THE CHALLENGES OF ENGLISH SPEAKING AND WRITING COMPETENCIES FOR ENGLISH FOR MEDICAL STUDIES: A CASE STUDY OF FIRST YEAR MEDICAL STUDENTS AT SEFAKO MAKGATHO UNIVERSITY IN GAUTENG PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA.

by

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Mini - Dissertation

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH STUDIES

in the

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

(School of Languages and Communication Studies)

at the

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

SUPERVISOR: Prof T.J Kekana

2023

DECLARATION

I declare that the mini-dissertation titled *"The challenges of English speaking and writing competencies for English for Medical Studies: A case study of first year Medical Students at Sefako Makgatho University in Gauteng Province, South Africa."* is my own work. All the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references, and this work has not been submitted before for any other degree at any other institution.

__Thama Millicent Mamabolo__

Full names   **Signature**

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family. My special gratitude goes to my son Phenyo Aiden Mamabolo and my late grandmother Manoko Agnes Matlala. I would also like to thank my mother Ramaesela Evelyn Mamabolo, my uncle David Matlala for being the most supportive parents I could ever ask for. I also want to acknowledge my little brother Seripa Tokollo Mamabolo and my little sisters, Matema Mamabolo, Koena Andy Masipa, and Tsiri Masipa. I appreciate all the support you have given me throughout this study. I also extend my special gratitude to my supervisor Prof T.J Kekana. Thank you for your guidance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Almighty God for giving me the courage, strength, wisdom, and dedication to be able to complete my study. I also want to extend my gratitude to all the participants, which includes the lecturer who allowed their students to give me a little of their time and students whom I interviewed.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges of writing and speaking proficiency for English for Medical Studies (EMS) of students who are doing first year in Sefako Makgatho Health Science University (SMU). Qualitative and quantitative research was conducted to determine the views and perceptions of the participants. Data was collected through interviews and paper survey with a selected sample of respondents, and the data was analysed using thematic analysis. Themes were generated to present the data based on the study's objectives, which were aligned with the literature review. The study has highlighted how important knowledge of basic English skills is and how it affects students in the medical field. The findings revealed that even though the English subject is taught throughout high school students still lack writing and speaking proficiency in order for them to engage and thrive in English for Medical Studies courses. The study recommends that during first year relevant content be designed in modules such Academic Literacy (AL) to develop essential skills such as writing and speaking.

Key concepts: English for General Purposes, English for Medical Purposes, English for Specific Purposes

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

CHE Council on Higher Education

EAP English for Academic Purposes

EGP English for General Purposes

EMAP English for Medical Academic Purposes

ESL English Second Language

ESP English for Specific Purposes

EST English with Special Topics

HE   Higher Education

HoD Head of Department

L2   Second Language

NA   Need Analysis

SA South Africa

SLA Second Language Acquisition

SLL Second Language Learner

TREC Turfloop Research Ethics Committee

UL University of Limpopo

CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

According to World Health Organisation (2022), Health literacy is a multidimensional concept that encompasses an individual's, a family's or a community's knowledge, confidence and comfort (which accumulate through daily activities, social interactions and across generations) to access, understand, appraise, remember and use information about health and healthcare. In addition, Dodson and Osborne (2015) maintain that heath literacy responsiveness describes the way in which policies, services, environments and providers make health information and healthcare available and accessible to people with different health literacy strengths, needs and preferences. Though other international languages have developed across the world, English continues to serve a vital role in education around the globe. English has been recognised as a global language and one of the official languages in South Africa (SA). It has evolved into the language of science, the media, and technology. However, in our day and age, studying English is associated with gaining life skills; it is taught in accordance with the requirements of a given sector. Mastering English has transformed into an indisputable need for scientific students, as it has evolved into the standard language of science, technology, and research. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), with the growing need for English language learning, each English language student demands expertise in her or his profession. As a result of this need-based circumstance, English instruction for these students has transitioned from second/foreign language study to English for Specific Purposes (ESP). This movement in English language teaching and learning began in the 1960s. According to Brunton (2009), the term ESP was coined in the 1960s in response to the realisation that general English was no longer satisfying the demands of learners or employers. With the rising need in international commerce and technical and commercial activities in the post-World War II period, the creation of an international language to ease the transfer of information and international trade was imperative, as it moved the aims of studying English from pleasure or prestige language to English for practical and professional usage (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Furthermore, Hutchinson & Waters (ibid) suggest that the method to the study of language has altered, which has helped to the development of ESP as linguists began revisiting early approaches to the norms

of English usage and grammar and focused on how English is deployed in real-life communication. The primary features of this method emphasise the context in which language, whether written or spoken, varies. English used in the medical field, for example, needs specialised terminology and substance. Scholars such as Mohamed (2021) in his study titled "The Effectiveness of Internet and Mobile Applications in English Language Learning for Health Sciences' Students in a University in the United Arab Emirates" also highlighted the importance of 'English that is meant for health professions'.

1.2 Background of the Study

In many parts of the world, including South Africa (SA), English for Specific Purposes (ESP) approach programs have become an integral component of teaching and learning English as a second language (Razika, 2016). ESP approach programs are multifaceted in that they cater to students' needs while also providing necessary communication training, which may include "writing medical reports, scientific writing, and air-traffic control; which contain lexical, grammatical, and other linguistic features that differ from ordinary language" (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). The content and aims of the ESP approach courses are determined by the specific demands of a group of students in this context (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). In other words, an ESP approach program that does not address learners' 'needs' cannot exist in a classroom.

Since the 1960s, there has been substantial literature on ESPs, and there is a strong view that such programs remain important because they give models for establishing English academic literacy for students from varied backgrounds. The importance of the ESP method is further supported by the growing realization that English is still a modern lingua franca (Otilia, 2015). South Africa is a well-established multilingual country where different university students acquire English as a second language in primary and secondary school (Nomlomo & Katiya, 2018). Despite this, not all students have the chance to gain adequate English language competence to enable them to function to their full capacity in their studies. As a result, English remains a barrier to communication and restricts access to education (Du Plessis, 2006). To address these obvious challenges, universities in South Africa, including Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU), have implemented English modules within various degrees to help first-year students cope with the conundrum of learning through a

second language (Ngoepe, 2007), so that they can meet the standard of proficiency required to perform well at the university. According to Wright (1992), the ESP technique wastes less time in teaching and learning. This is because learners utilize their learning resources, which are designed to assist them in acquiring previously defined abilities and linguistic pieces. Furthermore, the ESP technique allows students to learn more efficiently, comprehend, and participate to their full capacity.

1.3 The Research Problem

Every discipline has its own discipline specific language and most students seem to suffer inadequacy in acquiring those discipline specific languages. Literature in SA proved that majority of first year students in South Africa do not have sufficient English for General Purpose (EGP) for them to take any course of ESP. Thus, this problem cannot be left to perpetuate. It has been observed that first-year medical students at Sefako Makgatho Health Science University are not immune to this challenge. In other words, they are not proficient enough in their EGP for them to start learning English for Medical Academic Purposes (EMAP). Thus, this proposed study seeks to address this problem with evidence-based answers and probable solutions. Many of the students in this context are first-generation students, and the majority of them speak English as a second or even third language. They frequently come from low-income families and dysfunctional secondary schools, leaving them unprepared for university and at a disadvantage, particularly in terms of academic literacy in English (Cross & Carpentier, 2009; Krugel & Fourie, 2014; Mhlongo, 2014). Due to the legacy of apartheid in South Africa, the national Department of Education inherited an education system that was uneven and lacked resources. Many public schools were unable to equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in higher education (Rantsi, 2016; Spaull, 2013). Because of the disparities in South Africa's education system, not all students are adequately prepared for university. There exists a disparity between the skills and knowledge acquired in high school and those demanded by universities.

While on the other hand, EMAP is considered extremely important for medical students' academic and professional life. Knowing EMAP is thought to help physicians make more precise diagnoses, establish better physician–patient communication, and

reduce the number of clinical errors, so it is essential in all institutions of higher education including Sefako Makgatho Health Science University (SMU), that students studying medicine do EMAP in their first year. It will only be easier for them to grasp EMAP if they know the general English. For this reason, the study found in-depth information about English writing and speaking challenges faced by First Year students at SMU. In addition, at Stellenbosch University in South Africa, 10% of the medical school's intake comes from rural towns. This is a serious problem because these students come to the university with very poor English proficiency. If students come with low or poor general English proficiency how will they cope with the more specialized English like English for health. Thus, the study is trying to find better strategies and methods that can be used by English lecturers at SMU to help these medical science students with their English language challenge or challenges.

1.4 The Aim of the Study and Research Objectives

The aim of the proposed study is to investigate the challenges of English speaking and writing competencies for first year English students who are doing Medical Studies at Sefako Makgatho University in Gauteng Province, South Africa. 201

1.4.1. The Objectives of the Study
- To investigate and examine the challenges with regards to English Speaking and Writing competencies among first year students of English for Medical Studies at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University in Gauteng province, South Africa.

- To pinpoint the difficulties faced by students in English writing and speaking.

- To evaluate if Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University is helping as far as addressing the English language proficiency of these students is concerned.

- To suggest possible intervention strategies that can help these students improve their English writing and speaking competencies.

1.5   Significance of the Study

This study will help different institutions and organisations that train medical practitioners to improve their English speaking and writing competencies. In addition, the study will serve as a springboard for other English speaking and writing challenges

that occur in medical environments. It will also create a sense of belonging for EFAL grammar teachers in medical studies and learners in a learning environment. Furthermore, the study will assist various medical organisations, institutions, societies and schools to realise the need to avail ESP programmes language in different places such as hospitals, shops, and in the learning environment.

1.6 Ethical Considerations

The ethical consideration section focuses on permission to conduct the study, right of privacy, informed consent, confidentiality anonymity, and confidentiality.

1.6.1 Permission to Conduct the Study.

The researcher requested a permission certificate from the University of Limpopo Turf-loop Campus and the Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) before conducting the research. Every participant was given the freedom to decide whether or not to participate in this study. The researcher alerted the participants that they have the right to withdraw their participation at any time of the research process without being required to give any explanation.

1.6.2 Right of Privacy

The right to privacy was maintained by the researcher. The researcher has ensured that no attention was given to the participants in terms of their names being mentioned in the study. Furthermore, the participants are informed about their right to participate in the study out of their free will, and that they can at any stage withdraw from the study if they feel uncomfortable to continue without any negative consequences.

1.6.3 Informed Consent.

The researcher asked the participants to read and sign an informed consent form that explained the nature of the study, the significance of the study and the ethical aspects of the study. A consent form has also outlined what is required from the participants during the research and how the results will be used.

1.6.4 Confidentiality

Confidentiality of participants will be maintained by ensuring that the participants' information such as their names, age or any form of identification is kept safe and private. Anonymisation is a critical part of confidentiality (Surmiak, 2018). Furthermore, interviews could be held in privacy (one-on-one) to ensure confidentiality. Documents submitted will not be shared with anyone and will only be used for this study purpose only. The researcher will also ensure that the participants are told that the information they provide would not be disclosed to anyone.

1.6.5 Anonymity

The researcher ensured the anonymity of participants throughout the study by ensuring that the participants' names i.e., individual names of students and lecturers were not included in the study.

1.6.6 Informed Consent

Voluntary participation implies that all study subjects are free to choose whether or not to participate. All participants have the option to withdraw from or exit the research at any time without feeling obligated to do so. Participants are also not required to give a reason for leaving the research.

1.7 Benefits and Risks Anticipated in the Study

1.7.1 Benefits anticipated in the Study

The study has shed some light on the importance of English studied in High school, how it does benefit students once they get to university and also the importance of ESP and EAMP.

1.7.2 Risks Anticipated in the Study.

The researcher ensured that participants endure no harm in the study by ensuring that any harm associated with the study, such as the use of data collecting tools and loss of time will be avoided. Dixon and Quirke (2017) posit that harm or risk on participants

must be always avoided in research. The participants experienced a low degree of inconvenience when they were engaged in interviews.

1.8 Dissertation Outline

Chapter 1: Orientation and Background to the Study

This chapter serves as the general orientation of this investigation. It presented how the study was conducted. It explained the research problem, the research aim, the research question, significance of the study, ethical consideration, benefits of the study, and dissertation outline.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter critically discussed theoretical framework behind this study along with explanations of significant terms and action as a theory that underpin the study, as well as its connection to the study. It also reviewed literature from current published studies relevant to the research paper from South Africa. The review is presented into relevant subsections.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter explained the research method employed in this study, research paradigm, research design, research instruments, collection and analysis of data, population, sample, and the sampling method.

Chapter 4: Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation of Data

The fourth chapter presented the results and interpretation of data collected. The results in this chapter are presented in the form of tables along with detailed discussions and interpretations. In addition, data is also presented through figures containing graphs.

Chapter 5: Summary of Findings, Recommendations and Conclusions

This chapter presented a summary of the key findings. The chapter also provided recommendations and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 English for Specific Purposes Approach and English for General Purposes

The ESP approach has undergone various definitions since its origin and evolution through time. Scholars have attempted to define the notion in terms of its shortcomings. Hutchinson & Waters (1987) originated the term, describing ESP as an approach rather than a product, implying that ESP is not limited to a certain language, technique, or instructional materials. What is considered crucial in ESP is why pupil need to utilize a foreign language (Hutchinson & Waters,1987). As a result, the ESP approach course was created primarily for the goal of learning English. Belyaeva (2015) describes ESP as a method that addresses a student's particular needs.

Pleșca (2016) defines ESP as "the teaching and study of English as a second or foreign language, with the learners' goal of using English in a specific academic, professional, or vocational area." It is English with an emphasis on the particular requirements of the learners" (Pleșca,2016). Hutchinson and Water (1987) proved that there is no theoretical difference between ESP and EGP. However, according to Ajideh (2009), the distinction is solely in how the learning aim is stated and accomplished. Pleșca (2016) defines EGP as English language education, which is often present in primary and secondary schools. It is required of pupils in order for them to grasp the language. Lamri (2016) says that EGP places a strong emphasis on studying the English language, as well as the culture and literature that surround it, and that the language is the subject matter of the course. The primary goal of EGP in schools is for students to succeed in their exams and examinations.

2.2 Typology of ESP

According to Lamri, Bouabdallah-Heddam, and Bensafa (2017), ESP can be differentiated in three types: Occupational Purposes (EOP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP), English with Specific Topics (EST) and English as a Restricted Language (ERL). EOP can be understood as the English that is used in the workplace. For instance, English for technicians, which is usually used by workers to communicate with customers (Anthony, 2018). Woodrow (2017), outlines that other

individuals use EOP to publish their research papers following their work. EAP allows students to be taught the appropriate way to use a language for studying. It aims to assist students to study using the English language. Lamri (2016) points out that regardless of the separation between EAP and EOP, they cannot quite be separated because one can work and study simultaneously.

Hans and Hans (2015) explain EST as the type of ESP where the focus is shifted from a purpose to a topic. EST is essentially concerned with the future of English needs, for instance, scientists working in foreign institutions and demands the English language for postgraduate reading studies. Lately, more focus has been put on EOP and EAP as the ESP branches to consider when looking at ESP (Anthony, 2018 & Woodrow, 2017).

Furthermore, Hans & Hans (2015) cited in Carter (1983) claim that ERL is the type of language used by specific people. Lamri et al. (2017) provide a clear example with air traffic-controllers using words like 'turbulence'. However, Lamri et al. (2017) indicate that learning this type of ESP as an ordinary individual might not allow one to be able to communicate effectively in other settings as the language is only known by a small group of people.

In addition, Rogers (1983) is one of the scholars who categorised ESP into three types namely:

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

The language used by health practitioners or by police officers are examples of English as a restricted language. Mackay and Mountford (1978) clearly illustrate the difference between restricted language and language with this statement: ... the language of international air-traffic control could be regarded as 'special', in the sense that the repertoire required by the controller is strictly limited and can be accurately determined situationally. This applies to health practitioners working environments.

2.2.1 English for Academic Medical Purposes

According to Maher (1986), a specialized technical language such as the language of medicine can be defined as a "restricted repertoire of words and expressions selected from the whole language to cover every requirement within a well-defined context". The language of medicine is one of the technical languages that are investigated for their instrumental role both in medical diagnosis and in treatment. Medical terminology, medical text patterns, and medical text and discourse content have been developed as a means of dealing with reality in a way that is appropriate for medical purposes (Gunnarson, 2006). EMAP course is designed to meet the specific English language needs of medical learners, and therefore deals with the themes and topics related to the medical field. It may focus on the restricted range of skills, which are required by the medical learner, such as writing medical papers or preparing talks for medical meeting (Maher, 1986b). Hull (2004) believed that EMAP is a subset of ESP education that most often focuses on teaching aspects of medical English, particularly terminology. Often referred to, as ESP but the language of medicine is quite unique. It is fraught with technical, academic language and replete with slang, idioms, abbreviations and acronyms. Therefore, career-specific, highly technical language must be contextually based. The goal of learning English at this level is not to learn grammar and structure primarily, but to acquire and use the language of practice and social relations within the career. Scholars such as Budhathoki, Hawkins, Elsworth, Fahey, Thapa, Karki, Basnet, Pokharel, Osborne (2022) also emphasise the need for a relevant and efficient English language for health professionals. Makhubele and Kekana and Mogoboya (2022) recommended that 'the university should introduce ESP to different fields of study throughout the faculties as a compulsory module other than a stand-alone module or degree in the department because this is one of the measures taken by international universities to try and remedy the problem. Workplace English literacy is paramount for effective working practices, Kekana & Montle (2023).

2.3 Second Language Acquisition (L2)

Second language learning occurs in a structured context, generally the classroom. Language difficulties can impede communication, and teachers must be sensitive to the skills and requirements of their students. Language acquisition is the process through which a child learns language from birth to the pre-school years. Language instruction is provided in school. Because language is so important in a

child's mental development, home language is required for learning. As children get older, they become more fluent in their use of language.

Cummins (2001) cites evidence that supports the idea that maintaining academic abilities in two or more languages has good cognitive implications. He also believes that exposure to First Language (L1) or L2 can encourage the development of competency in both languages, provided appropriate motivation and exposure to both, either in school or in the wider community. Children are denied the potential for linguistic development if they do not learn in their native language.

According to Vygotsky (1978), the ability to write is connected to the development of inner speech. Some students at this secondary school may be able to speak English; nonetheless, they are significantly lacking in English writing abilities. Writing, in turn, helps a child's cerebral growth. Literacy is also a strong motivator for language development. According to researchers, children's L2 competency is somewhat built on their L1 competence.

Cummins (2001) advises that students with low academic competency in the language of instruction will fall behind unless the education they receive assists them in understanding the information and they engage in classes. There is a significant failure rate and drop-out rate among students, particularly in the senior secondary phase. Cummins (2000) adds that there is an interdependent link between L1 and L2 proficiency; that is, academic language transfer from first to second language.

Teachers encounter several problems in today's multilingual environment, particularly when communication is hampered by language differences. This remark is accurate for most secondary school instructors and students, since an environment of diversity and multilingualism dominates among students and teachers of Indian and African descent.

The Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) is a critical factor in a child's language development and its impact on literacy. Children gain linguistic fluency as they mature. Reading and writing are essential for children's language development because they help them learn grammatical patterns. Writing is harder than speaking since it requires grammatical structural understanding. Writing, according to Vygotsky (1978), promotes a child's intellectual growth. The literacy level of a pupil effects his or her

linguistic development. The poor English proficiency levels of pupil at the Secondary School under investigation constitute hurdles to academic progress.

Further study is needed in multicultural and multilingual courses because the majority of pupils in South Africa do not use their native language as LOLT. This assertion is accurate for most Secondary School students. They are educated in an English medium school and speak an African language at home. This has implications for their second language learning.

2.4 Benefits of ESP approach

ESP, like any other approach, has benefits. The benefits are identified in terms of the learning speed, improvement of English proficiency, employment preparation, and communicative competence.

2.4.1 Learning Speed

According to Ahmed (2014), the ESP approach can help learners to have a faster acquisition of linguistic items that are required for them to study efficiently. This is because it follows the sequence of the native speaker's acquisition of language for a specific purpose. Moreover, speakers learn what they need and when they need it. The study by Tahir (2009) maintains that by being involved in an ESP course, a learner can have the faster acquisition of the intended linguistic items (Tahir, 2009). Furthermore, in the lesson the learner's needs are not taken for granted. Learners learn only what they need when they need it, guided by the course design. Therefore, less time is wasted in the process of teaching and learning.

2.4.2 Improvement of English Proficiency

According to Lin (2018), ESP courses can significantly improve students' English proficiency. ESP courses are of different types and have specific features depending on the specific fields, which can help second language learners to acquire more proficiency in the English language. Similarly, in the study by Kordić and Cigan (2013) conducted in Croatia, the results indicated that students performed better, and thus supported their assumption that an ESP course can effectively enhance a student's

English proficiency. Although that is the case, the drawback of the study is that the sampling size was only thirty participants. The number cannot allow the results to be generalised.

2.4.3 Employment Preparation

Kuo (2016) states that ESP is designed to be learned and practised as a basic element for employment preparation. This comes as an added advantage to the students who are involved in the ESP programme. Students use ESP skills to enhance their occupational development and are advised on how to improve learning and knowledge to meet the needs of their workforce. In a study done by Lin (2018) in one of the Chinese universities, it was established that participants in the study thought that ESP course helped them with the necessary skills required in a particular profession.

2.4.4 Communicative Competence

According to Tarvin (2014), the ESP approach can help a student to have communicative competence because it equips a second language learner (SLL) with the ability to communicate in a culturally appropriate manner. It can also help an SLL in knowing how and when to use certain phrases to make meaning and accomplish social tasks effectively in extended interactions (Tarvin, 2014). In the literature, it is evident that ESP can provide students with a chance to learn fast, with less time wasted. Students' English proficiency can be improved, and their skills are improved in preparation for the workplace, let alone their way of communication.

2.5 Weaknesses of ESP approach

Students are one of the reasons why ESP was established. However, they come across flaws during the ESP programme. The weaknesses are established in terms of the student's demand, English proficiency, lack of vocabulary, and skills for using a dictionary.

2.5.1 Inconsideration of Students' Needs

Students' demands for learning ESP are not met adequately. This happens when the resources which they are supposed to use during the lessons are not enough for them,

and that destabilises students. Moreover, students are subjected to attend in overcrowded classes where most of the classes are postponed without a viable reason. A study conducted in Iran by Suzani, Yarmohammadi & Yamini (2011) revealed that students who were supposed to take ESP course started to be timid, since enough material was not being provided and the crowding of the course, which was detected earlier, continued.

2.5.2 English Proficiency

According to Thị Tố Hoa & Thị Tuyết Mai (2016), English Proficiency plays an important role in communicating and comprehension of the content. English proficiency is one of the disturbing challenges that students face in the ESP course. Before students can get access to the university, their English proficiency matters. In a study, teaching aviation English in the Chinese context, Wang (2007) highlighted English proficiency as a major problem for students in China. The drawback of the study is that it was conducted in a country where English is not an official language.

2.5.3 Lack of Vocabulary

Lack of vocabulary can be a disadvantage to ESP students. According to a study by Thị Tố Hoa & Thị Tuyết Mai (2016), done in Vietnam, it was found that ESP students did not see a reason for them to learn new words which are aligned to their field of study. This was because the terms were rarely used in their everyday lives, which is not an advisable thing to do. After all, for them to succeed in the course, they needed those terms or words.

2.5.3.1 Skills for using a Dictionary

In an ESP course, having skills on how to use a dictionary, according to Thị Tố Hoa & Thị Tuyết Mai (2016), is crucial as it can enable a learner to have and learn new vocabulary. Not knowing how to use a dictionary properly, for instance, relying on only the first definition of a word than other definitions can negatively affect the performance of a learner, which result in the student's goals to achieve the objectives of the course failing. Brooks (2014) shows the important role that new vocabulary plays in any language teaching programme, wherein it helps an ESP learner to achieve his or her goals in the course.

2.6 Assessment

Tosuncuoglu (2018) argues that assessment is accepted as one of the crucial aspects in teaching. According to Amua-Sekyi (2016), assessment can be defined as the activity in which teachers and students start to gather information that can be used to alter teaching and learning. Adding an assessment practice in an ESP approach course can be beneficial to both the students and lecturers as it can be used to measure whether what is being taught and practised in the course is working or not. Through assessment, lecturers can determine the level of skills or knowledge of students, (Tosuncuoglu, 2018). This indicates the importance of assessment in course. To support this claim, in a study conducted by Taras (2005), it was revealed that assessment is very important for the students to acquire a language.

2.7 Capacity of lecturers

The capability of lecturers in providing students with relevant content and skills can have an impact on the kind of input students receive from the provided lecturers. Besides the importance of relevant content in developing important skills, the qualification and proper training of lecturers can have an impact on developing suitable content in a lecture. Madhavi Latha (2014) highlights the importance of teachers receiving specialised training in their profession. Madhavi Latha (2014) outlines aspects which explains the need of teacher education, namely, the improvement of teacher-quality, the improvement of efficiency, making innovation as well as meeting changing needs.

2.7.1 Improvement of teacher-quality

Teachers serve as the cornerstone of the education system. They play a crucial role in imparting knowledge, skills, and values to students. Quality education begins with teachers who possess the necessary qualifications, knowledge, and expertise in their subject areas. This is because teacher education can impact upon teacher quality (Madhavi Latha, 2014).

2.7.2 Improvement of efficiency

The achievement of maximum productivity in any course is advised. According to Madhavi Latha (2014), teacher training does not only ensure that teachers are competent, but it ensures that they also stay motivated in their profession through time. Motivation can improve efficiency among students.

2.7.3 Making innovation

The development of changes in an ESP course is required. Madhavi Latha (2014) mentions that teachers are important in improving the quality of education. Teachers are not only responsible for delivering course content but also for creating engaging learning experiences, providing effective feedback, and fostering a supportive learning environment. Their knowledge, skills, and instructional practices significantly influence students' learning outcomes and overall educational experience. This indicates the importance of investing in teacher training. Quality teacher training programs equip educators with the pedagogical knowledge, teaching strategies, and skills necessary to effectively deliver ESP courses. This training may include methods for designing learner-centered curriculum, integrating technology into instruction, implementing assessment strategies, and catering to diverse learning needs.

2.7.4 Meeting changing needs

In an ESP course needs of students often change in respect to what they are learning. In that sense, Madhavi Latha (2014) indicates that "much innovation and reform is necessary in the professional training of teachers, to assist teachers in adapting to their changing occupational roles". It is evident that without proper teacher training, the capability of lecturers can be greatly impacted. This is because teacher training enables teachers to keep track on the latest development in the subject and skill areas.

2.8 Time

Time spent in a course can have an impact on the nature of education students receive, either negatively or positively. A study conducted by Grave (2010) revealed that a course should provide students with time for self-study as it can have a positive impact on their education. On the other hand, a study conducted by Eze and Ombajo (2017) found that long lecture duration impacts negatively on the quality of teaching and learning, particularly taking into consideration the human attention capacity.

Although the studies vary in terms of the field of study, they indicate the importance of time in a course. This feature can assist ESP course planners in terms of the time aspect in a course.

2.9 Challenges faced by some Grade 12 Learners in Acquiring English Speaking and Writing Skills

Learners in Grade 12 face major challenges which come with their mother tongue, because the skills of listening, speaking reading and writing generally come at a later stage in their process of social formation. There is no active role for English outside the classroom, so learners do not feel the immediate need to learn (Akbari, 2015). Wildsmith-Cromarty & Balfour (2019) argue that most African parents choose English for their children out of necessity, because it is highly resourced and is perceived as the language of progress and of access to higher education and social mobility.

2.9.1 Basic Facilities and Equipment for Effective Language Learning

There is a lack of basic facilities and equipment to facilitate effective learning in schools the world over, and South Africa is no exception, with most schools not having a language laboratory and well-equipped libraries (Fatiloro, 2015). This lack of basic facilities and equipment as a challenge hinders effective teaching and learning that could have strengthened learners' skills in one way or another (Fatiloro, 2015). Devices such as LCD projectors, computers, listening devices, and sound systems, are limited and insufficiently available, with textbooks barely available. In schools where these facilities are available, the unfortunate part is that these facilities do not support the English teaching and learning process; instead, they focus on other areas (Songbatumis, 2017).

2.9.2 Psychological Problems as a Hindrance

Some learners fear and have difficulties in speaking English in front of their classmates because they feel inadequate to speak it, which, according to Fatiloro (2015), may lead to incoherence and incorrect expressions. This psychological problem of student's fearful attitude towards the use of English, especially in the presence of a competent user, has proven to be a hindrance in speaking English to learners, because speaking the language requires confidence and readiness. Such students

are afraid of making mistakes, especially in pronouncing or spelling words incorrectly (Songbatumis, 2017). Therefore, they become timid in performing their speaking skills and lack confidence in front of others, especially their classmates, particularly in speaking a foreign language since it can threaten them with losing face. Unfortunately, educators worsen the situation, as they are not aware that their students have distinct and unique needs and interests, as some of the students are emotionally volatile and need self-confidence and self esteem (Brining, 2015).

2.9.3 Educators using Wrong Techniques in Language Teaching

In most schools, educators do not use appropriate teaching techniques to guide students with activities which are included in their textbooks in order to achieve the desired learning outcomes; consequently, this affects learners negatively (Akbari, 2015). Sometimes educators use wrong techniques when teaching English, mainly because they lack the skills, as they are not trained to teach the language. More so, a severe shortage of trained or workshopped and developed English educators result in educators finding themselves teaching English without proper training and struggling to use teaching methods effectively (Songbatumis, 2017). Consequently, these educators end up teaching a specific curriculum, a body of knowledge and skills, which students would not have encountered in their lives outside of school. This presents a challenge, as young learners are more receptive to sounds, and have no strategies to address such issues because they are not trained in that area (Brining, 2015).

2.9.4 Different Cultural Background and Values Between the Educators and Learners

Different cultural backgrounds leading to varied values between educators and learners, as well as amongst learners themselves, prove to be a barrier because there is a great risk of misunderstanding between them. This notion is supported by Akbari (2015), who states that distance between learner and teacher creates anxiety, frustration, and alienation, and consequently the learner becomes less receptive to the learning process. Also, students do not have a common background knowledge, because some of them are trained in rural areas where no qualified English educators are available to teach them. On the other hand, students who are taught in urban areas have access to several classroom facilities, which is of great benefit to them. Most

learners simply have their textbooks as the only source of learning English, and under such circumstances there is no placement test to put students into different groups according to their language proficiency levels. Instead, they are treated homogeneously, making the situation much worse for the weaker students (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). Byrne (2009) noted that there are differences in academic ability amongst students in the class, the rates at which they learn, and the range of learning levels within a class. Consequently, these disparities between learners' levels of understanding within a class place extra demands on educators, which they rarely attend to. Moreover, these cultural barriers often make it difficult for educators to inform parents about standards, and exchanging ideas and information with their students, resulting in poor communication between learners and educators, which hampers efforts to learn English (Khong & Saito, 2014).

2.9.5 Mother Tongue Interference

According to Fatiloro (2015), learners find it difficult to learn English as a second language because there is a sudden break from a familiar language to a non-familiar language, resulting in phonetical, morphological, and semantic errors being committed.

2.9.6 Lack of Priority given to English as a Subject

Akbari (2015) asserts that English is considered as a general subject when compared to special subjects such as physics, chemistry, mathematics, and biology, hence students spend more time studying their special subjects rather than general ones such as English. Learners are made to learn basic grammar at school level only for the purpose of passing exams, hence application-oriented advanced grammar is not taught in schools (Fatiloro, 2015). Furthermore, learners' belief about the nature of learning English as a subject that consists of a list of words and a set of grammatical rules that are to be memorized becomes another challenge as some students will not have the same motivation or purpose to learn English. Some of them look at English merely as a course that should be passed, and do not understand its importance as a means of communication (Akbari, 2015). Hence, English is not given as much attention as that given to subjects such as mathematics, which are considered as challenging to learners.

2.10 Pedagogical Process of ESP Approach at a Higher Education Level

The teaching and learning process of ESP approach to develop language acquisition involves a system that consists of components that interact together (Hutchinson & Waters,1987). The components of ESP approach are course design, syllabus, and materials.

2.10.1 Course Design

Hutchinson & Waters (1987) posit that in the process of a course design, raw data based on learning need and collected with the use of needs analysis is interpreted to produce a combined series of teaching-learning skills. The aim is to navigate a learner to a certain state of knowledge. Furthermore, Bensafa (2017) indicates that Hutchinson and Waters (1987) proposes that an ESP course can be designed by using a learner-centred approach. This is because a learner-centred approach considers a learner in every phase of the designing process. Nurpahmi (2016) summarises factors that affect an ESP approach course design, and these are questions that a course designer needs to answer before designing an ESP course. The questions are:

(a) Why do the students need to learn?

(b) In the process, who is going to be involved? This question includes not only students but instructors, teacher, and sponsors.

(c) Where will learning occur?

(d) When will the learning occur?

(e) What content do the learners need to learn in terms of aspects of language, the level of proficiency to be achieved and the topics which will be covered.

(f) What learning theory and methodology will be used for learning to be achieved?

A study conducted in Algeria by Guerid and Mami (2017) on 30 finance managers discovered that by using the course design methods suggested by Hutchison and Waters (1987), a viable and user-friendly course can be designed. This was possible because the researcher used different research tools to gather the appropriate data among the participants. The methods were used to understand the needs in the current used English, their challenges and what they want in the content of the course.

The study, however, was based on the working class, which is a gap within the study field of English and ESP in education.

2.10.2 Syllabus Design

Due to developments over time, a syllabus has attained different definitions according to how different scholars observed the phenomenon (Irshad & Anwar, 2018). Widdowson (1983) defines a syllabus as a framework which is used to carry activities; "a teaching devise to facilitate learning" while Brown (2001) defines a syllabus as 20 a design to carry out a programme for a language, which looks at the primary concern of the learners, their specification of linguistics and subject objectives. Furthermore, Tahir (2009) claims that Kumaravadivelu (1994) views syllabus as "a pre-planned, pre-ordained, pre-sequenced inventory of linguistic specifications imposed in most cases on teachers and learners". Kumaravadivelu (1994) further claims that this perspective of the syllabus is "widely recognised". The 'pre' indicates the importance of starting the syllabus design right from the start of a programme in terms of the learner-centred approach. This allows for students' methodological considerations.

According to Harmer (2001), in designing a syllabus, one needs to be concerned with the learnability, frequency, coverage, and usefulness of the course. The designed syllabus must however cover language description, learning theories and need analysis (Tahir, 2009) In one of the papers found in the proceedings of the First International Conference on Teaching English for Specific Purposes compiled by Stojkovic (2013), it was found that in Slobomir P University, teachers were the ones responsible for creating a syllabus which meets the needs of learners. This responsibility requires time, skill, and support. Without those aspects, the plan is dimmed to fail.

2.10.3 Material Design

Material writing is one of the most important aspects of the ESP approach. It is seen "as the most characteristic feature of ESP in practise" (Hutchinson & Waters,1987: 106). Materials are created usually in a newly formed and designed programme. For instance, an institution may wish to provide teaching and learning material which fit

the specific needs of a certain group of learners. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) outline principles that show how a useful and creative ESP material can be written: Firstly, materials provide a stimulus to learning. The material will contain enjoyable and fun activities which can engage the learner's cognitive capacity. Learners have opportunities to use their existing knowledge and skills in the programme, both the learner and the teacher can cope with the content and interesting text. Secondly, materials "help to organise the teaching-learning process, by providing a path through the complex mass of the language to be learnt". A good material must provide a clear path and structure that can guide the teacher and the learner to perform different activities in the programme, in a way that creates a great chance of learning. The model must be flexible to allow the creativity of learners. Again, materials embody a view of the nature of language and learning. As a material writer, the material must reflect the learning process. It is important to include thoughts and reflections about what you believe in the learning process. Furthermore, materials reflect the nature of the learning task. Even though the complexity of language is well documented, according to Hutchison and Waters (1987), "the material should try and create a balance outlook which both reflects the complexity of the task and makes it appear manageable". Also, materials can "have a very useful function in broadening the basis of teacher training, by introducing teachers to new techniques". Lastly, materials offer models of correct and appropriate language use. By using principles by Hutchison and Waters (1987), a material designer can understand what the material is intended to do.

According to Ahmad (2012), if the teaching materials do not achieve the intended needs of the students, the students will have a lack of motivation. Bytyqi (2017) indicates the importance of material writing after doing needs analysis. Bytyqi (2017) used the data which was gathered in a summer semester in 2014 to be able to design a new ESP syllabus. The results helped the researcher to gather and write new course material according to what the students preferred to work on. To design the materials, the researcher used various sources including podcast, books, and different websites. The study indicates an important angle of material design. The drawback is that the study took place in the South-East European University in Tetovo and Skopje, not in South Africa. Although that is the case, studies by Ngoepe (2007) and Ngoepe (2012) conducted in the University of Limpopo outlined the importance of course evaluation

in terms of the material in the course. The drawback of the studies is that they focused on mathematics and science foundation year course in English and study skills.

2.11 Needs Analysis

Arnó-Macià, Aguilar-Pérez & Tatzl (2020) claim that needs analysis is a core element of the ESP approach. This is because ESP teachings are based on learners' needs since needs analysis can be used as an element to probe students' observations of the course. Belyaeva (2015) identifies approaches that can be followed when analysing the needs of learners, that is: target-situation, present situation, strategy analysis, means analysis and language audit.

Target-situation is a phase of needs analysis where the set of situations where students will have to use the English language is determined. The phase focuses on what learners need before the course starts to determine students' goals (Belyaeva, 2019). Equally important, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) argue that to explain a target situation one has to focus on the necessity, lacks and wants of the targeted learners.

Todea and Demarcsek (2016) maintain that necessity is the type of need that is channelled by the demand of the target situation. That is to say, what does the learner have to know to perform and function well in the target situation. For instance, a translation student may need to understand how a person produces speech sounds, to master the skill of knowing how and when to use the speech sounds.

Lacks, on the other hand, is a need that deals with knowing what the student already knows, and you then determine the necessity which the student lacks (Hutchinson & Waters,1987). What students lack can be determined by, for instance, reading a text, as this will reveal if students need help or not during the exercise. To see whether students lack proficiency, the target proficiency must be compared to their existing proficiency (Alqunayeer & Zamir, 2016). Conversely, Alsamadani (2017) views lacks as what students do to know.

With the two above needs, learners are seen as passive and having no voice. Wants are the type of needs where the voice of a learner is taken into consideration. ESP is an approach that considers the needs of a learner. Learners can voice out what their needs are (Hutchinson & Waters,1987: 56). In ESP, the perception of a learner is important. Ureña (2017) indicates that because of wants, participants in the study

conducted were able to tell the researcher what they needed, for instance, students wanted to listen to a recording, study grammar and watch videos during a lesson.

The present situation is a type of needs analysis that focuses on the standpoint of the learners' language command before the ESP instructions. Sanmugam (2013) points out that present situation analysis (PSA) involves the weakness and strength coupled with the learning experience and skill of a language, which learners may have.

Strategy analysis, according to Belyaeva (2015), focuses on determining what kind of style students prefer to learn using. This can help in choosing a relevant teaching method for students (Allwright, 1982; Belyaeva, 2015).

Means analysis, according to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), takes into consideration the availability of teaching staff, the equipment and materials for the course so that it can succeed in the process of teaching and learning. Rahman (2015) indicates that means Analysis can be understood as an assistant to a needs analysis to establish an active and workable course design. It involves the information of the local situation to see how a course may be executed (Rahman, 2015).

Belyaeva (2015), adopted in Robinson (1991), points out that language audit happens when companies and employers want to know whether language teaching is needed for their employees in terms of the kind of tasks related to their job. A connection between employees' language proficiency and the specific work-related situation is determined.

In summary, Irshad and Anwar (2018) citing Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), indicate that needs analysis helps in determining the following information about the learners:

- Professional information: the tasks and activities with which learners will use the English language.
- Personal information: aspects which may affect their learning (prior experience and cultural information).
- Language information: the existing skills and 16 language use of the learners. The language which students lack regarding their professional information.

- Language learning information: what is it that they need to learn, their expectations about the course and the environmental information in which the course will be taught.

In a study based on needs analysis by Sanmugam (2013), conducted in Malaysia, where a questionnaire of needs analysis was distributed among 120 students, it was established that reading technical manuals, listening to spoken presentation was their concern.

A similar study was conducted by Todea and Demarcek (2016), wherein 179 students were requested to indicate their level of satisfaction regarding the English course, including their suggestions on the topic and language issues they would like to deal with in the course. The researchers were able to find what activity should be included in the course.

The above studies indicate the importance of employing needs analysis on learners before a course can be designed. Although that is the case, it must be considered that a needs analysis of learners must not be done after a long period. It should be an ongoing activity since their needs might change over time (Alsamadani, 2017).

2.12 Content-based approach

According to Stryker and Leaver (1997) content-based approach is concerned with the incorporation of language learning with content learning. The integration of language learning and content learning results in the English language being learned through the content of the subject matter (Yang & Chan, 2015). In a content-based approach, language teaching is solely designed around content teaching. With the way the approach is practised, it is evident that it fits to be an ESP approach method, (Ngoepe, 2007). A content-based approach can incorporate various content when designing a course, (Ngoepe, 2007). These include the skill- based content. According to Sellin (2003), for any academic driven course, the promotion and integration of skills should be paid enough attention, as this is important in a course. A communication skill is one of the important skills set which a student needs, this is because the communication skill incorporates a variety of skills which include listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This is evident in one of the Council of Higher Education (CHE, 2015) report which details that on qualification standard for Bachelor of Medicine, for a student to

obtain their qualification, they must be proficient in reading, writing and comprehension and also speak in a professional manner.

2.13 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the literature that provides a clear understanding of ESP approach and what it caters for. The different types of ESP approach and how it can benefit a learner as well as the difficulties which learners and teachers may come across in the course were reviewed. The literature further indicated how the ESP course can be designed and implemented to fit the needs of a learner.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section of the research paper discusses the research approach and design that used in this study. This is so because scholars such as Van der Merwe (2010) maintain that a research methodology is an approach and tool used by the researcher to carry out a study.

3.2 Research Approach

This study adopted a mixed research approach as its design. This approach is relevant because the qualitative data collection method and quantitative data collection method were both used to collect and analyse data. According to Creswell (2014) qualitative research is "an approach used to understand and investigate the meaning individuals ascribe to a social or human problem". The qualitative research method was chosen because the researcher aimed to understand the in-depth views and perceptions of people regarding the examined phenomenon. Quantitative research approach deals with numeric data. This kind of data in this study came from the interviews. According to Seliger and Shohamy (1989), a combination of methods yields a composite picture of a particular phenomenon and that is the reason why the researcher proposed two sets of data collection methods.

3.2.1 Case Study

This study is not investigating the entire medical science students at SMU but only a specific group of students (i.e. First Year students) and this makes this study a case study. According to Simons (2009) a case study is "is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program or system in a 'real life". A case study is more apt for this research.

3.3 Population

The participants in this study are first-year Medicine students who are registered for English (Academic Literacy) module. According to Taherdoost (2016) the population is commonly related to the number of people living in a particular setting or country. Thus, the plan as a researcher is not to study the entire number of the population. In that case, a sample would be selected to represent the population and that is the reason why First Year students have been proposed and not the entire university community.

3.4 Sample

A convenience sampling technique was used to collect data and this is applicable to the whole sample of this study. According to Etikan (2016) convenience sampling "is a nonprobability sampling where members of the target population that meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, availability at a given time, and the willingness to participate are included for the study". In this study, first-year medicine students who are registered for English are appropriate because they are accessible, closer, and convenient to the researcher since she is a lecturer there at SMU. To ensure the issue of bias, the researcher is conducting a study on students that she does not lecturer. She is strictly lecturing Bachelor of Science students. The sample of this study consists of twenty-six (26) first-year medicine students registered for the English module in 2023 out of a course consisting of 47 students. In other words, the researcher targets 55 % to 60 % of the number of students enrolled for that course in 2023 and this is for generalizability purposes. The study utilise convenience sampling methods because is well-known for its selectivity and subjectivity in research (See Matthews & Ross, 2010). Furthermore, thirteen (13) of the selected students are male and thirteen (13) other are female. Out of the both thirteen male and females that were chosen, the first four (4) are the top achievers, five (5) are average students, and the last four (4) are the least achievers based on their grades from the first semester.

3.5 Data collection, Instruments and Analysis

Kubayi (2013) states that data collection is a process of acquiring data through the use of different instruments and techniques. Kabir (2016) posits that data collection is

the "process of gathering information on variables of interest in a systematic manner that enables one to answer stated research question, test hypothesis and evaluate outcomes". Once collected, the data was analysed and interpreted. This process will allow for generalisability as far as the First-Year medicine students are concerned for that particular academic year. Mohan and Elelngovan (2011) defines data analysis as "several closely related operations that are performed to summarise the collected data and organise these in such a manner that they will yield answers to the research questions or suggest hypothesis or questions if no such questions or hypothesis had initiated the study. In this proposed study, data was collected through interviews to determine the students' English speaking competency and through paper survey to determine their English writing competency.

3.5.1 Interviews

The researcher used semi-structured face-to-face interviews to obtain in-depth information from the participants. Rubin & Rubin (2005) argue that in a semi-structured interview, an interviewer probes a question to the interviewee and may further expand their responses. The semi-structured interviews were used so that the researcher can get clarity on interviewees' English-speaking proficiency as well as to discuss their responses further. The researcher interviewed 26 students who are doing the first-year Academic Literacy module with the intention of seeing if the students are able to have a conversation in English.

3.5.2 Paper Survey

Paper survey was also employed to collect data for this investigation. The paper survey was in a questionnaire format. A questionnaire is a prepared and written tool with a collection of research questions that is used to collect valuable primary data from study participants (Questionpro.com, 2020). The researcher employed open-ended questionnaires to collect information from the individuals because open-minded questions foster exploration, understanding, by inviting diverse perspectives and encouraging critical thinking. This method was chosen so that content analysis can be used to analyse the data. Content analysis is a qualitative research method that examines and quantifies the presence of certain words, subjects, and concepts in text. Students were given fifteen open-ended questions to answer in order to supply the

researcher with content that will allow the researcher to determine the student's writing proficiency.

3.5.3 Analysis of paper survey and interviews

The paper survey and interviews of the current study were analysed using thematic analysis where the researcher grouped a list of common themes from the answers to give expression to the participants' common voice. The researcher derived themes from the words of participants and then grouped themes in a manner that directly reflects the responses as a whole (Anderson, 2007).

The thematic analysis process model adopted by Miles and Huberman (1994) was followed during the analysis of the questionnaires and interviews. The process consisted of three stages, namely data reduction, data display and data conclusion-drawing/verifying. During these stages, the researcher visually represented the data by means of quotations, narrative text, figures, tabulating differences, and similarities, in an attempt to explore and explain the relationships among them (Gibbs, 2002; Miles & Huberman 1994; Yin, 2010).

Data reduction allows the researcher to focus and organise the data by selecting, simplifying, and transforming the data in such a manner that he/she can draw some conclusions from it that can be verified (Miles and Huberman, 1994). In this, study data were reduced through identification.

Miles & Huberman (1994) describes data display as "using textual representations of your data for the purpose of selecting segments that best illustrate your concepts of interest". They (Miles & Huberman 1994) further highlight that data display should include the following:

- repeatedly reading transcriptions or documents;
- adding notes in the margins of transcribed data, or
- identifying and marking parts of the data as representations of particular concepts.

The most appealing benefit of data display is that it allows the researcher to classify and categorise data and arrange it logically (Huberman & Miles,1994). In this study,

the responses of students were arranged according to their first semester grades, namely: The top achievers, the average achievers and low achievers.

The final step of the Miles and Huberman (1994) model involves data drawing and conclusions. In this study, the researcher adopted elements from Miles and Huberman's (1994) model to generate meaning from data. These elements were:

- Identifying and indicating any patterns relevant to the aims of the study;
- Organising and categorising the data;
- Indicating the relationships among codes and themes in the data;
- Ensuring coherence and consistency, with the theoretical basis of the study.

After analysing data from questionnaires and interviews, the researcher further analysed the paper survey to add credibility to the research findings. The next subsection discusses the analysis of data from the paper survey.

3.5.4 Analysis of Paper Survey

The primary method of the paper survey analysis was thematic analysis. Fereday & Muir-Cochrane (2006) describes this process as a "form of pattern recognition within the data, with emerging themes becoming the categories for analysis".

In order to avoid bias in the text and interpretation, the researcher used a technique suggested by O'Leary (2014) called the interview technique in which the documents are treated like respondents that could provide the researcher with relevant information pertaining the study. After the planning process, the researcher then analysed data using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis includes careful, focused reading and re-reading of data, as well as coding and category construction (Bowen, 2009).

3.6 Quality Criteria

The quality criteria of a study can sometimes be regarded as the 'trustworthiness' of the study. Connelly (2016) argues that quality criteria is "the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality of a study". According to Anney (2014) trustworthiness of a study is the degree to which people can depend on and trust is given on the research findings. Amankwaa (2016) advises that in each

study, researchers should establish the protocols and procedures necessary for a study to be considered worthy of consideration by readers. The researcher in the study ensured the trustworthiness of the study by adhering to credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability criteria.

3.6.1 Credibility

According to Korstjens & Moser (2018) credibility "establishes whether the research findings represent plausible information drawn from the participants' original data and is a correct interpretation of the participants' original views". Credibility in the study was earned by assuring that the original data which was provided by the participants was not altered. The researcher went on further to quote some of the respondents' actual words in the study, which indicate the plausible information drawn from the participants.

3.6.2 Transferability

Anney (2014) argues that transferability is the degree to which the results of a specific study can be transferred to a different context or used with a different population. Transferability in the study was discussed by the provision of an in-depth and clear description of important concepts, a clear summary of the purpose of the study and the participants in the study. This includes an explanation of the relevance of the theory and the nature of the study.

3.6.3 Dependability

Moon, Brewer, Januchowski-Hartley, Adams & Blackman (2016) argue that 'dependability' refers to the constancy over a research finding and the how the research process is followed, allowing someone to follow and critique the research process. Dependability in the study addresses such that the researcher reports the process that guards the study in detail. The report of the process will enable future researchers to follow and repeat the work and possibly obtain the same results.

3.6.4 Confirmability

Makweya and Oluwatayo (2016) suggest that during confirmability, the researcher takes steps to demonstrate the results that arise from the data collected and not their

own "predisposition". Therefore, in a study, the researcher stayed away from being biased and ensure neutrality throughout the research. To ensure confirmability, the researcher provided explanations on why other methods and approaches were selected and used than others.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the research methodology used in the study. The research methodology focused on the research design, the population and sampling, the data collection instruments, data analysis, and quality criteria, and benefits and risks anticipated in the study.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the presentation and interpretation of data. The chapter deals with data that was collected through interviews to determine the student's English speaking competency and through paper survey to determine their English writing competency which are both presented in figures followed by a discussion. This study used qualitative research methodology which allows participants to provide detailed information on how "they make sense of their experience on a certain phenomenon, where open-ended interviews and questionnaires may be used" (Mohajan, 2018). It also used quantitative research methodology. The study began with the presentation of the students' personal information in figures, followed by the analysis of the students' actual words, which are quoted during the interviews, using themes and lastly the paper survey data is presented.

4.2 Students' Personal Information.

It was established worthy to include the students' personal information to help the researcher to formulate appropriate recommendations for the students to have sufficient knowledge of EGP. The students' personal information is presented in graphs that illustrate gender, age, home language, and the sector of their high school. The students' gender will be presented first, followed by age, then home language and lastly the sector of the high school they attended. The information is discussed in the figures below.

4.2.1 Number and Gender of the Students.

The number and gender of the students is presented in a figure and is demonstrated below:

Figure 1: Number and Gender of Students
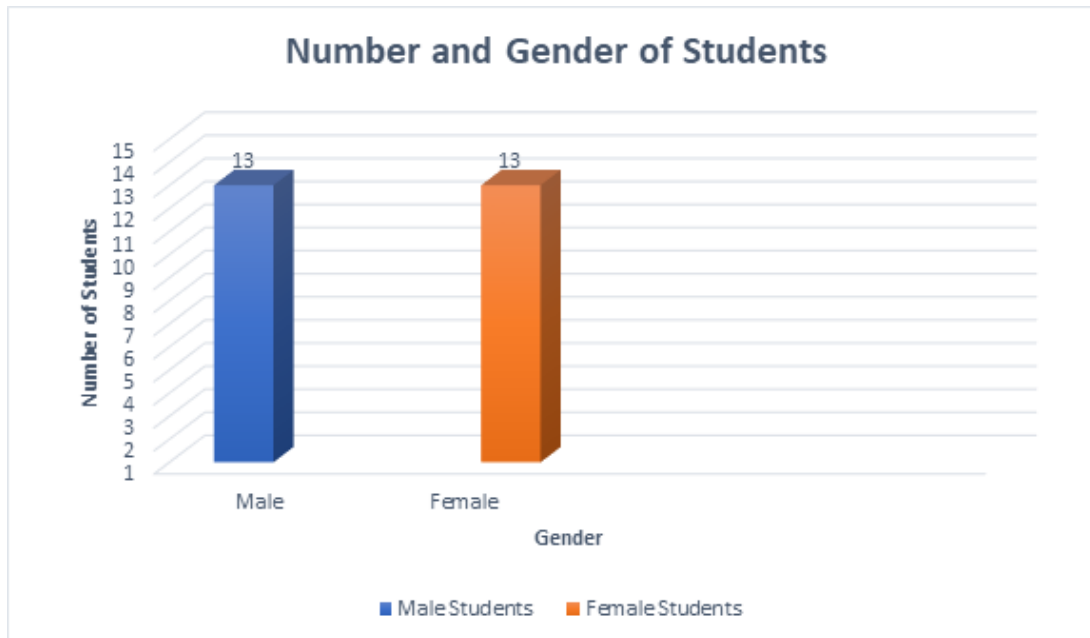
Figure 1 above illustrates the number and gender of the students. The figure indicates that out of 26 students, 13 were females and 13 were males.

4.2.2 Students' Age Range.

To understand the participants well, the researcher asked the participants to provide their age range.

Figure 2: Student's Age Range
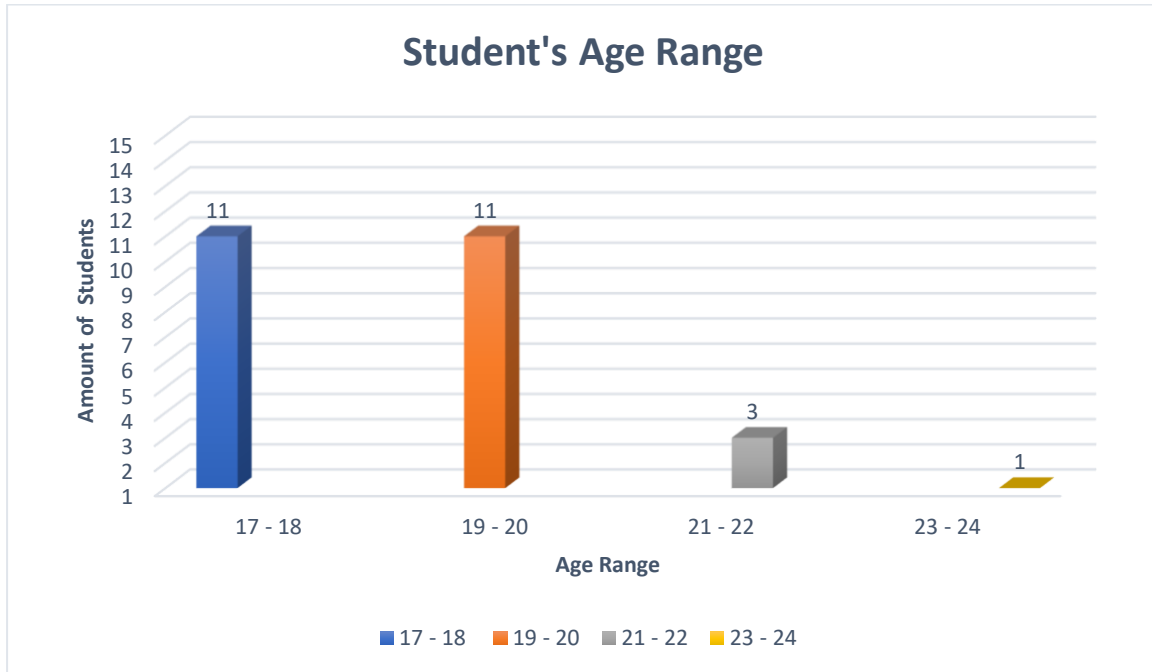
Figure 2 above illustrates the age range of the students. The figure shows that the eleven (11) students were between the ages of 17 to 18. Another eleven (11) students were between the ages of 19 to 20, three (3) students were between the ages of 21 to 22 and the last one was between the ages of 23 to 24. The study reveals that the students were between the ages of 17 to 24. This implies that the youngest student was between ages 17 - 18 and the oldest was between 23 to 24 years.

4.2.3 Home Languages of the Students.

The home language of the students was one of the aspects used to describe the participants. The figure below indicates the home language of the students.

Figure 3: Home Languages of the Students

Figure 3 above illustrates the home languages of the participants. The graph indicates that three (3) students speak Xitsonga, five (5) speak Tshivenda, two (2) speak siSwati, one speaks Setswana, five (5) speak Sepedi, three (3) speak Sesotho, four (4) speak isiZulu, and three (3) speak isiXhosa as their home language.
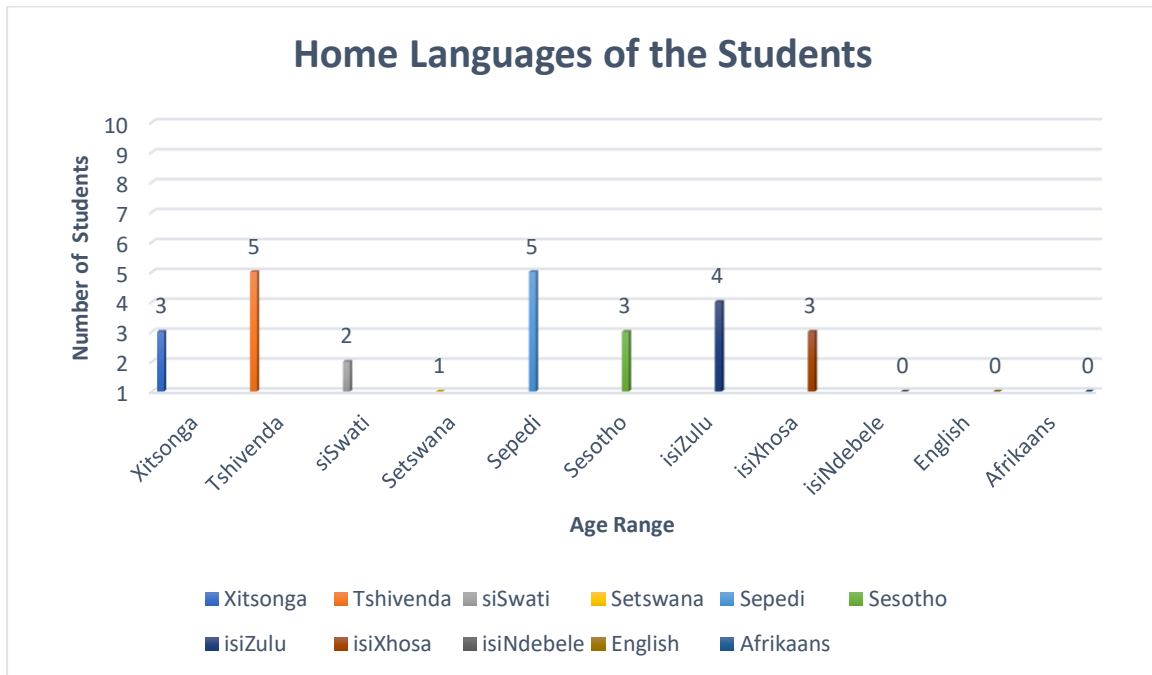
4.2.4 Sector of the High School the Students Attended.

To understand the participants even better, the researcher asked the students to disclose the type of high school they attended:

Figure 4: Sector of the High School the Students Attended
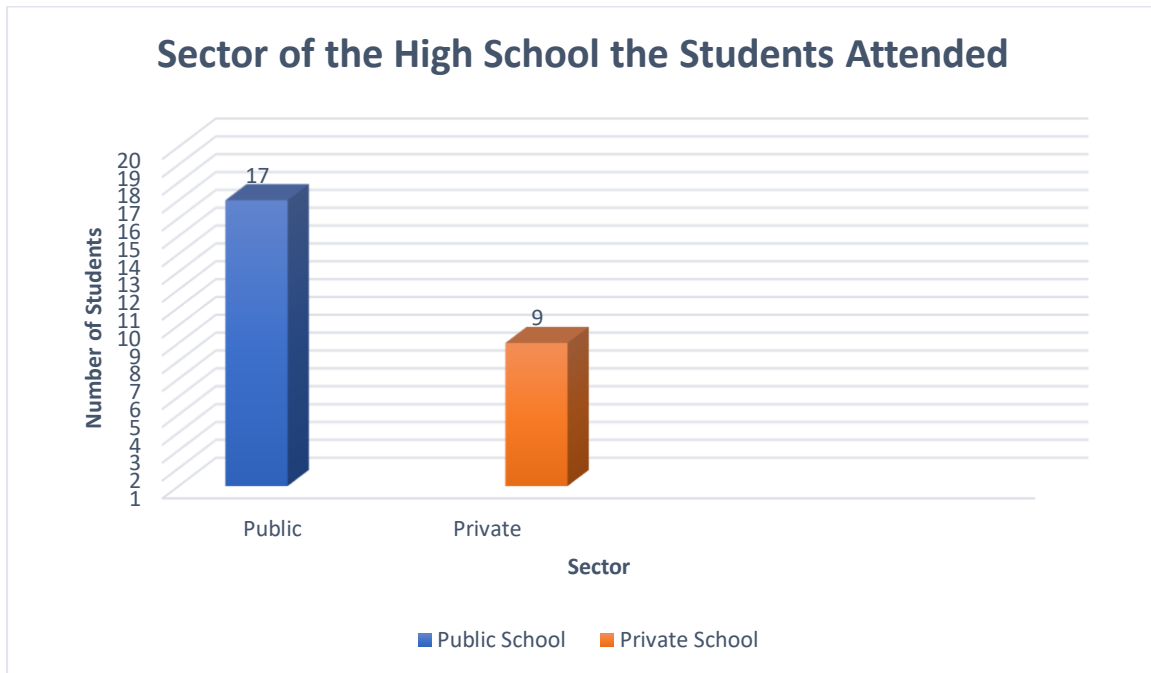
Figure 2 above illustrates which sector the student's high schools were in. Seventeen (17) went to public high schools and nine (9) went to private schools.

4.3 Analysis of the Student's Interviews

This data was analysed using thematic analysis, during which a list of common themes that emerged from the coding of the answers were grouped in order to give expression to the commonality of voices from the participants. The theme emanated from the first and second objective of the study which were to investigate if first year students at SMU have English writing and speaking proficiency challenges and if so to identify those areas.

The transcribed data were based on the following questions, from the interview questionnaires:

1. Describe where you are from and what is unique about your town/village.
2. What made you decide that you want to study medicine?

3. Describe something you own which is very important to you. Include where you got it, how long you had it, and what you use it for.

The aim of these three questions was to allow the students to speak openly, allowing the researcher to observe patterns and recurring themes between participants. The data was analysed using Miles and Huberman's (1994) process discussed in Chapter 3. The data was reduced by identifying the essential data that related directly to the research aims. The data was displayed and the data transcripts were read and reread carefully, during which categories and eventually important themes were formulated in line with the research aims. The conclusion was drawn by drawing meaning from the data display.

THEME	CODES	SOME QUOTES
Grammar	Misuse of verbs and tenses	Student 8: "I did live in a village next to a mountain." Student 17: "My mother did not went to school so she is not working."
	Misuse of personal pronouns (he/she)	Student 9: "My mother, he is a very strong woman." Student 23: " My father gives me this chain because she was working at a shop for jewellery."
	Misuse of prepositions	Student 1: "I came to SMU for Medicine." Student 15: "My friend's family is different than mine."
Vocabulary	Incorrect word usage	Student: "Studying every day is exhausting sometimes after class I just lay down and switch off my phone." Student 9: "Me I don't like being with friends."

Table 1

4.3.1 Grammar

In order for anyone to articulate anything in English they need to be aware of their grammar. According to Betti (2015) English grammar is the way in which meanings are encoded into wordings in the English language. This includes the structure of words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and whole texts. Table 1 illustrates that some students were having a struggling with their grammar.

Misuse of verbs and tenses are common in English second language speakers. The examples on Table 1 give a clear indication that there are students who are not competent. Out of 26 students, 40 % did very well in their grammar and all of them attended private school prior to coming to SMU, the other 60% were at a disadvantage due to being in public schools. Jacoby, J. W. (2021) revealed that challenges, including weak linguistic knowledge, teachers' lack of English language structures and learners' inability to use the English language, still exist in South African schools. Doctors work in environments filled with people who speak all sorts of languages. It is important that their articulations are clear to avoid miscommunication as sometimes it is a matter life and death. Doctors knowing different tenses helps the nurses and everyone else around in knowing whether plans have been executed or not. It is also important to note that personal pronouns are important to acquire and know as doctors work with people.

4.3.2 Vocabulary

As table 1 illustrate, some students were struggling with their English vocabulary. Out 26, 70 % were had challenges with using vocabulary. Some students told the researchers that in their public school that they attended their Grade 12, they were taught in their respective home languages majority of the time, therefore that is why their English vocabulary is poor. It is important for doctors to master their English vocabulary as a lot of medical terms as challenging to know, pronounce and remember. Mastering medical terms will prove highly challenging for a student who lacks familiarity with general English terminology.

4.3.3 The Variation Between the High School English Content and University English Module Content.

The common perspective regarding the transition from high school to university suggests that students will encounter more detailed or possibly distinct content. This theme focuses on establishing whether students observed a difference in content, in terms of the English offered at university and the one offered at high school. The theme emanated from the following question: Is the English module content different from the English you learned in high school?

The question in this theme also emanated from the fourth objective of the study that suggested possible intervention strategies that can help these students improve their English writing and speaking competencies. The responses helped the researcher determine intervention strategies.

Students had to provide a "Yes" or "No" answer and an explanation of their response. Among the 26 students, 13 students indicated that there was a difference between the English module offered in the medicine degree and the English offered at high school, while the other 13 students mentioned that there was no difference. Among the 13 students who indicated that there was a difference, 7 students outlined that the difference was with the way the module was delivered to students, for instance, the broader and in-depth learning of the English content. One student outlined that the difference was the words used. However, the other student highlighted that "it is more complicated", while the other student did not explain the answer further but indicated "Yes" to the question.

However, 13 students indicated that the English module was not different from the English subject they learned at a high school level. Among the 13 students, 6 students indicated that they still learned language aspects like paragraph and essay construction, visual literacy and referencing at the university level, which they learned at high school. The other student indicated that the module added time to their period at the university as they cannot use essays in their careers. The remaining 3 students did not explain their answers but responded with a "no" to the question. A sense of difference in opinion about the difference in the modules can be drawn in this theme since half of the students outlined how different the module was, while other students disagreed with that notion.

4.3.4 Essential Skills that the English/Academic Literacy Module Provides to Students.

Essential education skills such as having problem-solving skills and being able to produce a well-written report are important for a medicine degree student to have. The skills can also help students to cope with the career of being a doctor. Furthermore, the skills are also essential in helping the student to cope with the educational system concerning the field of medicine. This theme emanated from the objective that evaluate if Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University is helping as far as addressing the English language proficiency of these students is concerned.

Do you think the university is addressing the issue of students who are not proficient in English? How so?

Out of 26 students, 14 students indicated that the university is helping those who do not know English enough, although with different opinions. On the other hand, 5 students indicated that their English/Academic literacy module did not provide them with the interventions, and only 1 student provided an ambiguous answer to the question. Out of the 14 students who indicated that the university does help, 9 students explained further that some of the academic literacy lecturers take time after classes to assist students with basic English skills such as grammar and vocabulary. Two other students indicated that sometimes in class some lecturer take 10 minutes to recap on basic English skills. One student indicated that the lecturers sometime suggest websites and books that will help improve their English skills. Only 2 students indicated positive sentiments on the question without further reasons.

On the same matter while answering question 5, 5 students indicated that the university does not provide any help when it comes to improving their English proficiency. Out of the 5 students, 3 students indicated that some lecturer are only consent with getting through the syllabus. Two students did not give further explanations on their responses but indicated "no".

These findings reveal that a lot of students thought the university is trying its best to accommodate those with low English language proficiency.

4.4 Analysis and Interpretation of Paper Survey (Written Assessment)

Document analysis was employed in this study because it can support and strengthen the research in various ways. The researcher gave 26 students an academic essay assessment. The essay question was "Why is it important that South Africa has to

produce more medical graduates?" The essays were marked based on the content, organisation, language and the style of the essay. With the content, the researcher was looking for the statements of main idea, explanation and examples or further elaboration. With the language and style, the researcher was looking for grammar, spelling and academic language use. The essays were marked out of 20. 10 marks for content, 6 marks for technical aspects and 4 marks for style. The data was analysed using thematic analysis categorised emerging codes into themes for further analysis (Bowen, 2009).

4.4.1 Presentation of Themes

Out of 26 students, 25 got above 60 % and one got 50 %. The students passed this writing assessment mostly due to their content with comes from their ability to conduct research. Out of 20, content weighed 10 marks and 90% of the students got 8 out 10. The students were able to conduct research and put their information that is also relevant in logical order. This might be due to the fact that this research is being conducted towards the end of the year whereby they were already taught how to write a well-researched essay in Academic Literacy. Although these students were impressive in their essay content, the aspect that made them not obtain full marks was the language and style. An academic essay is characterized by several key features that distinguish it from other forms of writing. Firstly, its content is typically research-based, presenting a clear argument or thesis supported by evidence and analysis. This evidence often comes from scholarly sources, such as academic journals or reputable books, and is integrated seamlessly into the essay's structure, which the students excelled in. Secondly, academic essays adhere to formal grammar and spelling conventions, maintaining a high standard of language proficiency throughout. Clarity and precision are paramount, with attention paid to sentence structure, punctuation, and vocabulary choice. In this category, the students struggled. It was clear from their answers that their grammar was severely lacking. Additionally, the writing style of an academic essay is typically objective and impersonal, prioritizing logical reasoning and critical analysis over personal opinion or emotion. This style fosters credibility and professionalism, encouraging readers to focus on the substance of the argument rather than the author's voice, which the student lacked. Overall, academic essays exemplify rigorous inquiry, clear communication, and adherence to

scholarly standards. 80% of the students got less than 40% on their technical aspect. These findings reveal that a lot of students still need to improve their grammar and spelling. The theme aligns with the first and second objective of the study.

4.5 Conclusion

The chapter presented the analysis presentation and interpretation of data. This section dealt with the data collected using interviews which were presented in a table and discussed in detail and also analyses and interpretation of the paper survey data. The next chapter discusses the findings and gives recommendations.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the reinstated aim and objectives of the study, the summary of the findings, the conclusion, and the recommendations. Firstly, the aim of the study together with the objectives are reinstated, followed by the summary of the findings, then the conclusion and lastly the recommendations for further research on the topic.

5.2 Objectives of the Study.

- To investigate and examine the challenges with regards to English Speaking and Writing competencies among first year students of English for Medical Studies at SMU in Gauteng province, South Africa.

- To examine whether first-year students at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University encounter difficulties in English writing and speaking proficiency, and if they do, to pinpoint those specific areas of challenge.

- To evaluate if SMU is helping as far as addressing the English language proficiency of these students is concerned.

- To suggest possible intervention strategies that can help these students improve their English writing and speaking competencies.

Concerning the first and second objective, 26 students participated in the study through the interviews and paper survey. The study established that students do have English speaking and writing challenges. To be specific students are having difficulties in their grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and spelling.

Concerning the third objective of the study, its purpose was realised. The objective was directed to all the participants in the study, focusing on what exactly is the university doing to accommodate those who are not proficient in the English language.

The fourth and last objective was also realised. Detailed information is provided in the recommendation section of the study.

5.3 Summary of the Findings

The summary of the study findings below is presented in terms of the interviews and questionnaires' themes that guided the analysis. The research employed qualitative methodology, enabling participants to offer comprehensive insights into how they interpret their experiences with studying academic literacy in SMU. This approach involves utilizing interviews and paper survey questionnaires to delve deeply into participants' perspectives and understanding. The research also employed quantitative methodology, enabling the researcher to use statistical techniques to analyse data and draw conclusions. The interview and paper survey data were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods for interpretation.

5.3.1 Findings from the Interview.

Grammar and Vocabulary

The research findings affirm the achievement of the study's initial and secondary goals. The investigation reveals that students encounter difficulties in English speaking attributable to insufficient proficiency in grammar and vocabulary. Such challenges stem from inadequate English language exposure during their secondary education. Several students corroborate this observation, noting that their public high schools primarily utilize a blend of English and their native languages, with the latter often prevailing. Analysis of their language usage in the study highlights prevalent errors in verb conjugation, tense application, personal pronoun usage, and prepositional structure. Additionally, a tendency towards word repetition or misapplication is noted among the participants.

Furthermore, the study underscores the significance of addressing these linguistic hurdles to enhance students' English proficiency. It highlights the necessity of targeted interventions aimed at bolstering grammar and expanding vocabulary acquisition among learners. Effective strategies may include immersive language programs, focused grammar instruction, and vocabulary-building activities tailored to students' proficiency levels. By addressing these foundational linguistic challenges, educators can better support students in overcoming barriers to effective English communication and academic success.

The variation between the high school English content and university English module content.

Differences between the English curriculum in high school and that of university were evident in the study's findings. Participants expressed varying viewpoints on this matter, with divergent opinions emerging among the 26 individuals surveyed. Specifically, 13 participants emphasized the stark disparity between the university English module and their prior high school English education. Conversely, the remaining 13 participants contested this perspective, indicating a lack of substantial differentiation between the two educational frameworks.

The research outcomes highlight the contrasting perceptions regarding the transition from high school English to university-level coursework. Among the surveyed participants, half acknowledged notable dissimilarities in the content and structure of the university English module compared to their prior academic experiences. Conversely, the remaining participants did not share this sentiment, suggesting a more aligned continuum between high school and university English education. This divergence in perspectives underscores the complexity of the transition process and the varied expectations held by students as they navigate academic progression.

Essential skills that the English/Academic Literacy module provides to students.

The English/Academic Literacy module equips students with fundamental abilities crucial for academic success. Among these skills are report writing and academic writing, identified as essential competencies fostered by the module. Nevertheless, divergent perspectives emerged regarding the module's efficacy in imparting certain proficiencies, particularly in essay composition and comprehension of specific concepts. While a segment of participants expressed satisfaction with the skills acquired, others contended that the module failed to adequately address their needs in these areas. The research outcomes further elucidate the fulfilment and resolution of the study's third objective, revealing how students perceive the university's role in augmenting their proficiency in English reading and writing.

The study's findings shed light on the multifaceted impact of the English/Academic Literacy module on students' skill development. While some participants acknowledge the module's success in nurturing skills like report writing and academic writing, others voice concerns about perceived gaps in areas such as essay composition and comprehension of module content. This nuanced understanding underscores the complexity of addressing diverse learning needs within the academic context. Moreover, it underscores the critical role of universities in refining students' English language proficiency, as evidenced by students' reflections on the support received in enhancing their reading and writing skills.

5.3.2 Findings from the Paper Survey.

While students managed to pass the essay assessment provided to them, certain individuals exhibited shortcomings in their grammar and spelling proficiency. Despite these deficiencies, the outcome of passing the assessment is not unexpected, given that many students excel academically by virtue of their adeptness in writing, particularly if English is their second language. Additionally, it is worth noting that students encountered difficulties in maintaining appropriate grammar, spelling accuracy, and stylistic coherence throughout their essays.

5.4 Conclusion

The study investigated the challenges of English speaking and writing competencies for first year English students who are doing Medical Studies at SMU in Gauteng Province, South Africa. The objectives of the study were: to investigate and examine the challenges with regards to English Speaking and Writing competencies among first year students of English for Medical Studies at SMU; to investigate if first year students at SMU have English writing and speaking proficiency challenges and if so to identify those areas; to evaluate if SMU is helping as far as addressing the English language proficiency of these students is concerned; to suggest possible intervention strategies that can help these students improve their English writing and speaking competencies.

The study employed a qualitative research methodology to understand the views and perceptions of the participants and quantitative research methodology to find the ratios. A thematic analysis was used to a method for analysing qualitative data that involves reading through a set of data and looking for patterns in the meaning of the data to find themes. The literature review of the study focussed on the following themes: language proficiency, followed by typology of ESP, the difference between ESP approach and EGP, as well as EAMP.

The study found that even though students passed very well in Grade 12 they still struggle with speaking and writing English in University, due to the different high schools they went to. However, SMU is going out its way to accommodate the students.

5.5 Recommendations

The below recommendations are directed to the stakeholders in the Department of Languages, particularly the first-year English module coordinators and module planners.

- The needs of students, when designing a module content must be taken into consideration, by using a needs analysis model of designing a module, as it can help to cater for students' needs and develop their skills in line with their field of study.
- The module content should start with basic English skills such as grammar and vocabulary.
- A speaking and writing test should be taken at the beginning of the year to determine if the student is competent enough to start learning EAMP.
- All lecturers should participate in ensuring that students who are lacking in basic English skills, are attended to and assisted.
- Provide access to language support resources, such as writing centers, language labs, and online tutorials, to assist students in improving their speaking and writing skills. Offer workshops or tutorials specifically focusing on speaking and writing proficiency enhancement.

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