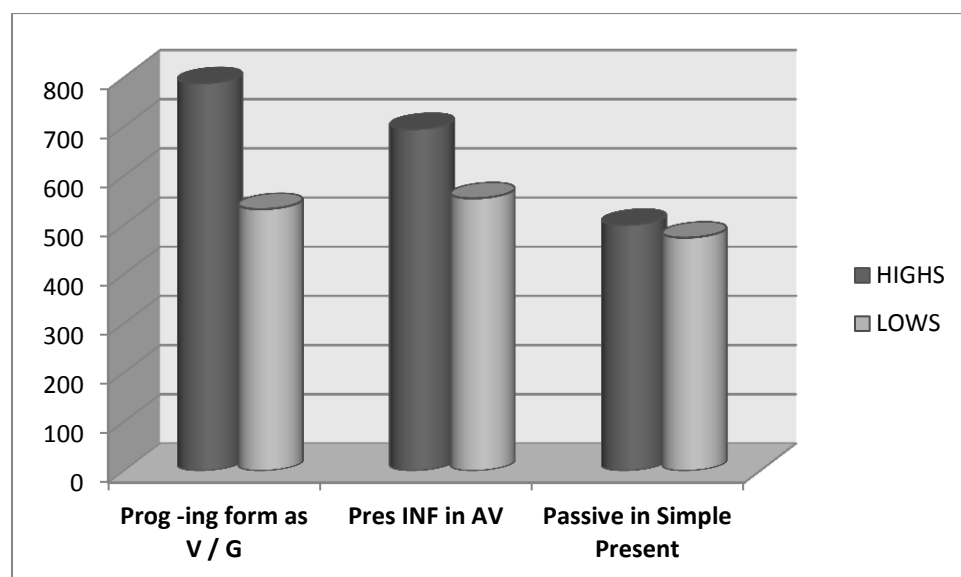

Figure 4.3: APP VP use: Sub-categories with second highest frequencies in HIGHS & LOWS

With respect to the use of the Progressive –*ing* form as either a verb or a gerund, there were many more occurrences in the HIGHS (788; 1.30) compared to the LOWS (532; 0.89), <u>and for which Log Likelihood calculations showed a highly significant difference (LL = 46.53, p<0.0001).</u> The high incidence of Progressive uses among the HIGHS may be understood in terms of its prevalence in BSAE, as explained by van Rooy (2014) who indicates that the progressive use with stative verbs marks what is termed the innovative sense of on-going states, and that this sense of duration, which van Rooy (ibid.) relates to the persistive aspect of South African Bantu logic, is central to the meaning of the progressive form in BSAE (§ 2.61.4).

Examples of **progressive -*ing* form as verb**:

[43]   *... many people **are now sitting at home** with their matric certificates, without any hope because they lack the money to establish themselves.* (DIET33H)

[44]   ***I'm saying** this because some of the students don't even qualify for NSFAS ...* (PHYSIO15L)

In a similar vein, the LOWS employed the Present Infinitive in Active Voice to a lesser extent (554 instances; 0.93) compared with the HIGHS where there were 695 instances (1.15); in this respect, <u>Log Likelihood calculations showed a significant difference (LL = 14.08, p<0.001).</u> The study by Kaltenböck (2004) revealed that *to/for*-infinitives were more frequent in academic and persuasive writing than *-ing* clauses which showed little variation between spoken and written register (§ 2.6.1.6). With respect to infinitive uses by learners, Granger and Paquot (2009) found that their learner cohorts overused the infinitive form, more particularly the expression, *to conclude*, in sentence-initial position as a connector by establishing a cohesive tie with the preceding context in that the placement of information accords with the given-before new principle, compared to the experts who used the form to introduce a complement clause (§ 2.6.1.6).

Example of **Present Infinitive in Active Voice** use:

[45]   *Globally speaking skilled and educated people are required **to better [ACC – improve] and make** life easier.* (MD10H)

The difference between the use of the Passive Voice in Simple Present Tense by the two achievement groups was comparatively lower, with the HIGHS having 500 instances (0.83) and

the LOWS having 474 cases (0.79). Overall, the students' use of the Passive Voice in VP constructions was encouraging, since this is an important structural device for creating a detached style by removing the agent from the prominent sentence position and for fronting thematic information (cf. Hinkel, 1999, in § 2.6.1.6). However, what stood out in the student texts was the tendency to use *get* in Passive constructions, which may well be explained by this use in conversation, and in American English (AmE) (to which South Africans have a lot of exposure via the media) as was observed in the study by Yao and Collins (2012) described in § 2.6.1.5.

Example of a ***get*-Passive** use:

[46] *The youth makes up more than sixty percent of our population. Imagine twenty percent of that population **been [being] sent** away from school because they do not have money. Parents **will** also **get frustrated by** this, and they will have to support their children even when they are adults.* (BDS18

Based on the results so far, it can be seen that the HIGHS have relatively higher frequencies than their counterparts, the LOWS, for the VP sub-categories: Modal Auxiliaries (without Aspect/Voice); Simple Present Tense; Primary verbs as Main verbs; the Progressive form *–ing* either as verb or gerund; Present Infinitive in Active Voice; and Passive Voice in Simple Present Tense, in that order.

The next VP constructions had the <u>third highest</u> frequencies of overall occurrences in the UL student cohort. The VP sub-categories are (in this sequence): Modal Auxiliary use with Passive Voice (527 occurrences); Mood Indicative (463); Progressive Aspect Present Tense (435); Simple Past Tense (197), and Perfect Aspect in Present Tense (160). The number of occurrences (frequencies) per sub-category per achievement group is displayed in Figure 4.4 below.
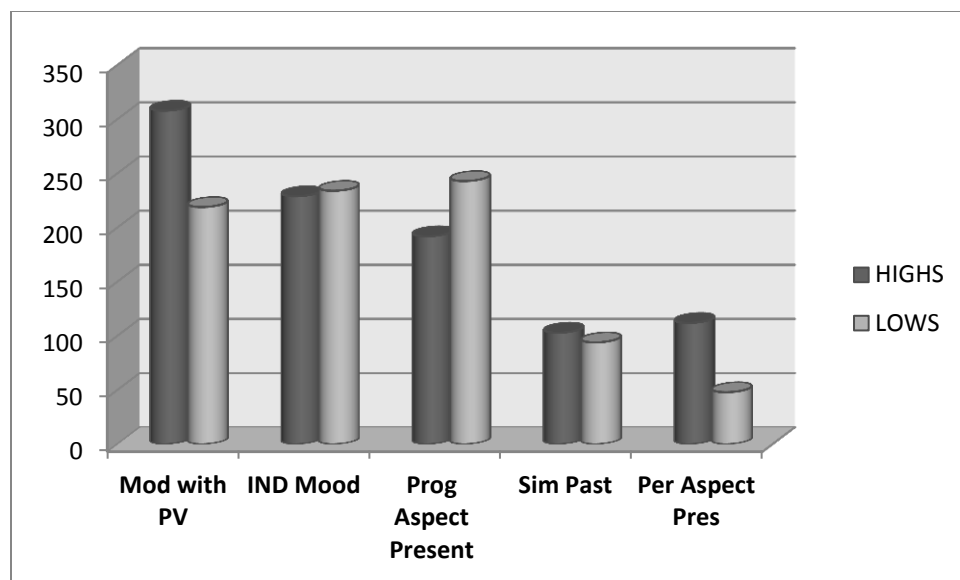
Figure 4.4: APP VP use: Sub-categories with third highest frequencies in HIGHS & LOWS

Modal Auxiliary use with Passive Voice was employed substantially more by the HIGHS (308 instances; 0.51) than the LOWS (219; 0.37). Log Likelihood calculations regarding students' use of Modal Auxiliary use with Passive Voice showed a highly significant difference between the two cohorts (LL = 13.91, p<0.001). A possible explanation for the lower occurrence in the LOWS may be an avoidance strategy, particularly if they find the combined construction (modal + passive) challenging.

Examples of **Modal Auxiliary use with Passive Voice** use:

[47] *Only learners who get a good pass **must be admitted**.* (DIET48H)

[48] *Also the people who teach or give lectures **would not be acknowledged** enough to keep doing their jobs.* (INF1H)

The two student cohorts used Mood Indicative VP markers to a very similar extent, with 234 (0.39) uses in the Lows and 229 (0.38) in the Highs. Not unexpectedly, there was a higher incidence of Progressive Aspect in Present Tense uses among the LOWS (243; 0.41) than in the HIGHS (192; 0.32). In this regard, Log Likelihood calculations revealed a significant difference (LL = 6.71; p<0.01). This finding relates to the studies on BSAE where Progressive uses in the Present tense are found to characterise this variety, in the sense that events are not presented as dynamic activities but rather as states (van Rooy, 2008, in § 2.6.1.4), and where, in cases of reporting, uses are generally present forms to create a sense of timeless space, rather than making

temporal sequence salient. There is also wide agreement in the literature that Outer Circle varieties make frequent use of stative verbs in the Progressive than Inner Circle varieties. According to van Rooy (2008), a primary meaning of this use is *on-going state*, which neither indicates clearly that the state will end soon, nor does it present the state as permanent; in this sense it resembles what Makalela (2013) refers to as the Bantu "persistitive/progressive" (§ 2.6.1.4).

Example of *are having* use:

[49]   *In the world today there many jobs opportunities out there waiting fo be fulfied by students who **are having** higher degree standard.* (DIET4L)

The Simple Past was employed to a similar extent by the two student cohorts, with a negligible difference between the Highs (103; 0.17) compared to the LOWS (94; 0.16). The low occurrence this construction could possibly be ascribed to the essay topic not requiring much past-time reference (except for a brief mention of the apartheid past resulting in education disparities among race groups), since the focus was on redressing the past injustices by means of access to higher education to facilitate upward social and economic mobility, and thereby create a better future for all South Africans. Past forms are also reported to be less frequent than Present forms in BSAE, according to van Rooy's (2008) study, which is in line with the notion of stativisation of this variety (§ 2.6.1.4).

Example of **Simple Past** use:

[50]   *One would expect better from the government as they **promised** a better life for all after taking over the country after apartheid.* (MC37H)

What is significant is the finding pertaining to the students' use of the Perfect Aspect in Present Tense, in relation to the students' overall appropriate verb phrase use. Comparatively, the frequency was quite low for the UL cohort (160 uses in total), which may suggest that, in general, students either have difficulty with this VP use either structurally (form), or lack of insight into time distinctions between tense and aspect, or as Yao and Collins' (2012) study has shown, is due to what appears a decline in Present Perfect use in the sense that it is being superseded by the preterit (past tense), with a shift being particularly noticeable in American English (§ 2.6.1.5). As Scheepers (2014) explains, while both tense and aspect relate mainly to

time distinctions in the verb phrase, tense refers to the time an action occurs, either in the past or in the present, aspect denotes whether the activity or state is ongoing or completed (§ 2.6.1.1). It is generally agreed that the Present Perfect "serves to relate a past situation to a present state in some way" (Yao & Collins, 2012:387, in § 2.6.1.5). In academic prose, the Present Perfect has the important function of highlighting the general relevance of previous research findings and practices to the author's current argument. The HIGHS employed the Present Perfect in Present Tense construction substantially more (112 instances; 0.19) than the LOWS (only 48 occurrences; 0.08). Here, Log Likelihood calculations revealed a highly significant difference in use by the two cohorts (LL = 25.46, p<0.0001).

Example of **Present Perfect in Present Tense** use:

[51]   *Our democratic government **has promised** people free education, but it seems as if their words are not followed by actions.* (DIET17H)

At this point, the findings indicate that for all the appropriate verb phrase uses thus far, except for the sub-category, Mood Indicative, the HIGHS had higher occurrences than their peers, the LOWS.

What will be described next, are those VP sub-categories with the lowest number of overall occurrences in the UL student group. These are shown in Figure 4.5 below. There were ten, namely (in this order): Present Infinitive in Passive Voice (87 occurrences); Mood Subjunctive (excluding *would* uses) (86 instances); Present Perfect Aspect in Passive Voice (54 occurrences); Present Progressive Aspect in Passive Voice (52 instances); Hypothetical clauses marked by Inversion (26 instances); Modal Auxiliary with Perfect Aspect (20 occurrences); Verbless (6 instances); Progressive Aspect in Past Tense (4 instances); the Past or Perfect Infinitive in Active Voice (4 occurrences); and finally, Perfect Aspect in Past Tense (only 1 occurrence).
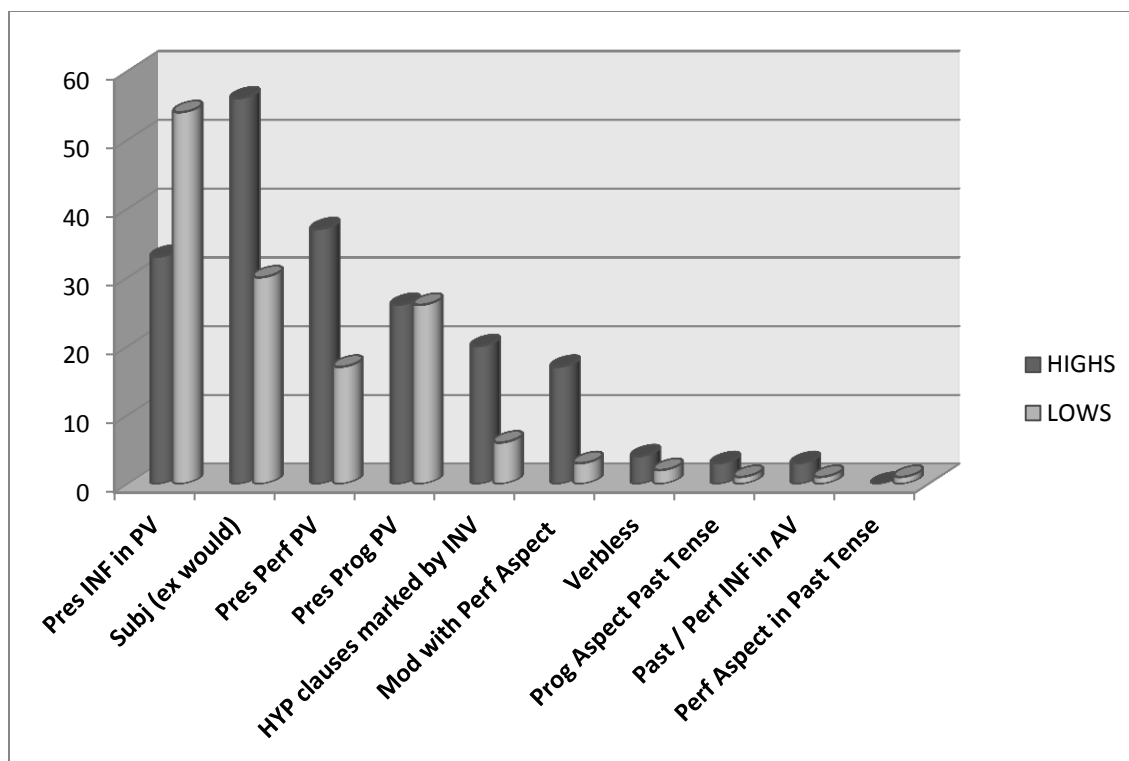
Figure 4.5: APP VP use: Sub-categories with lowest frequencies in HIGHS & LOWS

The LOWS were using the Present Infinitive in Passive Voice substantially more (54 instances; 0.09) than the HIGHS (33 instances; 0.05). In this regard, Log Likelihood calculations indicated a significant difference in use by the two achievement groups (LL = 5.41, p<0.01). The higher incidence in the LOWS may be attributed to the repetitive use of the phrase "*to be admitted*" in response to the essay prompt. The repetition detracted from elegant style, and in writing pedagogy, how to use repetition strategically of verb phrases, (and other language features), as opposed to being awkward and irrelevant, should be addressed.

Example of **Present Infinitive in Passive Voice** use;

[52]   *Many learners should work hard **to be admitted**. (DIET48H)

There was a substantially higher number of occurrences of Mood Subjunctive markers in the HIGHS (56 instances; 0.09) compared to the LOWS (30 cases; 0.05), for which Log Likelihood calculations showed a highly significant difference (LL = 7.63, p<0.01). While both achievement groups were aware of Mood Subjunctive markers to signal hypothetical cases, the higher

frequency in the HIGHS is some indication that the HIGHS were presenting more explicit hypothetical propositions than the LOWS using this feature.

Examples of **Mood Subjunctive** use:

[53]   *Finally, in conclusion I **would say** … (INF32L)*

[54]   ***If** the government and/or the universities **were able to make** university education free for students who are admitted, they would have done so but looking at our country's economic status and the condition of our universities currently, this cannot be. (PHARM22H)*

Similarly, the HIGHS employed the Present Perfect in Passive Voice to a much greater extent (37 instances; 0.06) than the LOWS (17 cases; 0.03), in which case, Log Likelihood calculations indicated a highly significant difference (LL = 7.32, p<0.01). What may well explain the lower incidence of this combination in the LOWS is most probably this group's uncertainty regarding the meaning of Perfect Aspect, and the challenge it poses in terms of construction in combination with Passive Voice, which is important for creating a detached style (Hinkel, 1999, in § 2.6.1.6). This, clearly, has pedagogic implications.

Example of **Present Perfect in Passive Voice** use:

[55]   *After so much work **has been put into** basic education, do we really want to end up with unqualified people? (MB14H)*

Present Progressive in Passive Voice was employed equally with 26 (0.04) instances in both student groups. Hypothetical clauses marked by Inversion occurred to greater extent in the HIGHS (20 instances; 0.03) compared to the LOWS (6 occurrences; 0.01). In this regard, Log Likelihood calculations revealed a highly significant difference between the two achievement groups (LL = 7.76, p<0.01).

Example of **Present Progressive in Passive Voice** use:

[56]   ***If** the money that **is being given** to young mothers **was being used** to pay for fees for hard working students … (MC18H)*

There was a substantial difference in use of Modal Auxiliary with Perfect Aspect, with the HIGHS having 17 instances (0.03) in comparison with their peers, the LOWS (3 cases; 0.01). In

this regard, Log Likelihood calculations revealed a highly significant difference between the proficiency groups (LL = 10.63, p<0.01). The overall lower frequency of Modal Auxiliary with Perfect Aspect in the UL student group, and more particularly the LOWS may relate to the processing ease factor as described by Conroy and Cupple (2010:527) who did a study to establish whether Modal Perfect (MP) constructions were harder to process than lexical-*have* (LH) uses by both NSs and NNSs given the fact that the MP construction is known to present acquisition difficulties for English language learners (§ 2.6.1.5). Both the NS and NNS groups showed a preference for MP over LH sentences. This finding is related to advanced students' processing during a reading task, and not having to produce these constructions in a writing task.

Example of **Modal Auxiliary with Perfect Aspect** use:

[57]   *... parents ... can encourage them to take their studies seriously because it will be paid for their their hard earned cash which* **could have been used** *for something else.* (M10H)

In the Verbless sub-category, the difference in use was minimal with the HIGHS having 4 instances (0.01)) compared to the LOWS who had 2 instances (0.00). While it is noteworthy that Verbless clauses featured in the student writing at all, the general paucity of Verbless uses might point to the students' avoidance of Verbless clauses as a result of previous teaching where they may have been told that all clauses require verbs.

Example of **Verbless** use:

[58]   Example of **Verbless** use:

There are maintenance teams which are hired by the universities in order to look after and take care of these facilities so that they can make the learning environment suitable for the students. **What about equipment?** *We shouldn't forget all about the equipment needed by universities*. (BDS7H)

While there were only 4 occurrences of Progressive Aspect Past Tense in the student writing overall, the HIGHS had a minimally higher incidence (3 cases; 0.00) compared to the LOWS (1 instance; 0.00). The same occurrence for the HIGHS (3 instances; 0.00) and LOWS (1 instance; 0.00) obtained for Past Infinitive or Perfect Infinitive in Active Voice. Finally, there was 1

occurrence (0.00) only of Perfect Aspect in Past Tense in the LOWS, with no uses by the HIGHS (0.00).

The findings pertaining to the students' appropriate use of modal auxiliaries in various constructions are presented separately to facilitate processing.

4.3.1.1 (a) Modal auxiliary use without voice or aspect

In this section, the findings relating to how the two achievement groups used Modal Auxiliaries (without Voice or Aspect) appropriately will be presented. Table 4.27 and Figures 4.6 (a) and (b) below show the number of occurrences for the specific Modal Auxiliary verbs for both the HIGHS and LOWS, including the total number of occurrences for the UL student cohort.

Table 4.27: APP Modal Auxiliary use (<u>without Voice or Aspect</u>): No of Occurrences LOWS & HIGHS

Modal auxiliary category	NO. OCC LOWS Total no of words 59702	NO. OCC HIGHS Total no of words 60524	TOTAL NO OCCURRENCES
Can	342 (0.57) LL 0.95 (underuse)	373 (0.62)	**715**
Could	24 (0.04) LL 11.43 (underuse)	54 (0.09)	**78**
May	46 (0.08) LL 6.22 (underuse)	74 (0.12)	**120**
Might	40 (0.07) LL 2.18 (underuse)	55 (0.09)	**95**
Should	319 (0.53) LL 0.28 (underuse)	337 (0.56)	**656**
Have to (semi-modal)	69 (0.12)	78 (0.13)	**147**

	LL 0.44 (underuse)		
Need to (marginal auxiliary verb)	42 (0.07) LL 0.75 (underuse)	51 (0.08)	**93**
Must	163 (0.27) LL 44.88 (overuse)	65 (0.11)	**228**
Ought to (marginal auxiliary verb)	0 (0.00) LL 1.37 (underuse)	1 (0.00)	**1**
Will	675 (1.13) LL 0.88 (overuse)	650 (1.07)	**1325**
Would	114 (0.19) LL 47.76 (underuse)	246 (0.41)	**360**
Shall	1 (0.00) LL 2.86 (underuse)	5 (0.01)	**6**
Total No of Occurrences	**1835 (3.07) LL 4.28 (underuse)**	**1989 (3.29)**	**3824**
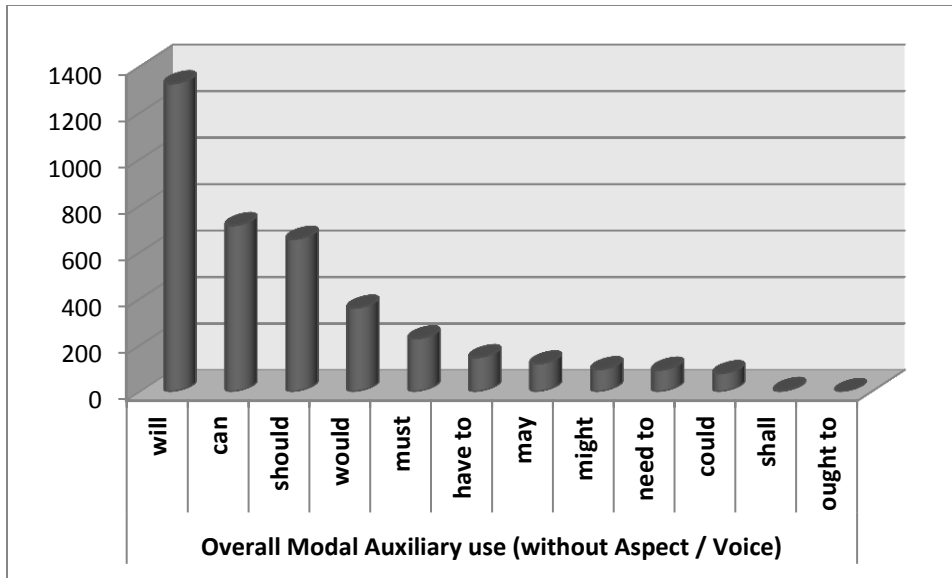
Figure 4.6 (a): Overall APP Modal Auxiliary use (without Aspect or Voice)

The following Figure 4.6 (b) shows the differences in frequency between the HIGHS and LOWS in terms of Modal Auxiliary use without Aspect or Voice.
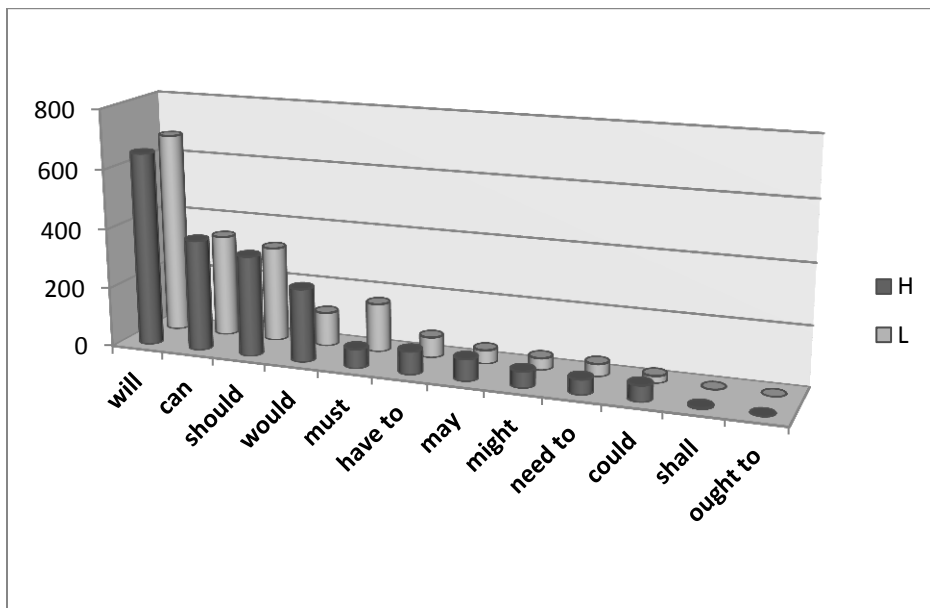

Figure 4.6 (b): APP Modal Auxiliary use (without Voice or Aspect): No of Occurrences HIGHS & LOWS

Overall, there was a higher occurrence of APP Modal Auxiliary use (without Voice or Aspect) in the HIGHS (1989 instances; 3.29) in comparison with the LOWS (1835; 307). In terms of frequency, the forms which featured the most were (in this order): *will* (1325 instances); *can*

(715 cases); and *should* (656). Regarding *will*, there was a minimal difference in occurrence between the HIGHS and LOWS, with the latter group having slightly higher occurrences (675; 1.13) than the former (650; 1.07). The modal auxiliary *can* appeared slightly more frequently in the HIGHS (373; 0.62) compared to the LOWS (342; 0.57). *Should* also occurred slightly more in the HIGHS (337 instances; 0.56) than the LOWS (319; 0.53). The relatively higher occurrence of *can* in both achievement groups relates to the finding by Collins (2007) where *can* is being used as a marker of epistemic possibility in affirmative contexts, in spite of its traditional association with non-affirmative contexts (§ 2.6.1.2). The students in both cohorts used *will* as an epistemic marker of predictive certainty based on their belief that free university education would, in general, have a positive impact. The tendency for students to use *will* for this function, instead of more hedged expressions, is perhaps best explained by the preponderance of *will* in conversation, which further suggests that student writers do not consciously distinguish between registers, purpose and audience, and therefore transfer uses, such as *will*, from informal spoken registers to formal written registers (cf. Aijmer, 2009, in § 2.6.1.2). *Should* was generally employed to make recommendations.

Example of ***will*** use:

[59]   *Free education **will** provide success to all people. Free education **will** improve our economy. IT **will** bring responsibility and healthy lives. It **will** improve our way of thinking **will** improve our working material.* (OT30L)

Following on the above-mentioned three Modal Auxiliary forms and their frequencies, were (in this sequence): *would* with 360 occurrences overall; *must* (228 instances); the semi-modal, *have to* (147 cases); *may* (120 instances); *might* (95 cases); the marginal auxiliary verb, *need to* (93 instances), and *could* (78 occurrences).

Would had substantially higher occurrences in the HIGHS (246; 0.41) in comparison with the LOW counterparts (114 instances; 0.19). Log Likelihood calculations indicated a highly significant difference in the use of *would* by the two achievement groups (LL = 47.76, p<0.0001). The higher occurrence of *would* uses by the HIGHS may possibly be explained by this group's insight into *would* as the subjunctive form of *will* as a marker of hypotheticality, or as a preferred form for stating conditionals in English. Clearly, for the purposes of formulating hypothetical statements, or conditional propositions, students should be made aware of how the

subjunctive use of modal auxiliaries can be used to signal hypotheticality or conditional propositions.

Examples of *would* as a subjunctive use:

[60]   *If an individual has worked hard it **would** only **seem** fair to reward them.* (MB50H)

[61]   *Can you imagine how much more tax they **would be required** to pay?* (PHARM43H)

There was a major difference between the two achievement groups regarding the use of *must*, with the LOWS having a substantially higher incidence (163; 0.27) than the HIGHS; in this regard Log Likelihood calculations revealed a highly significant difference between the two student cohorts' use of *must* (LL = 44.88, p<0.0001). What may explain this finding is the LOWS possibly not having insight into politeness conventions in English, and how to use linguistic devices, such as Modal Auxiliaries to express either politeness, or to convey epistemic meaning. While the *must* uses by the LOWS here were generally acceptable, some may be averse to *must* uses, more particularly within academic contexts (cf. Kasanga, 2007, in § 2.6.1.2). Students may also be transferring what is reported to be culturally valued in the African languages, namely directness in making requests, which was found to occur in both BSAE and Sesotho sa Leboa (Northern Sotho). Here, both groups revealed a preference for explicit performatives, such as *must*. Nevertheless, since the expression *must* carries the strongest sense of obligation based on the writer's authority, discernment is necessary to avoid claims being rejected (Hyland, 2009, in § 2.6.1.2).

Example of *must* use:

[62] … *everything about finance **must** be free*. (SPEECH4L)

The HIGHS (78; 0.13) and LOWS (69; 0.12) used the semi-modal *have to* (with the same meaning as *must*) to a similar extent. The student use may be a reflection of what Collins' (2009) study has revealed in the sense that quasi-modals (*have to*) in the Inner Circles appear to be replacing their modal counterparts (§ 2.6.1.2).

There is a substantial difference in the occurrence of *may* between the two achievement groups, with the HIGHS having much higher frequencies (74; 0.12) compared to their peers, the LOWS (46 instances; 0.08), with Log Likelihood calculations showing a significant difference in use by

the student cohorts (LL = 6.22, p<0.05). This comparatively low occurrence of *may* use among the student writers is some cause for concern given the fact that *may* is still the primary conveyor of epistemic possibility (Collins, 2007, in § 2.6.1.2). It is, therefore, important to create awareness of *may* uses in academic writing instruction, and to compare *may* with *might* uses (refer to the finding below).

Example of ***may*** use:

[63]   *Free education at University level, can lead to students dropping out for no reason. ... This **may lead to** the University itself losing so much money at the risk of the student themselves.* (MS19L)

For the modal auxiliary *might*, there are 55 instances (0.09) in the HIGHS compared to 40 (cases in the LOWS (0.07). The Marginal Auxiliary verb *need to* occurred minimally higher in the HIGHS (51 instances; 0.08) than the LOWS (42; 0.07). This form, alongside those of *must* and *have to* carry similar meanings, and while their use is not unexpected in the student writing given the essay topic (and the writing level of the students) the nature of the essay task (defending an opinion and thereby showing consideration for the audience) would require other preferred uses to signal obligation/necessity.

Lastly, *could* was employed substantially more by the HIGHS (54 instances: 0.09) compared to the LOWS (24 cases; 0.04); here, Log Likelihood calculations indicated a highly significant difference in use by the two cohorts (LL = 11.43, p<0.001). Similarly, the greater use by the HIGHS of the modal auxiliary *could*, may be attributed to this group's better understanding of how Modal Auxiliary forms can be employed to communicate shades of (epistemic) meaning. In relation to the use of *can/could* and *may/might* uses in Inner Circle varieties of English (British; American; Australian), Collins (2007) found that the past forms were more popular in all three cohorts, with *might* featuring slightly more. While both forms were used for signalling past time (the temporal function) and hypotheticality, the former use was generally rare in academic writing.

Example of ***could*** use:

[64]   *... your goal is to change the nation that **could** clearly **be done** with proper Education. We **could achieve** it by Government giving us a chance to study fo free.* (INF9L)

The two forms with the lowest occurrence in the student essays were *shall*, with a slightly higher incidence in the HIGHS (5 instances; 0.01) compared to 1 instance in the LOWS (0.00), followed by, lastly, the Marginal Auxiliary verb, *ought to* (also to signal obligation/necessity rather than recommendation), with only 1 occurrence (0.00) in the HIGHS, and none in the LOWS (0.00).

Based on the above findings, overall, the HIGHS employed greater use of Modal Auxiliaries than the LOWS which may be due to the HIGHS having greater insight into the functions of Modals than the LOWS, which had a substantially higher occurrence in the use of *must*, which may be due to this cohort's not being aware of the overly strong illocutionary force of *must* in formal writing, more particularly the essay task at hand, in which the main concern was persuasion – convincing the reader of the merit of one's perspective on a controversial issue. The findings of the current study reflect those of Aijmer (2009) described in § 2.6.1.1. In addition, the findings by Collins (2009) that quasi-modals seem to be replacing modals in the speech of certain Inner and Outer Circle varieties (particularly the less conservative groups, such as American English) may be helpful in understanding student writers' choices in the sense that, in general, students do not appear to have insight into register distinctions, and, inadvertently, assume that conversational uses are suitable for academic prose (§ 2.6.1.2). This is most probably an explanation for the high frequency of *will* in both the UL achievement groups.

4.3.1.1 (b) Modal auxiliary use with passive voice

In this section, the findings pertaining to how the students employed Modal Auxiliary verbs with Passive Voice will be presented. Table 4.28 below gives the number of occurrences per achievement group and for the UL student cohort.

Table 4.28: APP Modal Auxiliary use <u>with Passive Voice</u>: No of Occurrences LOWS & HIGHS

Modal auxiliary use with passive voice	NO. OCC LOWS Total no of words 59702	NO. OCC HIGHS Total no of words 60524	TOTAL NO OCCURRENCES
Can	37 (0.06) LL 0.43	32 (0.05)	**69**

	(overuse)		
Could	5 (0.01) LL 6.75 (underuse)	17 (0.03)	**22**
May	4 (0.01) LL 1.91 (underuse)	9 (0.01)	**13**
Might	2 (0.00) LL 0.19 (underuse)	3 (0.00)	**5**
Will	64 (0.11) LL 0.73 (underuse)	75 (0.12)	**139**
Would	3 (0.01) LL 25.27 (underuse)	30 (0.05)	**33**
Should	53 (0.09) LL 7.47 (underuse)	86 (0.14)	**139**
Must	29 (0.05) LL 0.78 (overuse)	23 (0.04)	**52**
Need to (marginal auxiliary verb)	13 (0.02) LL 1.40 (underuse)	20 (0.03)	**33**
Have to (semi-modal)	9 (0.02) LL 0.68 (underuse)	13 (0.02)	**22**
Total No of Occurrences	**219 (0.37) LL 13.91 (underuse)**	**308 (0.51)**	**527**

Figure 4.7 below shows the overall frequency of Modal Auxiliary use with Passive Voice.
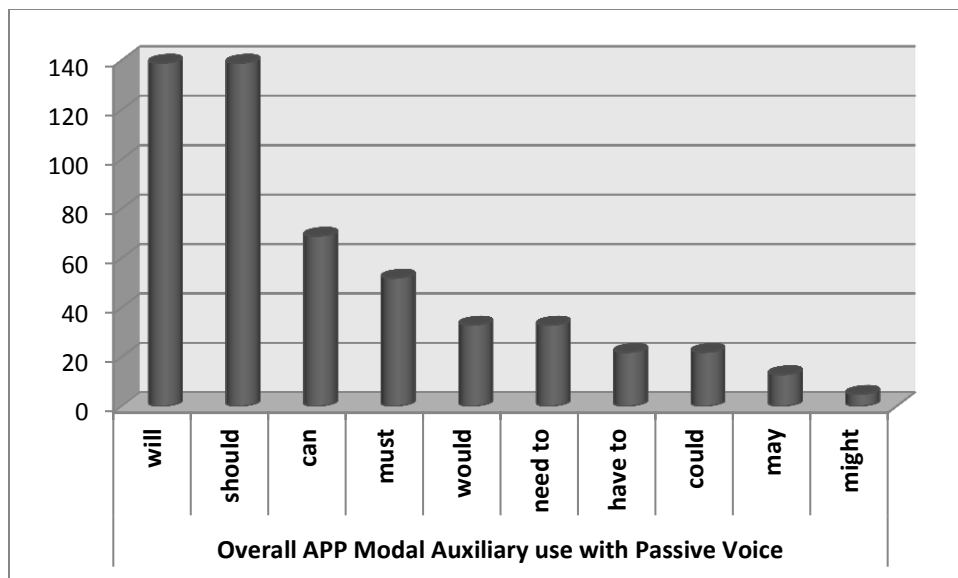
Figure 4.7: Overall Modal Auxiliary use with Passive Voice

The Modal Auxiliaries featuring most with Passive Voice in the UL student cohort were *will* and *should* with equal overall occurrences (139 for both forms). *Can* occurred in 69 instances, followed by *must* with 52 cases. *Would* and *need to* were employed to the same extent (33 cases each). *Could* and *have to* also had the same number of occurrences (22 each). *May* appeared in 13 instances, and *might* had 5 occurrences.

How the two achievement groups compared with respect to the use of modal auxiliaries with passive voice is depicted in Figure 4.8 below. These findings will be presented next.
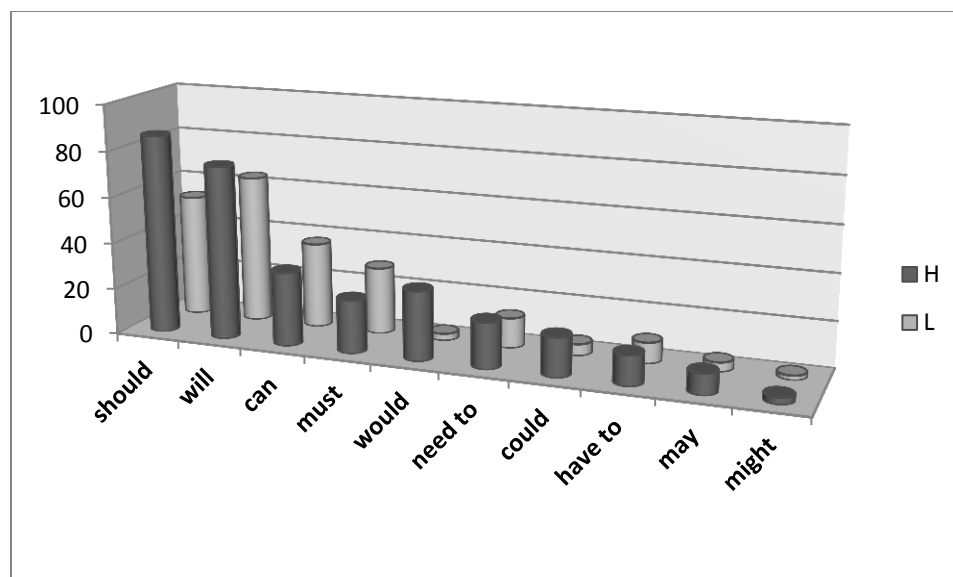
Figure 4.8: Modal auxiliary use with passive voice: Frequencies HIGHS and LOWS

Should with PV was used substantially more by the HIGHS (86; 0.14) compared to the LOWS (53; 0.09); for which Log Likelihood calculations revealed a highly significant difference between the two achievement groups (LL = 7.47, p<0.01).The higher occurrence in the HIGHS may be attributed to this group's awareness of politeness conventions in formal English, and the role of the Passive Voice in either sequencing information in relation to its perceived importance, and/or backstaging the agent in the proposition.

Example of ***should*** with Passive Voice use:

[65]   *When the university admit students, there should be a formative test that **should be written** to assess the potential and the non-potential ones.* (DIET14H)

The difference regarding the use of will between the achievement groups was negligible, with the HIGHS having 75 occurrences (0.12) compared to the LOWS (64; 0.11). In both groups, *will* use with PV was to make confident assertions regarding outcomes of providing free university education, and within this context, the *will* use was acceptable. By contrast, Hinkel's (1999) study on objectivity conventions in the writing of native (NSs) and trained non-native speakers (NNSs) found that NNSs used *will* to a much greater extent than NSs, where both groups tended to use *will* and *would* rather than more suitable options, such as *probably* and *possibly*, which were frequently omitted. In this regard, Hinkel (ibid.) points to the importance of addressing cultural views on factuality and truth, and helping the student writer to understand the world

view of the target language, English, where good judgement is seen as making moderate claims and avoiding strong predictives and implications of certainty (§ 2.6.1.6).

There was a minimal difference in the use of *can* with PV by the LOWS (37; 0.06) compared to the HIGHS (32; 0.05), where *can* uses were to signal possibility. Similarly, the LOWS used *must* with PV (29; 0.05) similarly to the HIGHS (23; 0.04). A possible explanation for the similar use of *can* and *must* by the two student groups is being unfamiliar with the need to, or the linguistic means (including modal auxiliary verbs or other linguistic resources) to tone down propositions to make the assertions or claims more acceptable to one's audience. Hyland's (2009) study on directives, which, in the student writing featured frequently as physical acts, expressed by means of obligation modals, revealed that although *must* uses were rare, when this did occur, it was always expressed in the Passive Voice (§ 2.6.1.2).

There were higher occurrences of both *would* and *need to* with PV in the HIGHS compared to the LOWS. There were 30 instances (0.05) of *would* in the HIGHS compared to 3 instances (0.01) in the LOWS. Regarding this *would* with Passive use, Log Likelihood calculations showed highly a significant difference in use between the two achievement groups (LL = 25.27, $p < 0.0001$). Similarly, there were 20 (0.03) instances of *need to* in the HIGHS compared to 13 (0.02) cases in the LOWS. Regarding *would*, the HIGHS appear to understand the function of *would* as signalling tentativeness (a politeness convention), and are able to incorporate its use with PV, to either front important information, or to backstage an agent deliberately. This finding is therefore relevant to writing pedagogy, since it would be important to equip less writing proficient students with these linguistic tools for successful academic writing. Although *need to* may not be viewed by some as the most suitable option to indicate necessity in academic registers, its use by the HIGHS was generally appropriate. However, in many cases in this study, the use of *need to* was, instead, considered inappropriate since the phrase was often coupled with expressions with the same meaning, and therefore created a sense of redundancy or awkwardness. In this regard, examples will be provided in the section on inappropriate VP use (§ 4.4.2).

Example of ***would*** with Passive Voice:

[66]   *We live in a world plagued with poverty, where crime is rapidly on the increase and new strains of diseases are discovered each day, however, if people are determined and goal-oriented to make our world a better place, they **would be focused on** ensuring that they receive proper education*. (BDS17H)

Could with PV occurred substantially more in the HIGHS (17; 0.03) compared to the LOWS with 5 instances (0.01), <u>for which Log Likelihood calculations indicated a highly significant difference (LL = 6.75, p<0.01).</u> The possible explanation that was provided for the use of *would* by the HIGHS above, might apply here in the sense that the HIGHS may have awareness of how the different forms of the Modal Auxiliaries can be used to create subtle differences in meaning with respect to degrees of certainty, and as politeness markers in English.

Example of ***could*** with Passive Voice:

[67]   *A new job **could be formed by** a student from a university whose back ground is poor but because of free education he/she create a new job*. (DIET4L)

The HIGHS used *have to* with PV (13; 0.02) slightly more than the LOWS (9; 0.02). Some may regard *have to* in academic registers as more being slightly more acceptable than *need to* (both signal the same epistemic meaning, obligation/necessity). Nevertheless, both forms should be attended to in writing instruction.

May with PV was also used to a slightly more by the HIGHS (9; 0.01) compared to 4 occurrences (0.01) in the LOWS. The purpose of *may* with PV was to indicate possibility and to foreground what the writer viewed as important information in the proposition. The explanations suggested earlier for the uses of *would* and *could* most likely apply here as well. *Might* with PV was employed to a similar extent by both achievement groups, with 3 occurrences (0.00) in the HIGHS, and 2 (0.00) in the LOWS. The comparatively low incidence is probably explained by the student writers not being familiar with the communicative functions of *might*.

4.3.1.1 (c) Modal auxiliary use with perfect aspect

Here, the findings relating to how the two achievement groups employed Modal Auxiliaries appropriately with Perfect Aspect will be presented.

Table 4.29 below displays the frequency for Modal Auxiliary verb use with Perfect Aspect for the HIGHS and LOWS and the UL student cohort as a whole.

Table 4.29: APP Modal Auxiliary use <u>with perfect aspect</u>: No of Occurrences LOWS & HIGHS

Modal auxiliary with perfect aspect	NO. OCC LOWS Total no of words 59702	NO. OCC HIGHS Total no of words 60524	TOTAL NO OCCURRENCES
Could	0 (0.00) LL 2.75 (underuse)	2 (0.00)	**2**
Might	0 (0.00) LL 1.37 (underuse)	1 (0.00)	**1**
Will	0 (0.00) LL 1.37 (underuse)	1 (0.00)	**1**
Would	3 (0.02) LL 6.60 (underuse)	13 (0.03)	**16**
Total No of Occurrences	**3 (0.00)** **LL 10.63 (underuse)**	**17 (0.03)**	**20**

Figure 4.9 below displays the overall frequency of appropriate Modal Auxiliary use with Perfect Aspect.
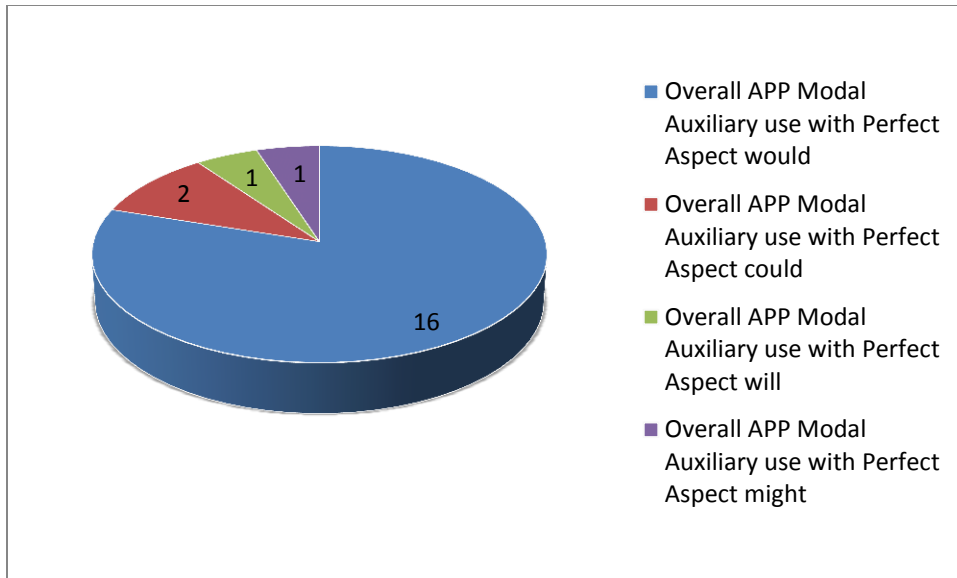
Figure 4.9: Overall APP Modal Auxiliary use with Perfect Aspect

Overall, there were only 20 occurrences of Modal Auxiliary use with Perfect Aspect in the UL student cohort. Sixteen of these comprised the use of *would*, followed by only 2 instances of *could*, and 1 case each of *will* and *might*. The HIGHS had a total of 17 occurrences (0.03) compared to the LOWS with only 3 instances (0.00).

The general paucity of Modal Auxiliary use with Perfect Aspect in both the HIGHS and LOWS is noticeable in Figure 4.10 below.
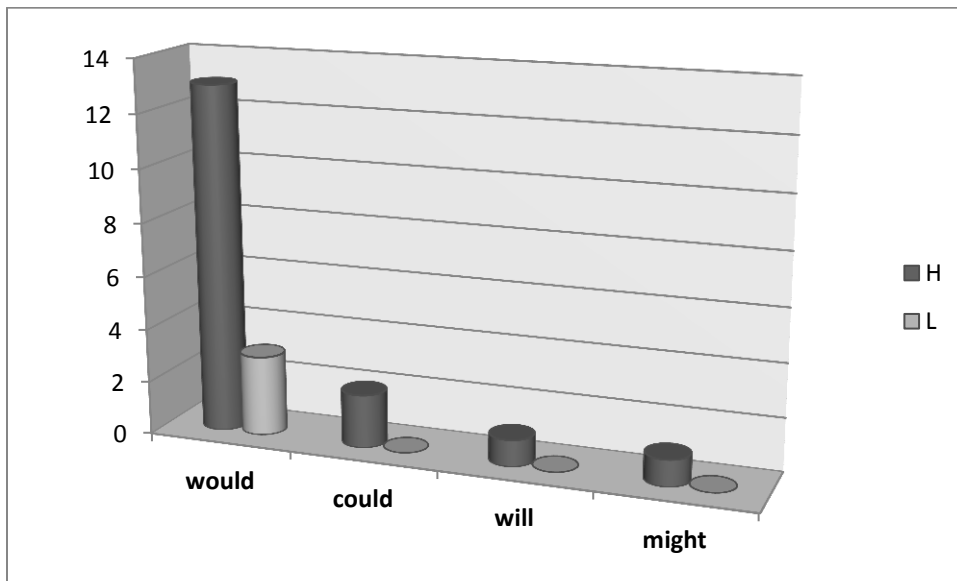

Figure 4.10: Modal Auxiliary uses with Perfect aspect: Frequencies HIGHS & LOWS

As can be seen in the Figure 4.10 above, in spite of the overall paucity of Modal Auxiliary verbs with Perfect Aspect in the student writing, the HIGHS, nevertheless, employed certain forms more than the LOWS. There were 13 occurrences (0.03) of *would* in the HIGHS compared to the LOWS which had 3 instances (0.02); in this respect, Log likelihood calculations revealed a significant difference in the use of *would* with Perfect Aspect between the two achievement groups (LL = 6.60, p<0.05). The remaining three forms that were employed were by the HIGHS, namely: *could* with 2 instances (0.00); and 1 case each of *will* (0.00) and *might* (0.00).

Example of ***would*** with Perfect Aspect use:

[68] *If the government and/or the universities were able to make university education free for students who are admitted, they **would have done** so but looking at our country's economic status and the condition of our universities currently, this cannot be.*
(PHARM22H)

4.3.1.1 (d) Modal auxiliary use with progressive aspect

In this section, the findings relating to the extent to which the students employed Modal Auxiliaries with Progressive Aspect will be presented.

Table 4.30 below shows the frequency for the two achievement groups and the overall frequency for the UL student cohort. Figure 4.11 below displays the differences in frequency between the HIGHS and LOWS.

Table 4.30: APP Modal Auxiliary use <u>with progressive aspect</u>: No of Occurrences LOWS & HIGHS

Modal auxiliary with progressive aspect	NO OCC LOWS Total no of words 59702	NO OCC HIGHS Total no of words 60524	TOTAL NO OCCURRENCES
Can	0 (0.00) LL 1.37 (underuse)	1 (0.00)	**1**
Should	2 (0.00) LL 3.77 (underuse)	8 (0.01)	**10**

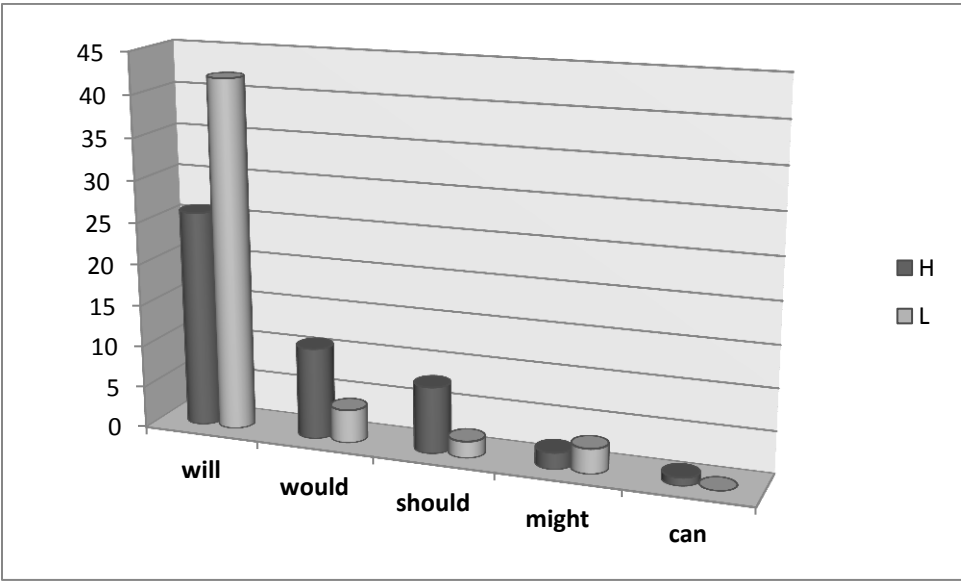|			
Will	42 (0.07) LL 4.02 (overuse)	26 (0.04)	**68**
Would	4 (0.01) LL 3.30 (underuse)	11 (0.02)	**15**
Might	3 (0.01) LL 0.22 (overuse)	2 (0.00)	**5**
Total No of Occurrences	**51 (0.09)** **LL 0.14 (overuse)**	**48 (0.08)**	**99**

Figure 4.11: APP Modal Auxiliary use with Progressive Aspect HIGHS & LOWS

For the interpretation of Modal Auxiliary uses with Progressive Aspect, the studies by Bergs (2010), Celle and Smith (2010) and Salkie (2010) were helpful (§ 2.6.1.3). Overall, there were 99 occurrences of Modal Auxiliary verb use with Progressive Aspect in the UL student cohort. *Will* had the highest frequency, with 68 instances in total. Although this use was considered appropriate within the essay context, this finding corresponds to the findings in the literature, in the sense that learner writers for whom English is an additional/foreign language, are found to

have a tendency to use the Progressive Aspect, and in this study, are prone to use *will* as a predictive marker when, perhaps, other options may be more suitable. In this regard, there was a higher occurrence of *will* in the LOWS (42 instances; 0.07) compared to the HIGHS (26 cases; 0.04). In this regard, Log likelihood calculations indicated a significant difference between the two achievement groups' use of *will* with Progressive Aspect (LL = 4.02, p<0.05). The high incidence of *will* in combination with Progressive Aspect should perhaps not be surprising given that research shows that *will* on its own is prevalent in speech generally, and in terms of African varieties of English, the Progressive Aspect is a regular feature (Salkie, 2010, in § 2.6.1.3). Nevertheless, when and how to use or to avoid *will* uses should be addressed in writing instruction.

Example of **will** with Progressive Aspect use:

[69]   *This days you won't find anything for free, but if you get an opportunity for free education, you will do everything in your power to prove that you accept for free education and you will no that are not only proving to someone, you* **will be doing it for yourself** *...* (MS45L)

Would with Progressive Aspect occurred in 15 cases in the student writing, with a slight difference between the two achievement groups, with the HIGHS having 11 instances (0.02) compared to the LOWS which had 4 occurrences (0.01). The difference in *should* with Progressive Aspect was also slight, with the HIGHS having 8 cases (0.01) in comparison with 2 instances in the LOWS (0.00).

Might and *can* were used to a much lesser extent, with 3 instances (0.01) of *might* in the LOWS, and 2 (0.00) in the HIGHS. *Can* occurred only once (0.00) in the HIGHS.

In the next section, a summary of the results pertaining to the appropriate use of verb phrases will be presented.

4.4   Summary of findings for appropriate verb phrase use

In order to answer research question 3 regarding whether there was a difference in appropriate verb phrase use between use between the HIGHS and LOWS, a summary of the key findings with respect to appropriate verb phrase as revealed by Log Likelihood calculations is provided in Table 4.31 below.

Table 4.31: Summary of key findings for appropriate verb phrase use

Findings Appropriate VP uses	Highly significant differences	Relative use between LOWS & HIGHS
Progressive -*ing* form (verb/gerund)	LL = 46.53, p<0.0001	L<H underuse
Perfect Aspect in Present Tense	LL = 25.46, p<0.0001	L<H underuse
Modal Auxiliary without Voice or Aspect: *would*	LL = 47.76, p<0.0001	L<H underuse
Modal Auxiliary without Voice or Aspect: *must*	LL = 44.88, p<0.0001	L>H overuse
Modal Auxiliary with Passive Voice: *would*	LL = 25.27, p<0.0001	L<H underuse
Modal auxiliary with Passive Voice	LL = 13.91, p<0.001	L<H underuse
Present Infinitive in Active Voice	LL = 14.08, p<0.001	L<H underuse
Modal Auxiliary without Voice or Aspect: *could*	LL = 11.43, p<0.001	L<H underuse
Simple Present	LL = 10.57, p<0.01	L<H underuse
Progressive Aspect in Present Tense	LL = 6.71; p<0.01	L>H overuse
Present Infinitive in Passive Voice	LL = 5.41, p<0.01	L>H overuse
Mood Subjunctive	LL = 7.63, p<0.01	L<H underuse
Hypothetical clauses marked by inversion	LL = 7.76, p<0.01	L<H underuse
Modal Auxiliary with Perfect Aspect	LL = 10.63, p<0.01	L<H underuse
Modal Auxiliary with Passive Voice: *could*	LL = 6.75, p<0.01	L<H underuse
Modal Auxiliary with Passive Voice: *should*	LL = 7.47, p<0.01	L<H underuse
Present Perfect in Passive Voice	LL = 7.32, p<0.01	L<H underuse
Findings Appropriate VP use	**Significant differences**	**Relative use between LOWS & HIGHS**
Modal auxiliaries (without Aspect or Voice)	LL = 4.28, p<0.05	L<H underuse
Modal Auxiliary with Perfect Aspect: *would*	LL = 6.60, p<0.05	L<H underuse
Modal Auxiliary with Progressive Aspect: *will*	LL = 4.02, p<0.05	L>H overuse
Modal Auxiliary (without Aspect or Voice): *may*	LL = 6.22, p<0.05	L<H underuse
Findings Appropriate VP uses	**Non-significant differences**	**Relative use between LOWS & HIGHS**
Primary verbs as Main verbs		L<H underuse
Passive Voice in Simple Present		L<H underuse
Mood Indicative		L>H overuse
Simple Past		L<H underuse
Present Progressive in Passive Voice		Equal use between 2 groups
Verbless		L<H underuse
Progressive Aspect Past Tense		L<H underuse
Modal Auxiliary without Voice or Aspect: *will*		L>H overuse
Modal Auxiliary without Voice or Aspect: *can*		L<H underuse
Modal Auxiliary without Voice or Aspect: *should*		L<H underuse
Modal Auxiliary without Voice or Aspect: *might*		L<H underuse
Modal Auxiliary without Voice or Aspect:		

need to		L<H underuse
Modal Auxiliary without Voice or Aspect: *shall*		L<H underuse
Modal Auxiliary without Voice or Aspect: *ought to*		L<H underuse
Modal Auxiliary with Passive Voice: *will*		L<H underuse
Modal Auxiliary with Passive Voice: *can*		L<H underuse
Modal Auxiliary with Passive Voice: *must*		L>H overuse
Modal Auxiliary with Passive Voice: *need to*		L<H underuse
Modal Auxiliary with Passive Voice: *have to*		L<H underuse
Modal Auxiliary with Passive Voice: *may*		L<H underuse
Modal Auxiliary with Passive Voice: *might*		L<H underuse
Modal Auxiliary with Perfect Aspect: *could*		L<H underuse
Modal Auxiliary with Perfect Aspect: *will*		L<H underuse
Modal Auxiliary with Perfect Aspect: *might*		L<H underuse
Modal Auxiliary with Progressive Aspect		L>H overuse
Modal Auxiliary with Progressive Aspect: *would*		L<H underuse
Modal Auxiliary with Progressive Aspect: *should*		L<H underuse
Modal Auxiliary with Progressive Aspect: *might*		L>H overuse
Modal Auxiliary with Progressive Aspect: *can*		L<H underuse

As a response to Research Question 3 (restated below),

- **Research question 3**

Is there a difference in the frequency of appropriate verb phrase use by the Lows, relative to the frequency of appropriate verb phrase use by the Highs?

the results show that differences in appropriate verb phrase use between the two achievement groups were highly/significant for ten types of verb phrase constructions (indicated in red in Table 4.31 above) as revealed by Log Likelihood calculations. In addition, six modal auxiliary uses in combination with particular verb phrase constructions were found to be highly/significant (indicated in green). Difference in the progressive *–ing* form was also found to be highly significant. While differences occurred in the use of the remaining categories and sub-categories between the HIGHS and LOWS, these were non-significant (also shown in Table 4.31 above). Overall, the results indicate that the HIGHS had better control over verb phrases than the LOWS. Results indicate that for most of the verb categories, the LOWS were underusing verbs relative to the HIGHS. Overuse by the LOWS in indicated in blue.

In the next section, the results with respect to inappropriate verb phrase use will be presented.

4.5 INAPPROPRIATE VERB PHRASE USE

In this section, the findings pertaining to the the difference in the two achievement groups' inappropriate verb phrase (INAPP VP) use will be presented. As was the case with appropriate verb phrase uses, Log Likelihood calculations were done to determine whether differences in use between the two achievement student groups were significant, or not. The Log Likelihood calculations revealed that the differences in verb phrase use between the two achievement groups were significant or highly significant for several constructions.

The results pertaining to research question 4 (restated below) regarding difference in inappropriate use between the two achievement groups are presented here.

- **Research question 4:**

Is there a difference in the frequency of inappropriate verb phrase use by the Lows, relative to the frequency of inappropriate verb phrase use by the Highs?

Table 4.32 below displays the overall frequency of inappropriate use of verb phrases by the two student groups, and the total number of occurrences for the UL student cohort. The difference in extent between the HIGHS and LOWS is reflected in the subsequent Figure 4.12.

Table 4.32: INAPP VP uses: Overall No of Occurrences LOWS & HIGHS

INAPP VP categories	NO. OCC LOWS Total no of words 59702	NO. OCC HIGHS Total no of words 60524	TOTAL NO OCCURRENCES
Wrong (W) (1) (Refer to the separate section on Wrong VP uses for description)	1096 (1.84) LL 101.95 (overuse)	684 (1.13)	1780
Dispreferred (DP) (2) While the use may not be wrong or entirely inappropriate, more suitable forms are available given the context & register	359 (0.60) LL 39.10 (overuse)	214 (0.35)	573
Problematic Verb Phrase (PVP) /Incoherent (INC) (3) The Verb Phrase is faulty and requires revision OR the Verb Phrase makes no	293 (0.49) LL 80.49	117 (0.19)	410

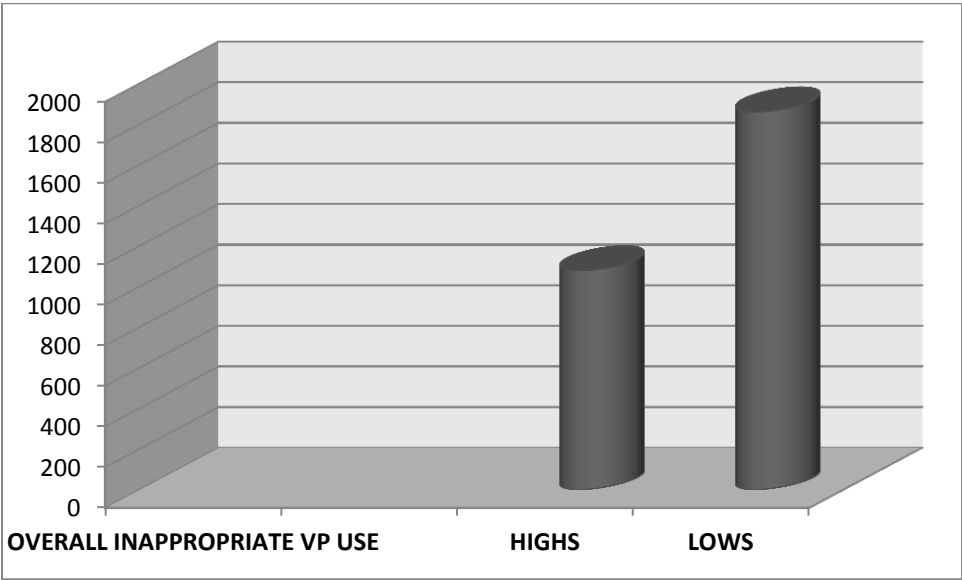| sense	(overuse)		
Incomplete Verb Phrase (IVP) (4) A form in the Verb Phrase is missing	78 (0.13) LL 9.42 (overuse)	45 (0.07)	123
Omission (OM) (5) A necessary Verb Phrase has been omitted	37 (0.06) LL 5.38 (overuse)	20 (0.03)	57
TOTAL NO of OCCURRENCES	1863 (3.12) LL 221.06 (overuse)	1081 (1.79)	2943

Figure 4.12: Overall frequencies of INAPP VP use: HIGHS & LOWS

Figure 4.13 below shows the overall frequency of inappropriate verb phrase use in terms of the categories that were formulated for the analysis of inappropriate verb phrase use in the study.
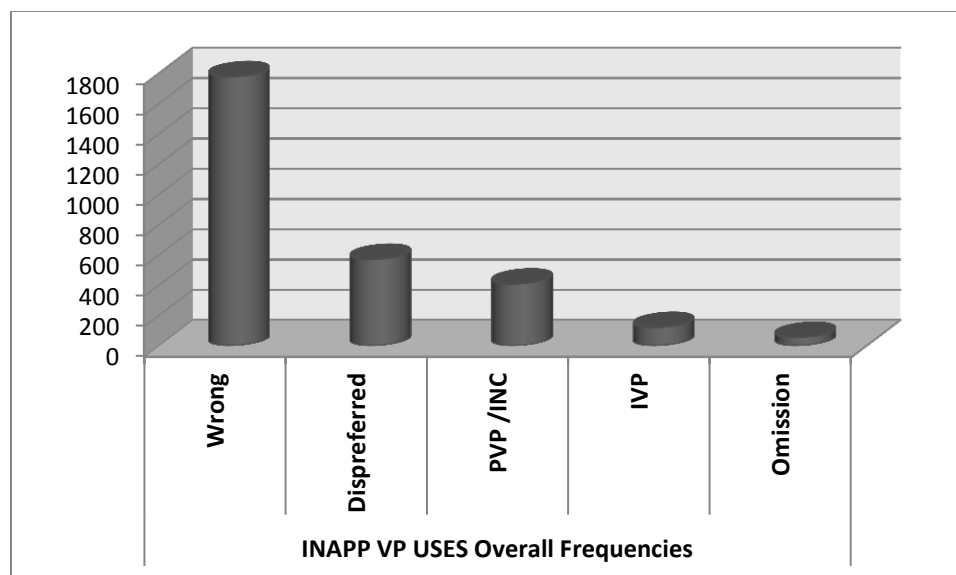
Figure 4.13: INAPP VP USES: Overall frequency

Overall, there were 2943 instances of inappropriate verb phrase use by the UL student cohort, with the LOWS having substantially higher occurrences (1863; 3.12) than the HIGHS (1081; 1.79). For the five categories of INAPP VP use, Log Likelihood calculations were done to determine whether differences in use between the two achievement groups were significant, and where applicable, these will be indicated. The category posing the most difficulty was Wrong (W) VP use, with 1780 cases overall, with the HIGHS having a much lower incidence (684; 1.13) compared to the LOWS having 1096 occurrences (1.84). For the purposes of this study, the Wrong category was further sub-divided to better understand the difficulties students had, and will therefore be treated as a separate section. The difficulties that the LOWS appeared to experience with VPs may partly relate to the fact that English has over 200 grammatically possible verb forms or combinations of forms that can be distinguished (Housen, 2002, in § 2.6.1.1) in the sense that both the size and the range of constructions may be overwhelming for AL learners of English, especially if they have never or have seldom had the benefit of meaningful verb phrase instruction.

There was a substantially lower incidence of inappropriate verb phrase use for the Dispreferred (DP) category (573 occurrences in total) compared to the Wrong category (1780 cases overall). This was followed by the category, Problematic Verb Phrase / Incoherent (PVP / INC) which had

410 instances in total. The last two categories comprised Incomplete Verb Phrase (IVP) with 123 cases overall and Omission (OM) having 57 instances in total.

Findings relating to how the two achievement groups compared with respect to the inappropriate use (INAPP) of VPs is depicted in Figure 4.14 below, and will be presented next.
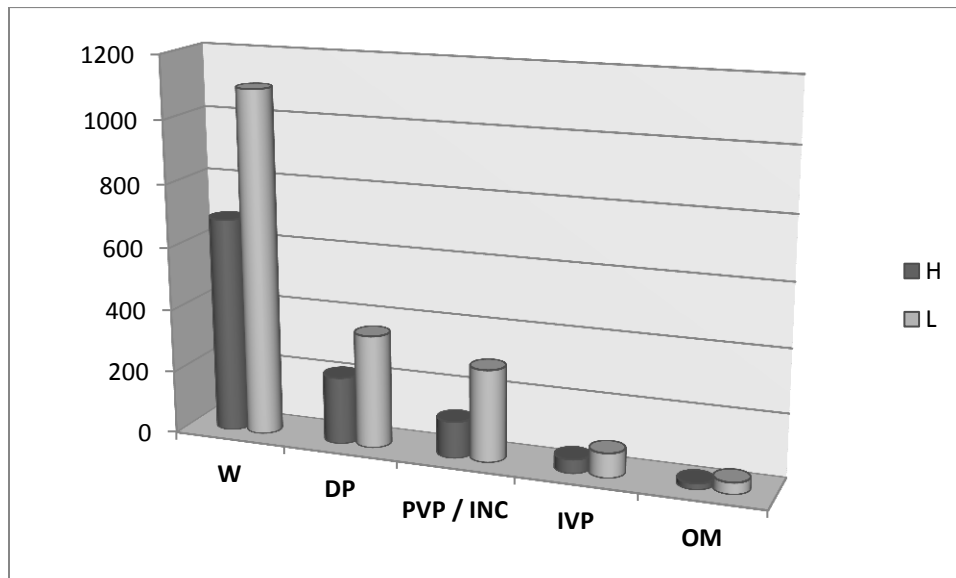

Figure 4.14: Types of Inappropriate VP uses: Counts HIGHS & LOWS

4.5.1 Wrong verb phrase uses

Before commencing with the findings pertaining to Wrong uses by the two achievement groups, it is important to keep in mind that in this study the **Wrong** category has been further sub-divided. Four types of Wrong use were identified, namely: Form; Misspelling; Agreement and Lexical Choice (cf. Table 4.33 below for the description of Wrong sub-categories). Correctly punctuated contracted forms of verbs were not analysed as wrong, although contractions would generally be discouraged in formal and academic writing.

As was pointed out earlier, the overall occurrence for Wrong uses was 1780, by far the highest overall frequency in INAPP VP use in the UL student cohort, with the HIGHS having a substantially lower frequency (684; 1.13) than the LOWS (1096; 1.84). Log likelihood calculations for the difference in Wrong uses between the two achievement groups showed a highly significant difference (LL = 101.95, p<0.0001).

Refer to the Table 4.33 below.

Table 4.33: Overall Wrong VP uses: No of Occurrences LOWS & HIGHS

WRONG VP USES	NO OCC LOWS Total no of words 59702	NO OCC HIGHS Total no of words 60524	TOTAL NO OCCURRENCES
	1096 (1.84) LL 101.95 (overuse)	684 (1.13)	1780

The following Table 4.34 and Figure 4.15 show the frequency for the types of Wrong uses by the HIGHS and LOWS. The findings relating to Wrong uses will be presented next.

Table 4.34: Types of Wrong VP uses: No of Occurrences LOWS & HIGHS

| TYPES OF WRONG VP USES	NO OCC LOWS Total no of words 59702	NO OCC HIGHS Total no of words 60524	TOTAL NO OCCURRENCES
Form (an incorrect form of a verb was used)	741 (1.24) LL 168.50 (overuse)	329 (0.54)	1070
Misspelling (a verb was misspelt; this included wrongly punctuated contractions of verbs)	166 (0.28) LL 0.70 (underuse)	184 (0.30)	350
Agreement (between nouns/pronouns and verbs)	136 (0.23) LL 18.73 (overuse)	75 (0.12)	211
Lexical choice (the lexical choice of a verb is inappropriate within the context)	53 (0.09) LL 12.01 (underuse)	96 (0.16)	149
TOTAL NO OF OCCURRENCES	**1096 (1.84) LL 101.95 (overuse)**	**684 (1.13)**	**1780**
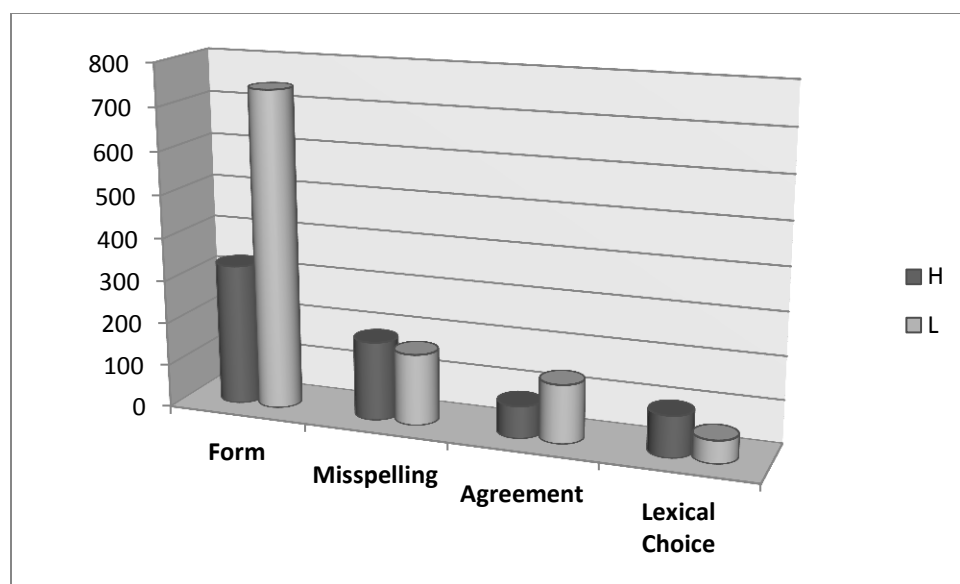
Figure 4.15: Types of Wrong VP uses: Frequencies HIGHS & LOWS

Within the Wrong category of INAPP VP use among the UL student cohort, the category with the highest frequencies was Form (F) with an overall incidence of 1070, with the LOWS having much higher frequencies (741; 1.24) compared to the HIGHS with 329 occurrences (0.54). While the overall high frequency for Form is a concern, the much higher incidence of Form difficulties in the LOWS points to the importance of addressing the problems identified in this sub-category in writing instruction. Log likelihood calculations showed that the difference with respect to VP Wrong Form uses between the two achievement groups was highly significant (LL = 168.50, p<0.0001). In this regard, Housen's (2002) study showed that students frequently had difficulty with inflectional verb categories, and based on his findings regarding either underuse or over-extended use, he argues the case for attending to verb morphology in EAP (§ 2.6.1.1). The UL cohort also experienced Form problems with respect to the use of delexical verbs (*have; take; make*) as was the case with the student writers in the study by Scheepers (2014, in § 2.6.1.1). Another problem that Scheepers (ibid.) observed relating to this category concerned tense, more specifically with the use of *have* (a stative verb) combined with progressive aspect in the present tense, and in spite of this being a frequent use in BSAE (cf. van Rooy, 2006; 2008; 2014 in § 2.6.1.1), as Scheepers (2014) points out, not all uses are appropriate. What she also suggests is that in teaching delexical verbs, it might be worthwhile to teach language in "chunks" rather than treating words as isolated items, which is an approach shared by the researcher, who encourages

students to identify "meaning units" and their "language components", in order to see how language choices work together to convey meaning. Not being able to use the correct tense markers was a major problem in the UL cohort. Tense difficulties were also reported by Scheepers (2014).

Examples of **Wrong <u>Form</u>** use:

The following VP is regarded as wrong rather than incomplete. For the idea of losing employment opportunities to foreign students, the negator *not* is necessary in the VP; as this use appears to be problematic for several students and therefore requires attention.

[70]   *More jobs would be taken by international student and our own student would suffer from* **[F - *not*]** *getting jobs in their own country.* (DIET48H)

Students should be made aware that using the present progressive form in *if*-clauses is inappropriate, as is the case below. Since *if*-clauses/meaning units commonly occur in student writing, it would be prudent to teach both indicative and subjunctive *if*-clauses, and concomitant VP form/constructions, and when or not to include modal auxiliaries, depending on communicative meaning.

[71]   ***If*** *the government* ***is going to pay for*** **[F – *pays for/paid for*]** *the student education as well, then we as a country* ***are going to suffer*** **[F – *will suffer*]** *financially.* (BDT2H)

Although discretion is necessary when choosing lexical verbs like *lead to/result in/cause*, since these signal a cause-effect relationship, which may not be the case, in the example below the use of *lead* is acceptable given its use with *can* as a possibility, rather than a certainty marker.

[72]   *There are bursaries but unfortunately not all students get it, because you can get them only if you meet the needed requirements. This* ***can lead students to stay*** **[F - *can lead to* students *staying*]** *at home even though they have passed their matric. It* ***can also lead them to engage into*** **[F - *can lead to their engaging in/can lead to them becoming involved in*]** *crime and abuse.* (DIET24H)

The extract below illustrates the student's difficulty not only with the appropriate tense, but also regarding the use of *not* as negator in a VP.

[73]   *Then looking into the bill of rights* ***it never stated*** **[F - simple present or passive simple present with *not* as negator - it *does not state* / it *is not stated*]** *that a learner or student*

at varsity level should be denied access and acceptance to varsity because he or she can not [M - cannot] *fully pay the fees.* (OH8H)

In the example below, the present perfect use is preferred.

[74]   ***Research showed* [F – *has shown*]** *that only 30% of all students in South Africa can afford the university education.* (OH10H)

[75]   *University education doesn't have to be free to those students who have been admitted, for if it ought to be so, pass rate will decrease enormously since the students will be relaxing, knowing that they **got** [F – **have/got** is ACC but adds a more colloquial tone to the text, as do the contractions] nothing to lose – they won't be as hardworking, rather they will be relaxed.* (SPEECH1H)

The use of the delexical verb *make* in the following verb phrase is wrong rather than dispreferred, a tendency among student writers of AL as shown by Scheepers (2014):

[76]   *This also **makes** the high rate of unemployed **to decline** because learners are getting educated after they get employed for the career choices.* (COMM10L)

The second sub-category within Wrong uses posing difficulty was <u>Misspelling</u> of verbs, with an overall frequency of 350, where the HIGHS had a slightly higher occurrence (184; 0.30) than the LOWS (166 instances; 0.28). This finding may be ascribed to the HIGHS having a wider verb lexicon than the LOWS. In this regard, the choice of the verb was correct, but it was spelt incorrectly. Idiosyncratic spelling is further attested in Ward-Cox's study (2012) on the writing of first-year distance university students (§ 2.6.3.2).

<u>Agreement</u> comprised the third category in Wrong VP uses. In this regard, there was a much higher incidence in the LOWS (136; 0.23) compared to the HIGHS (75; 0.12). <u>Regarding VP Wrong Agreement uses between the two student cohorts, Log likelihood calculations revealed that the difference was highly significant (LL = 18.73, p<0.0001).</u> Grammatical concord errors were similarly found in Asante's (2012) study (§ 2.6.1.1). Both notional and proximity concord errors were observed. In the current study, *-s* inflection was found to be an enduring difficulty among many of the student writers. Concord errors with respect to the use of the delexical verbs (*have; make; take*) were similarly found to be common in the students' writing in the study by Scheepers (2014). Agreement issues, however, need to be addressed by attending to relevant language features as an entity, namely: nouns; pronouns; determiners and verbs; this could be

done by parsing and cloze activities to help students become aware of these interrelationships and concomitant agreement requirements.

Examples of **Wrong <u>Agreement</u>** use:

[77]   *South Africa has a high rate of poverty, where by they **are some families who goes** to sleep without taking anything into the stomach.* (MS16L)

[78]   *Imagine those lots of money being paid as a parent then after your **child fail**.* (MS16L)

The last Wrong VP sub-category, namely <u>Lexical Choice</u>, comprised 149 instances in total, with the HIGHS having a much higher occurrence of Wrong Lexical Choices (96; 0.16) in comparison with the LOWS (53; 0.09). A possible explanation may be that the HIGHS experimented more with vocabulary to express ideas than the LOWS, who may have been more cautious, or may not have had a broad active vocabulary. <u>Log likelihood calculations revealed a highly significant difference in use between the two achievement groups (LL = 12.01, p<0.0001).</u> In this regard, Scheepers (2014) found that the majority of errors in relation to delexical verbs occurred in the collocation category, where students seemed unaware of more suitable lexical alternatives, as illustrated in the example provided below.

[79]   *On the other hand, I believe that if students are admitted for free, things like taxes and products **will go high** [**LC - will increase**], because the government will be using a lot of money on universities for every child and therefore will have to demand more from the community.* (MC35H)

What is further noteworthy is the point that Scheepers (ibid.) makes regarding verb phrase uses and derivation, for example, students not knowing the difference between *consider* and *consideration*. This, too, was observed in the current study and indicates the need to attend to morphology to help students understand how words are formed and what these forms stand for. Several researchers point out the importance of lexical specificity in academic prose (Partridge, 2011), which includes use of lexical verbs to perform several major academic functions, namely: expressing personal stance; reviewing the literature; expressing cause and effect; summarising and contrasting (Granger & Paquot, 2009). Regarding the learners' verb use, Granger and Paquot (2009) point out that the learner population tends to use conversational verbs, such as *say* and *think*, instead of academic verbs, like *state* and *view*. Also, when they do use academic verbs, they are inclined to restrict themselves to a limited range of patterns. This was a similar finding

by Partridge (2011) whose Tswana English students used fewer lexical verbs within a narrow range than their L1 English counterparts. However, as Granger and Paquot (2009) state, learner difficulties with verb use in academic discourse serves as a "quick way into learners' phraseology" which can be taken as prompts for lexical development and used with learners to develop a sound mastery of academic English (§ 2.6.1.6). This notion of lexical specificity alongside discipline-specific or disciplinary epistemology is further explored by Holmes and Nezi (2009) whose study shows lexical verb preferences by disciplines across the four epistemological quadrants (§ 2.6.1.6) and it would, therefore be relevant to address this aspect in academic writing pedagogy. The notion of lexical specificity is likewise commented on by Neuner (1987) in relation to poor writing quality in terms of a lack of cohesion due to poor writers using pseudo-chains, which are non-cohesive strands of words that collocate with virtually every word in the language (*thing; way; know; have*) and as a result, carry little semantic weight (§ 2.6.1.2 (c)).

Examples of **Wrong <u>Lexical Choice</u>** use:

[79]   *On the other hand, I believe that if students are admitted for free, things like taxes and products* **will go high** [**LC - *will increase***], *because the government will be using a lot of money on universities for every child and therefore will have to demand more from the community.* (MC35H)

[80]   *If ever the university* ***see's*** [**F & M - *views***] *educating students for free like wasting money, they* ***can*** [**DP - could**] *develop some programmes that* **will need the students to participate on** [**F and LC - *will require* student participation**] *and* **make money** [**LC - to generate income**], *then that* **will also help** *the university* **to make** *free education* [**F and LC -** which *should assist* **the university** *to provide* **free education.**] (BCURB7H)

[81]   *The government already have enough on its shoulder and I* **donnot** [**M – *do not***] *believe it* **needs** [**ACC – *can be burdened with***] *much more so this* **will lead** [**F - to** or *result in*] *the university* **to be poor managed** [**F & word order – not splitting the VP** *-to being managed* **poorly**]. (SPEECH1H)

[82]   *Our government would not want to repeat what* **had happened** [**this use is awkward but ACC**] *in previous years when our parents could not further their studies because they* **were financialy unbalanced** [**LC - they** *were impoverished*]. (COMM54H)

[83]   *Our government* **do not see things like we people sees** [**F and LC - *does not view* matters like we** *do/has* **a different perspective on things**]. (MS21H)

4.5.2 Dispreferred verb phrase use

With respect to Dispreferred (DP) Verb Phrase uses, the LOWS had substantially higher occurrences (359; 0.60) than the HIGHS (214; 0.35). <u>Log likelihood calculations revealed a highly significant difference between DP uses between the HIGHS and LOWS (LL = 39.10, p<0.0001).</u> What was particularly problematic in this category was the students' tendency to overuse *will* as a certainty marker instead of more tentative expressions. Aijmer's (2002) study revealed similar findings for the modals: *will; might; should; have (got) to*, and *must*. Aijmer (2002) suggests that a possible source may be students not understanding the requirements of argument (as persuasion) and how both the deontic (root) and epistemic meanings of modals realise the goals of argumentation. Also, students' perceptions of what appropriate levels of directness and certainty are may be different from what is required in academic writing. Another influence may be what the study by Collins (2009) has shown, namely that there is a move towards the quasi-modals replacing the modal counterparts, especially in American English, to which South Africans are largely exposed (media). Clearly, the appropriate choice of modals is important in academic writing since this affects tone, which further impacts overall style. In this respect, Aijmer (2002) provides useful guidelines for teaching modality, and here it would be prudent to take note of the findings by Collins (2009) on the use of quasi-modals in the speech of particular Inner and Outer Circle varieties, and their accompanying deontic and epistemic meanings since these assist in understanding what may sometimes appear to be less appropriate forms (§ 2.6.1.2). Collins (ibid.), for example, points out that in his study, the Inner Circle users avoided the use of *have got to* and instead used *have to*, which he attributes to the users being aware of the traditional proscriptions against the use of *get* in written prose. By contrast, the UL students quite often resort to *get* uses, either because they view this as acceptable based on its prevalence in speech, or they do not possess the requisite verb vocabulary to express themselves more appropriately. Collins (2009) also indicates that *need to* has replaced *need* in both the IC and OC varieties in equal distributions in both speech and writing. This may, in part, account for what was observed regarding the UL students' use of *need to*. Often, they would create a verb phrase with *need to* where another construction would have been a more natural, less awkward use. Obviously, the pedagogical implication here is to not only attend to verb phrase forms and constructions, but also to make students aware of other forms and constructions (for example, *it is necessary to; this necessitates*) that can perform the same communicative function. Another

tendency by the student writers in the current study was to use *end up* as a verb to mean result, a finding attested to in van Rooy's (2008) study (§ 2.6.1.4). While not all instances would be inappropriate, those that are should be pointed out, alongside suggestions for reformulation.

Examples of **Dispreferred VP** use:

[84]   *Because of the high fees at these institutions many learners* **find themselves with a problem** [have a problem] *when they are in matric because they don't know what they will do the following year ...* (BDS25H)

[85]   *Students depend on their parents and the fact of the matter is that not all parents* **are able to take** [**this appears to be a common BSAE use - *send***] *their children to university because they do not have the money to do so and the only solution would be free university education.* (MB33H)

[86]   *Eventhough they are dedicated to study* [**F - *studying***] *hard,* ***they end up*** [**CONV use**] ***not coping well*** [**they *become* stressed/anxious**] *because they also have to buy expensive books, ...* (MC15H)

In several instances, the awkward use of existential *there* impacts verb phrase construction, and in these instances, students should be helped to distinguish between the appropriate use of existential *there* and less effective uses (uses that do not serve one's communicative goal well).

[87]   *But if* **there are fees to be paid** [**awkward use of existential *there* and F - But if fees *are to be paid/are paid***] *student will study hard ... .* (INF36H)

[88]   *South Africa* **can be** [***would* be**] *a better nation if university* **can be** [***were* – aligned subjunctive use/ACC – *is* – indicative use**] *free for all admitted students.* (DIET17H)

The problem in the example below resides in the lack of alignment between subjunctive

and indicative uses.

[89]   ***Imagine*** [students used *imagine* to make hypothetical statements] *how* [***what***] *the world* **will be** [***would be* like**] *if things* **were made** *free.* (BDT12H)

4.5.3 Problematic verb phrases/incoherent verb phrases

Likewise, there was a much higher frequency in Problematic Verb Phrase/Incoherent Verb Phrase (PVP/INC) use between the two achievement groups, with the LOWS having a higher occurrence (293; 0.49) than the HIGHS (117 instances; 0.19). In this regard Log likelihood calculations indicated a highly significant difference between PVP/INC VPs between the HIGHS

and LOWS (LL = 80.49, p<0.0001). The problems identified in the current relate to the students having difficulty with verb-related matters, namely: tense and aspect, form and agreement, and lexicon (of verbs and more broadly), and syntax. Similar findings are reported by Ward-Cox (2012) and Potgieter and Conradie (2013) (§ 2.6.3.2).

Examples of **Problematic VP/Incoherent** use:

[90]   *For all this **to be** possible [**To make** all of this possible], money **is needed** [**is** necessary], and it is by far most a necessity [**redundant so either** money is necessary **OR** money is a necessity]*. (BDS16H)

In the following example, the negator (***not***) in the VP in the 2nd proposition makes no sense. In the last sentence, while the writer's meaning is obligation (signaled by ***must***), the preferred expression is ***should be able***. Also, the CE use of *because* is not the best choice; a concessive relationship between the two meaning units would be more effective.

[91]   *Every person has the right to education. People **should not be able to practise this right because of money** [should be able to practise this right in spite of lack of funds OR this right **should not be restricted to** those who **have** money]. Pupils who are believed to have achieved the results required for university admission **must** [**should be able to**] practise this right without any stress*. (DIET43H)

[92]   *… students will never get a chance to enjoy their money because **the loan will be taking its money back** [the loan **will have to be repaid**]*. (BA1H)

In the example below, the highlighted VP use is incoherent. When discussing incoherent text with students, they should be reminded of a writer's responsibility towards the reader, or reader consideration. Throughout the writing (instruction) process, student writers should be aware that their writing has a specific purpose (to inform or to demonstrate understanding) and is directed at a particular audience, and that writing at university is as goal-directed as demonstrating skill in a clinical task, or a practical. This notion should be home-driven by not only the language practitioners, but the discipline specialists as well.

[93]   *Being admitted at a University gives impression that a person has the skill and knowledge **to know that i have the right to read** [What precisely the latter means is unclear and requires reformulation. The reader cannot readily infer meaning].* (COMM47H)

In the extract below (same essay), the student's use of existential *there* is awkward, resulting in inappropriate verb use. Although *there* uses did not form part of the analysis, it was noted that this construction alongside verb use requires attention in writing instruction.

[94]   *It is the governments responsibility to make sure that **there are schools build*** [to ensure that schools are built] *and the youth of this country is educated*.

    Another person may argue that when the government makes [does] *the budget for the country, **there is education money given out** **[awkward existential** there **use - money for education** is allocated**].** (MS46H)

4.5.4 Incomplete verb phrase

In this category of INAPP VP uses, namely Incomplete Verb Phrases (IVP), the LOWS had a much higher occurrence of IVPs (78 instances; 0.13) in comparison with the HIGHS, which had 45 cases (0.07), <u>for which Log likelihood calculations revealed a highly significant difference r between the two achievement groups (LL = 9.42, p<0.01).</u> An explanation for this phenomenon is not readily available; writing under time constraints may have meant that there was no time to proofread the essay, or students did not know what all the necessary "parts" of the verb phrase were in order to complete it. Clearly, this should be discussed with students to properly identify areas of difficulty.

Examples of **Incomplete Verb Phrase**:

If the VP in the example below read ***would deal with***, the writer's intended meaning would be the assumption that government would simply attend to this task. However, from the context, the writer means it is government's responsibility to pay staff besides tuition fees, hence the use of **would have** to signal obligation.

[95]   *... the government **would** [**have**] **to deal with** that* [paying university staff]. (DIET17H)

[96]   *Many students pass their matric well with good simples, and they find it difficult to study at universities, because they* **[are] unable to pay** *university fees*. (DIET37L)

[97]   *There are some students needy to the bursaries because of having no pare-nts to pay, their parents* **[are] not working** *and the amount of money the earn*. (DIET38L)

4.5.5 Omission of verb phrase

There were slightly more Omissions of VPs within the LOWS cohort (37 occurrences; 0.06) than the HIGHS (20 instances; 0.03). <u>In this regard Log likelihood calculations showed a significant difference between the HIGHS and LOWS (LL = 5.38, p<0.05).</u> It is not entirely clear why students omit verb phrases in their writing; one suggestion is that they do not know how to construct a particular verb phrase for a specific function in the text, and then choose not to construct a verb phrase (an avoidance strategy perhaps), or the omission is simply an oversight. As is the case for IVP above, Omission should be discussed with students in order to identify the problem.

Examples of **VP Omission**:

[98]   *... through their results it shows they* [**OM – are**] *fit to be university students*. (INF20H)

[99]   *This essay will explain how free education will benefit the youth of South Africa, [and] challenges faced by both parents and the learner in the case of not being able to pay the University fees. furthermore, the outcome of free education and finally the fruits of free education for all* [**OM - will be considered/explored/elaborated on**]. (MS49H)

[100]   *South Africa according to comparison with other countries in the world.* [**OM – South Africa in comparison with other countries in the world, is …**] (COMM41L)

[101]   *Do we mean that only the advantaged people have great minds to think big and to* [**OM - get**] *the "top" jobs?* (PHARM29H)

Next, a summary with respect to the inappropriate use of verb phrases by the two achievement groups will be presented.

4.6   Summary of findings for inappropriate verb phrase use

In order to answer research question 4 regarding whether there was a difference in inappropriate verb phrase use between use between the Highs and Lows, a summary of the findings with respect to inappropriate verb phrase as revealed by Log Likelihood calculations is provided in Tables 4.35 and 4.36 below.

Table 4.35: Summary of findings for inappropriate verb phrase use

Inappropriate verb phrase categories	Highly significant differences	Relative use between LOWS & HIGHS
Wrong	LL = 101.95, p<0.0001	L>H overuse
Problematic Verb Phrase	LL = 80.49, p<0.0001	L>H overuse
Dispreferred	LL = 39.10, p<0.0001	L>H overuse
Incomplete Verb Phrase	LL = 9.42, p<0.01	L>H overuse
Inappropriate verb phrase categories	**Significant differences**	**Relative use between LOWS & HIGHS**
Omission	LL = 5.38, p<0.05	L>H overuse

Table 4.36 Summary of findings for Wrong verb phrase uses

Wrong verb phrase uses	Highly significant differences	Relative use between LOWS & HIGHS
Form	LL = 168.50, p<0.0001	L>H overuse
Agreement	LL = 18.73, p<0.0001	L>H overuse
Lexical choice	LL = 12.01, p<0.001	L<H underuse
Wrong verb phrase uses	**Non-significant differences**	
Misspelling	LL = 0.70	L<H underuse

A summary of the results pertaining to research question 4 (restated below) regarding difference in inappropriate verb phrase use between the two achievement groups is provided here.

In response to Research Question 4 (restated below),

- **Research question 4:**

Is there a difference in the frequency of inappropriate verb phrase use by the Lows, relative to the frequency of inappropriate verb phrase use by the Highs?

the results show that in terms of the categories that were formulated to analyse inappropriate verb phrase use, there were highly significant differences in use between the HIGHS and LOWS as revealed by Log Likelihood calculations (as can be seen in Tables 4.35 and 4.36 above), with overuse (indicated in blue) of inappropriate verb phrases by the LOWS relative to the HIGHS. The Wrong category had the highest number of occurrences of inappropriate verb phrase use for both the HIGHS and LOWS. This category was sub-divided, and for the sub-categories (as shown in Table 4.36 above), Form, Agreement and Lexical Choice, there were highly significant differences in inappropriate use of verb phrases between the two achievement groups. The difference in the sub-category of Misspelling was negligible. These results have clear implications for teaching.

4.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented and interpreted the findings pertaining to the two research aims and four research questions. Where relevant, comparisons of these findings have been made with reference to the literature reviewed in chapter 2, and examples illustrating student uses have been provided. Summaries of the key results have also been presented.

In the final chapter 5, the conclusions, pedagogical implications for course design, and limitations and suggestions for further research will be provided.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

IMPLICATIONS FOR COURSE DESIGN, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter concludes the study and summarises the main results. In the light of the results, implications for course design, in relation to writing instruction will be considered. Limitations with respect to the current study will be specified, and recommendations will be made for further research.

5.1   CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The current study has attempted to provide insight into entry-level first-year students' use of connecting expressions and verb phrases in terms of both appropriate and inappropriate use. The results of the analysis reveal that, overall, the highly rated essays exemplified more appropriate use of these two language features than the lowly rated essays. The results with respect to inappropriate uses of connectors and verb phrases for which Log Likelihood calculations revealed highly significant differences between the two achievement groups, where the LOWS had substantially higher occurrences of inappropriate use than the HIGHS, provide empirical evidence for attending to the problems that were identified regarding connector and verb phrase use in terms of the two analytical frameworks specially designed for the current study.

With this in mind, it is believed that the current study has made a contribution on an applied level in three ways: by providing empirical evidence for including connectors and verb phrases in course design relating to writing instruction, more particularly in an EAP course. Secondly, the design of the two analytical frameworks for examining inappropriate connector and verb phrase use may also have applicational value for the purposes of analysing these features. Thirdly, the current study has attempted to make an applied contribution by considering the pedagogical implications arising from the key findings for course design in EAP.

The research aims (set out in chapter 1) were:

1. To compare connector use between the two achievement groups.
2. To compare verb phrase use between the two achievement groups.

The aims were achieved in the course of investigating the following research questions:

1. Is there a difference in the frequency of appropriate connector use by the Lows, relative to the frequency of appropriate connector use by the Highs?
2. Is there a difference in the frequency of inappropriate connector use by the Lows, relative to the frequency of inappropriate connector use by the Highs?
3. Is there a difference in the frequency of appropriate verb phrase use by the Lows, relative to the frequency of appropriate verb phrase use by the Highs?
4. Is there a difference in the frequency of inappropriate verb phrase use by the Lows, relative to the frequency of inappropriate verb phrase use by the Highs?

In answer to the above four research questions, summaries of key findings with respect to appropriate and inappropriate connector use (§ 4.3.3 and 4.3.5) and appropriate and inappropriate verb phrase (§ 4.4.2 and 4.4.4) use were presented in chapter 4, Part One (connectors) and Part Two (verb phrases).

Next, the implications for course design in relation to writing instruction in terms of the key findings will be considered.

5.2   PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR COURSE DESIGN

The implications for course design in relation to writing instruction for EAP purposes are those emanating from the key findings of the current study. The results provide empirical grounds for including both connector and verb phrase study in EAP course design.

First, connectors will be considered, followed by verb phrases. It is important to emphasise that the idea is not to prescribe any methodology since this is beyond the scope of the current study; however, some suggestions for task types and activities will be offered.

5.2.1 Connectors

In terms of appropriate connector use (§ 4.2.3), the results of the current study reveal that the LOWS, in general, underused particular connector categories, namely: Circumstance Adverbials of Time, Purpose, Reason, Conditional, Concessive and Result. Similarly, the LOWS underused Linking Adverbials of Result/Inference, Apposition, Contrast and Concessive. In contrast, the LOWS overused Relativisers (explained in terms of the repetition of the phrase *who are admitted*) and the Circumstance Adverbials of Purpose and Reason, including Co-ordinators and the Linking Adverbial of Addition. Both the underuse and overuse of these connector types would therefore merit attention in teaching, since both underuse and overuse could impact writing quality (cohesion and coherence). It would appear that in the case of the LOWS, underuse and/or overuse of these features may have negatively impacted raters' perceptions of writing quality. The under- and overuse of particular expressions (such as those indicated in Tables 4.20 and 4.21 in § 4.2.3) also warrant discussion alongside possible, and perhaps better alternate expressions, keeping the variables that influence language choices in mind, such as text type, topic and audience.

The results pertaining to inappropriate connector use as shown in Table 4.24 (§ 4.2.5) reveal that the LOWS overused seven out of eight categories, namely: Incoherent, Omission, New Sentence, Wrong, Dispreferred, No Break and Punctuation. These types of connector use errors should therefore be carefully attended to in EAP writing instruction since they may well have compromised the writing by the LOWS.

For both connector and verb phrase study, it would be important to begin with recognition tasks where students try to identify these language features, and then suggest how they are functioning. Attention to form and function is necessary to create awareness of the form-function relationship in language choices. Following recognition, it is imperative that students are afforded opportunities to practise and produce these features in writing tasks that would require the use of particular categories of connectors and verb phrases, for example, laboratory reports requiring passive and active constructions, and specific tense and/or aspect uses and a treatment/intervention programme for a particular dysfunction requiring the use of concessive connectors. A pre-writing activity could be a cloze exercise, where students fill in the appropriate missing features.

For the purposes of teaching connector use, model texts (ideally discipline-related) (cf. Charles, 2011, in § 2.6.2.1 (b)) could be used for the identification of CEs and discussion of what types of logical relationships they are signalling; the latter task is particularly important in demonstrating to students how CEs are chosen to signal a specific relation between propositions (cf. Bondi, 2004 and Charles, 2011, in § 2.6.2.1 (b)). Ideally, a wide range of text types should be examined, to capture as many CE expressions as possible, and to have students explore a representative range of logical relationships. In this regard, students should also be made aware of how punctuation works alongside CE use (cf. Zamel, 1984, in § 2.6.2.1 (b)). This exercise could further be used to examine how CE use relates to the rest of the proposition, either intra- or intersententially. This would help students to understand the notion of discourse, and how meaning is constructed, since connectedness is neither created nor resolved at the word level (cf. Fahnestock, 1983, in § 2.6.2.1 (b)). Rather than providing students with a list of CEs, they could be given a table indicating the types of logical relationships that feature in academic prose, which they could use as a basis for recording the types CEs they observe in their reading, and those used in their writing – as a reminder of form-function relationships in English.

Besides instruction on appropriate use, it would be prudent to alert students to inappropriate use, given the findings of the current study in this regard (cf. Zamel, 1984, in § 2.6.2.1 (b)). This may necessitate exemplification through the use of student extracts. However, as the text analysis in the present study has shown, inappropriate use is complex, in the sense that it was seldom that only the CE use was problematic; often there was evidence of limited understanding of logical relationships (a deeper issue), or elaboration was insufficient or lacking which hindered interpretation of the CE use, or the proposition containing the CE was wrongly positioned, et cetera. Given this complexity, it may be useful to provide students with an analytical framework for the interpretation of inappropriate CE use (such as the one compiled for the current study), to help them to better understand why and how CE uses may be considered inappropriate.

Students should also be exposed to discontinuative relations (less expected alternatives) for two reasons: these are prevalent in academic writing, but more importantly, it would appear that students do not fully understand the notions of concession and counterargument (cf. Bondi, 2004, in § 2.6.2.1 (b)).

As will be indicated in the discussion of instruction on verb phrase use, the teaching of CE use cannot be divorced from expanding students' lexico-grammatical development. To be able to express one's ideas, or to convey information, particularly within an academic environment, knowledge of particular expressions and the company they keep (as in formulaic language or phraseology), and where they can be positioned or not, within the clause structure, is crucial. To teach this, without resorting to a pure grammar approach, one could work with what Scheepers (2014, in § 2.6.1.1) refers to as language chunks, but which the researcher prefers to call meaning units. It is the researcher's view that such an approach would be less overwhelming for AL and even novice students.

Finally, alongside the teaching of CEs, attention to how elaboration occurs in modern-day academic prose is warranted given the fact that language change is natural and that science has at its core, innovation. Here, elaboration as compression as opposed to clausal elaboration which may involve the use of CEs, should be taught, again by way of modeling, followed by assisting students to use the phrasal structures in compression, specifically those listed in Table 2.16 in Chapter 2 (§ 2.6.3.6). Also, in keeping with the current scientific perspective, students should be aware of how scientists interpret phenomena and relationships between variables. Today, as Jones (2010:210, in § 2.6.2.1 (b)) indicates, science favours "correlation, dynamic interaction, indirect influence and conditioned processes rather than cause-and-effect", and based on this, students should be provided with the linguistic tools to encode this new understanding. This would be particularly relevant for the Health Sciences students at Medunsa campus.

5.2.2 Verb phrases

The results for appropriate verb phrase use (§ 4.4) reveal that for the majority of the verb phrase categories (types or constructions) and with respect to the use of specific forms within categories, the LOWS underused verb phrase constructions or expressions in comparison with the HIGHS. The category that stands out is that of Modal Auxiliaries, in combination with the Passive Voice, Perfect Aspect and Progressive Aspect. Other uses in which underuse occurred in the LOWS were Simple Present, Mood Subjunctive, Hypothetical clauses marked by inversion and modal auxiliaries without Aspect or Voice, Primary verbs as Main verbs, Simple Past and Verbless (cf. Table 4.31 in § 4.4)

The results pertaining to inappropriate verb phrase use for the current study are shown in Tables 4.35 and 4.36 (§ 4.6). The LOWS overused inappropriate verb phrases in the categories: Wrong, Problematic Verb Phrase, Dispreferred, Incomplete Verb Phrase and Omission. In the Wrong category, overuse by the LOWS occurred in the sub-categories Form and Agreement, as opposed to underuse in the sub-categories, Lexical Choice and Misspelling.

The above findings provide an empirical basis for including verb phrase study in an EAP writing course. This should include: Modal Auxiliaries (and their three meanings: epistemic, deontic and dynamic) on their own and in combination with Tense, Aspect and Passive Voice. In this regard, the notions Tense and Aspect should be explained, including the role of the Passive Voice in achieving objectivity. Regarding Aspect, both the Perfect and Progressive uses should be taught in terms of form/function and in which contexts the Progressive form may not be suitable. All the combinations for the Passive Voice warrant attention, in that they are often all employed in reporting (for example, in the Health Sciences and Sciences). In addition, attention should be given to Primary verbs as Main verbs, both Mood Subjunctive and Indicative, and Verbless uses.

Regarding inappropriate verb use, the results reveal the need to attend to all the types of verb phrase error categories (§ 4.6, Tables 4.35 and 4.36). In this regard, it would be important to familiarise the students with the concomitant forms in each type of construction as students seem to think that a verb phrase is comprised of one word. They are not aware that a single verb phrase may be "split up" and do not realise that the forms making up the phrase all perform a specific function and contribute to an overall communicative function. These "basics" need to be made explicit in verb phrase teaching.

With respect to lexical verbs, students should be familiar with the types of verbs that are prevalent in their disciplines, and should understand the choices based on discipline epistemology (cf. Table 2.4, Holmes & Nesi, 2009, in § 2.6.1.6). As for other word classes, such as nouns, lexical specificity with respect to academic lexical verbs is equally relevant in verb phrase use (cf. Granger & Paquot, 2009, in § 2.6.1.6). Here, both overused and underused verbs should be pointed out, for example, in the current study, *will* was overused to signal predictive certainty, and *think* and *feel* (conversational verbs) were over-relied on to express subjective attitude. Because of the bleaching (loss of meaning) that occurs when words are overused (for example *say*), this phenomenon should also be pointed out to students. Modal auxiliaries, on the

other hand, were limited to a few expressions, rather than exploring the full range. Given this, it is considered worthwhile to teach the modal system and semantics (cf. Table 2.3, Collins, 2007, in § 2.6.1.2). Regarding the teaching of epistemic modality, students should be explicitly instructed on the notion of argument, or the elements of persuasion, since research indicates that they have great difficulty in this area. Without a clear understanding of what constitutes argument in academic writing, students will not grasp the relationship between communicative purpose and language choices as shaping/influencing one's communicative purpose (cf. Hyland, 2004 and Street, 1999, in § 2.6.3.4). Expressions of epistemic meaning, however, cannot be restricted to the modal system, but would require a consideration of all possible hedging expressions for the purposes of conveying information accurately and reliably for the purposes of sound argument. In addition to developing students' lexical academic verb repertoire, and creating awareness of modal meanings, it is necessary to work on tense and aspect since these present major difficulties for the students. Within the South African context where the majority of students are Black, and for whom English is an AL, and the Afrikaans White students for whom tense and aspect are also problematic, it might be worthwhile to look at BSAE and Afrikaans English uses and discuss these in terms of the research findings in this area (cf. Makalela, 2013, in § 2.1 and van Rooy, 2014, in § 2.6.1.4). Both these cohorts have difficulty in time frame conceptualisation (in terms of scientific thought processes) and concomitant expressions; they do not understand the subtle shifts between past and present on their own, and in combination with aspectual meaning. In this regard, they need to know when the use of the simple present or past progressive is suitable and when to combine this with time adverbials or omit, when extralinguistic factors are sufficient. Related to aspect, teaching the perfect as relating a past situation to a present state in some way is also important (cf. Yao & Collins, 2012, in § 2.6.1.5).

As was suggested for CE instruction, model texts could be used for instruction on verbs since context is critically important for insight into choices in relation to the overall purpose of the text, and meaning at the proposition level (clause and beyond). If model texts are not feasible, then materials for demonstrating effective use of connectors and verb phrases should at least be authentic.

Next, the limitations pertaining to the current research will be indicated.

5.3 LIMITATIONS

One limitation relates the sample size of the text analysis (only 250 essays were analysed) but this was largely determined by the fact that only 124 students passed the essay. As a result, the findings pertaining to the analyses of CE and VP use cannot be generalised to other contexts. They have to be interpreted within the UL context.

A second limitation relates to the comparison of student writers only and not including more advanced or expert writing to use as a benchmark for CE and VP use. Although it was a carefully considered choice not to include an expert database since the aim of the current study was to focus on learner language, nevertheless, such a comparison may well have revealed interesting similarities and differences, and useful insights for academic writing instruction.

A third limitation relates to the breadth of the analysis. Rather than attempting to cover both CE and VP analysis in a single study, it would be more practical and rewarding to focus on a specific feature (for example, lexical verbs) and do a detailed form-function analysis of how this feature is used in a particular context. A narrower linguistic focus also allows for a larger database in terms of sampling.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In spite of the plethora of academic writing research, and the growing body of learner language research, there is no doubt that research into student writing will remain necessary for a while given the fact that students, worldwide, continue to experience challenges with academic writing tasks. Because it is the researcher's view that there is a tendency to lose sight of the heart of the matter, namely "language" in EAP teaching in South Africa, the focus of the recommendations for further research is on language study.

One possible area of research is for EAP language practitioners to collaborate with discipline specialists to identify additional language features (besides connectors and verb phrases) posing difficulty for AL student writers. This could be followed by analyses of appropriate and inappropriate uses of the identified language feature/s for the purposes of providing empirical evidence for which language feature/s to include in writing instruction.

Another area is to identify language features commonly associated with a particular degree programme, for example, MBChB, and to use these findings to inform writing instruction for the degree programme. This could be done by a language practitioner with or without the involvement of discipline specialists.

Additionally, it might be worthwhile comparing AL and novice student writing if this were feasible in the light of what is presumed to be a diminishing population of English home language speakers in South Africa. However, this may change as more and more Blacks choose to raise their children in English. What could be considered is comparing South African AL student writing with native speaker student writing abroad, such as using material from LOCNESS (Louvain Corpus of Native English essays).

Lastly, a corpus approach to student writing could be adopted, which is in line with current trends, and may be well suited to some researchers' aims. Corpus research may generate interesting data pertaining to learner language patterns, and varieties within this group.

5.5 CONCLUSION

Overall, the results of the study have revealed that with respect to the two achievement groups, the LOWS had greater difficulty with connectors and verb phrases than the HIGHS, in the sense that in terms of appropriate use, underuse was observed for many of the categories and forms. Overuse, on the other hand, was observed in relation to inappropriate uses of both connector and verb phrase forms. These results, therefore, provide empirical grounds for including connectors and verb phrases in EAP course design.

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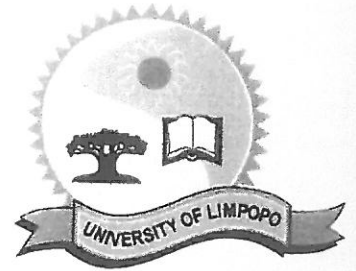
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TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE
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29 June 2012

A Coetzer

Department of Languages

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

ETHICAL CLEARANCE OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL

This is to confirm that the following proposal was considered for ethical clearance, and was duly approved by the Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC):

TITLE: "A survey on Faculty views on the nature of Academic Writing and Instruction and an analysis of 1st year student writing at the University of Limpopo: Pedagogical implications for course."

RESEARCHER: A Coetzer (████████████)
Department of Languages
Faculty of Humanities, University of Limpopo

SUPERVISOR: Dr RV McCabe – University of Limpopo

DATE CONSIDERED: 28 June 2012

TREC REFERENCE: TREC2012/897-969

PROF. RL HOWARD

CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

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CC: Prof RL Howard – Chairperson: Turfloop Research Ethics Committee
            Dr MA Rampedi – Acting Executive Dean: Faculty of Humanities
            Prof RN Madadzhe – Director: School of Languages and Communication Studies