

Narrative writing and language biographies on English language learning: the case of Hifikepunye Pohamba Campus

Language student teachers aiming to teach English soon after completing their four years of teacher training are often unable to use English fluently and accurately. Additionally, they are often inexperienced and not sufficiently competent in teaching the language. Therefore, this study explored whether expressive and narrative writing by final-year B.Ed Honours student teachers could lead to an improvement in their English proficiency as well as the content knowledge of English that they will need to pass on to their learners. It further aimed to understand the development of the student teachers' ability to reflect on their learning during the course of study.

Consequently, this study critically reviewed the Namibian language policy to find out how it could inform the results of this study. Using expressive writing like biographies, journals and narrative frames, I found that although the participants were proficient in English, some improvement as well as some lapses occurred, due to time limitations, restrictions on the type of research instruments used and the impact of a currently restrictive monolingual language policy in terms of exposure. This study concurs with the results of similar studies, finding that many factors contribute to whether or not an improvement in language proficiency occurs and that it does not happen at the same pace for all. Results also indicate participants' awareness of a considerable increase in their knowledge of as well as knowledge about English.

This study contributes by demonstrating how narrative inquiry theory can serve two purposes: as a methodological approach as well a data collection method. It further showed the importance of creating awareness of the subject content knowledge that pre-service teachers will need once their training is completed. Lastly, this study's contribution is conceptual (agency and the development of two proficiencies) as shown by how student teachers' language ability and knowledge are motivated through willpower despite many challenges in their learning situations.

Dr Meameno Aileen Shiweda

Promoter: Prof Christa van der Walt