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**Intertextuality in student writing: the intersection of the
academic curriculum and student voices in first year
economics assignments.**

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Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1. Description of the Study	1
1.2. Context for the Study	3
1.3. Objectives of the Study	4
1.4. Research questions	6
1.5. Overview of the thesis	7
Endnotes	8
Chapter 2: The Theoretical Framework	9
2.1. Introduction	9
2.2. New Literacy Studies	10
2.2.1. Primary and secondary discourses in the South African situation	13
2.3. Critical approaches to language	16
2.3.1. Discourse as social practice	17
2.3.2. 'Interest' and 'design'	20
2.3.3. Intertextuality and voice	22
2.4. Building understanding	25
2.4.1. Situated meaning and cultural models	27
2.4.2. Life world models vs scientific concepts and economic concepts	28
2.5. Conclusion	30
Endnotes	30
Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology	32
3.1. Introduction	32
3.2. Interpretive Qualitative Research	33
3.3. Framework for Discourse Analysis	34
3.4. The role of the researcher	38
3.5. The research process	43
3.5.1. The Pilot Study	43
3.5.2. Selection of students as case studies	45
3.5.3. Data Collection	46
3.5.4. Analysis	50
Endnotes	52
Chapter 4: The educational context: Barriers and bridges to access	53
4.1. Introduction	53
4.2. Institutional Setting	54
4.3. The discourse of economics	56
4.3.1. Beliefs, values and attitudes	57
4.3.2. The discourse practice of abstract modelling	59
4.3.3. The language of modelling	60
4.3.4. The genre of the economics textbook	63
4.3.5. Writer stance in economics writing	65
4.4. Literacy instruction in undergraduate economics	67
4.5. Language and Communications in microeconomics (ECO100A)	73

4.6.	The essays	75
4.6.1.	The transition essay	75
4.6.2.	GDP essay	76
4.6.3.	Supply and demand essay	77
4.6.4.	Monopoly essay	77
4.7.	Effects of this collaborative approach	78
4.8.	Conclusion	79

Endnotes		79
----------	--	----

Chapter 5: 'The winner has a vision and he never forgets his past': The social backgrounds of the case study students. 81

5.1.	Introduction	81
5.2.	Background information: Schooling	81
5.3.	Background information: Social context/life experience	85
5.4.	Description of university admissions and programmes of study	87
5.5.	Academic performance	88
5.6.	Student biographies	90
5.6.1.	Ayanda	91
5.6.2.	Nkwenkwe	94
5.6.3.	Nomsa	96
5.6.4.	Philip	98
5.6.5.	Sherry	99
5.6.6.	Sibongile	101
5.6.7.	Thabo	103
5.6.8.	Vuyani	104
5.7.	Discussion: links between life experience and academic success	105
5.8.	Conclusion	107

Endnotes		107
----------	--	-----

Chapter 6: Analysis of student writing in the first academic essay 108

6.1.	Introduction	108
6.2.	Appropriating features of the academic discourse	110
6.2.1.	Intertextuality	110
6.2.1.1.	Quoting and not quoting ('actual intertextuality')	111
6.2.1.2.	Interdiscursivity (academic discourse)	117
6.2.2.	Coherence	123
6.2.2.1.	Teaching coherence	125
6.2.2.2.	Coherence (and cohesion) in students' essays	126
6.3.	Appropriating economics discourse and building understanding	136
6.3.1.	Situated meanings and cultural models	137
6.3.1.1.	Situated meanings and cultural models: understanding the apartheid economy	137
6.3.1.2.	Situated meanings and cultural models: understanding the market economy and economic policy under the ANC	140
6.3.2.	Difficulties and dilemmas in the application of the model to the case study: The Problem of the 'real' vs. the hypothetical	141
6.3.3.	The lexis of abstract modelling: Accessing the 'few words' in economics	142
6.4.	The range of other discourses students draw on	144
6.4.1.	Spoken discourses and the oral tradition	145
6.4.1.1.	Movement and flow	146
6.4.1.2.	Use of the first person and other features of 'involvement' typical of spoken discourse	151

6.4.2.	Narrative or recount genres	155
6.4.3.	Finding the register	157
6.4.4.	Traces of other languages: 'Mother tongue interferences'	159
6.5.	Conclusion	161
Endnotes		162
Chapter 7: Analysis of final essay		164
7.1.	Introduction	164
7.2.	Appropriating features of the academic discourse	168
7.2.1.	Intertextuality	169
7.2.1.1.	Vuyani's story: Manifest or actual intertextuality	169
7.2.1.2.	Other issues of manifest intertextuality in the final essay	174
7.2.1.3.	Interdiscursivity	177
7.2.2.	Coherence	181
7.3.	Appropriating economics discourse and building understanding	191
7.3.1.	Situated meanings and cultural models	192
7.3.2.	Using the visual diagram and the grammar of abstract modelling	193
7.3.3.	The lexis: Accessing the 'few words' in economic discourse	195
7.3.4.	Difficulties in applying the theory to the case study: The problem of real vs. hypothetical	198
7.3.5.	The language of the textbook	199
7.4.	The range of other discourses that students draw on	201
7.4.1.	Spoken and narrative discourses	202
7.4.1.1.	Movement and flow	202
7.4.1.2.	Use of the first person and other features of 'involvement' typical of spoken discourse	206
7.4.2.	Advertising discourse	207
7.4.3.	Finding the register	210
7.5.	Conclusion	212
Endnotes		213
Chapter 8: Implications and Recommendations		215
8.1.	Introduction	215
8.2.	Findings of the research	216
8.2.1.	Intertextuality	217
8.2.2.	Coherence	219
8.2.3.	Situated meanings and the growth of understanding	220
8.3.	Implications and recommendations for first year extended/bridging courses in economics	221
8.3.1.	Catering to diversity	221
8.3.2.	Economic modelling	223
8.3.3.	Acquiring the lexico-grammatical features of economics	224
8.4.	Implications for economic courses generally	225
8.5.	Literacy teaching: implications for my own context and my own practice	228
8.5.1.	Interim literacies	228
8.5.2.	Acquiring the discourse	229
8.6.	Conclusion	230
Endnotes		231

Bibliography

232

Appendices	244
Appendix A: Interview Questions	244
Appendix B: Course Outline	245
Appendix C: page 470 from C. R. McConnell and S.L. Brue, 2000 edition.	247
Appendix D: page 180 from R. H. Mabry and H. H. Ulbrich, 1989 edition.	248
Appendix E: Worksheet on Coherence	249
Appendix F: Worksheet on Cohesion	250
Appendix G: Worksheet on Referencing	251
Appendix H: Vuyani's transition essay	255
Appendix I: Model Answer for monopoly essay	256
Appendix J: Worksheet on Task Analysis	258

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Abstract

Title: Intertextuality in student writing: the intersection of the academic curriculum and student voices in first year economics assignments.

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This is an interpretive qualitative study which uses linguistic and intertextual analysis to examine student writing in a first year university economics course. The research has investigated the acquisition of the new academic discourse by drawing on Bakhtin's concept of intertextuality to consider the discourses, discourse models and literacy and learning practices that students draw on as they write their essays. It has explored the first and last essays of the course to look at the shifts and changes that take place over the academic year and to consider whether students have been successful in integrating past discourses into economics discourse. Gee's theories of situated meanings and cultural models were used as tools for analysing the ways in which students draw on existing linguistic resources to access new discourses and to make sense of new concepts.

Eight students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds volunteered as subjects for the case study and were interviewed regularly so that they could assist in the analysis of their writing. These interviews also contributed to biographical sketches of the students which provided important data for the study which used Fairclough's three-tiered approach to discourse analysis as a framework for understanding both the social context and the processes involved in text production.

The findings of the research indicate that first year student texts are built from a range of past and present discourses, discourse strategies and genres and that in these 'interim literacies' students build on their prior discourses to learn new ways of writing. The data showed that the students' adaptations of written text to reflect their 'interests' are often an indication of a transformation of understanding and an appropriation of meaning. There was significant evidence that over the period of the study students learned to rework past discourses so that they blended more acceptably into the new discourse. However, the analysis also showed that many of the practices and discourses students bring with them from school may conflict with the requirements of academic discourse and that there were occasions when drawing on situated meanings served to complicate rather than to assist the process of acquisition.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Description of the study

This project was shaped by a pilot study conducted in 2000 (discussed in more detail in 3.5 and in Paxton 2003) which revealed the multiple discourses and identities in student writing and the ways in which identity is linked to learning. Ivancic's (1997) analysis of hybridity in student writing prompted my interest in intertextuality and assisted me in conceptualising the pilot study. In the process of doing this pilot study, I became interested in the connections between students' socio-cultural histories and the practices and discourses they draw on. I became convinced that student writing was a valuable resource for research because what is written becomes a record of the thinking processes involved; it is in writing that students make visible the thinking and refining processes that learning necessitates. Thus my interest shifted from a focus on identity to a stronger focus on the learning processes. I found that the written word is further enriched as a source when students are given opportunities to add additional insights through the interviewing process.

The project which is presented here could be described as an interpretive qualitative study which uses linguistic and intertextual analysis of students' writing to consider the relationship between the academic curriculum and student voices in the first year of studying economics at a historically white university in South Africa. The study focuses on an analysis of the first and final coursework essays written by eight case study students. Through a process of regular interviews after each essay the students were able to assist in the interpretation of their writing. The data were collected between March 2001 and October 2002.

Intertextuality is a central theme of the study. As Bakhtin says, any utterance is 'related not only to preceding but to subsequent links in the chain of speech communication' (1986:94). All texts are dialogic; they respond to past utterances and anticipate future ones and they are 'populated' by snatches of other discourses. In my analysis I use Bakhtin's notion of intertextuality^j to consider the ways in

which the students' texts and textual practices are built from the texts of their personal and cultural histories. At the same time the study will show how the students 'assimilate, rework and reaccentuate' (Bakhtin 1986:89) past texts and thus contribute to the making of history and to a changing discourse. This allows us to see dominant discourses, such as the discourse of economics, as not simply fixed and immutable but as permeable and situated in history.

The study is concerned with literacy, a term which has absorbed a range of different meanings and which many of the New Literacy Studies theorists consider to be a socially contested term. Gee says that the traditional meaning for the term is 'the ability to read and write', however he believes this usage is problematic because it situates literacy with the individual person (1996:22). The New Literacy Studies theorists perceive literacy as socially and culturally situated (cf. 2.2.) and therefore the term is often used to mean 'the ways in which written language is used'. Gee is careful to distinguish between these two different meanings by using the term 'discourse' to refer to the ways in which written language is used, while defining literacy as 'mastery, or fluent control... over a secondary discourse' (1996:141). I am concerned with both these uses of the term literacy. In Gee's terms very few of my students would be regarded as having 'mastered' academic discourse, therefore I prefer to use the term 'interim literacies'ⁱⁱ to refer to student literacies which reflect a transition process from school and home to academic literacy. The term 'interim literacies' could be seen in relation to the broader idea of multiliteracies which refers to both the growing multiplicity of communication channels and media and to the increasing significance of cultural and linguistic diversity. A multiliteracies pedagogy considers language and other modes of meaning as 'dynamic representational resources, constantly being remade by their users as they work to achieve their various cultural purposes' (Cope and Kalantzis 2000:5). My own notion of 'interim literacy' is specifically linked to the use of written language, which will be analysed as a dynamic resource, constantly being adapted and transformed by its users.

In my analysis I consider the ways in which a group of culturally and linguistically diverse students have assessed the new context for which they are writing to draw on the voices of the academy and appropriate the forms and features of economics

discourse. In addition I show the ways in which students often draw on and transform past discourses as they make sense of the new. I use Kress's notion of the signmaker's 'interest' to show the writers as agents operating within fields of power: they reshape the potentials of their existing resources to best represent their meanings (Kress 2000).

1.2. Context for the study

The study is set at a historically white English speaking university in South Africa. The students in the case study were registered on the extended first year course in economics, ECO100A, which caters to a very diverse group. The course was originally developed for the four year special admission programme in Commerce, the Commerce Academic Development Programme. Therefore many of the students come to the university from rural areas and schools which were disadvantaged during the apartheid era. Their difficulties with English and with academic writing have often been a consequence of language inequality and apartheid schooling. Recently admissions requirements for the mainstream economics course have become more rigorous and a wide diversity of students, many from the more privileged urban schools, have been admitted to the extended course. At the time of this study between 50 and 60% of the students on this course were speakers of English as an additional language (EAL). Many had difficulty making a smooth transition from school to university.

In its recently reviewed Language Policy document, the university commits itself to promoting multilingualism but emphasises that, because English is an empowering language in the wider community and not the primary language for many of its students, it has the responsibility

...to ensure that our students acquire effective literacy in English by which we understand the ability to communicate through the spoken and written word in a variety of contexts: academic, social, and in their future careers (Language Policy revised 2003).

The ECO100A course offers a language and communications tutorial as an adjunct; students whose language and literacy skills may put them at risk are required to do

this module. The purpose of the language and communications tutorial is to assist students in developing the ability to speak, read and write in the academic context. Difficulties experienced can stem from a variety of factors, including English as an additional language and inadequate opportunities for reading and writing in secondary schools. In addition, acquiring a new discourse like economics involves understanding the deep rules of the culture and taking on the values and beliefs of the discipline. Therefore it entails more than learning the cognitive and linguistic behaviour of the discipline; it involves social and affective issues as well. Degrees in economics and accounting are sought after as they are seen as a route to well-paid, high status jobs. However the social practices and value systems of the university and the Commerce Faculty present a particularly alien culture and ideology for many of these students.

This study takes place in a changed and changing political and cultural context as the South African Higher Education system transforms itself to address the requirements of a new social order (cf. Chapter 4). There is a need to redress past inequalities and transform higher education to allow greater access for students from previously disadvantaged communities. However, simply admitting more of these students to university is no longer seen as sufficient. Therefore the government is changing the universities' funding formula and putting pressure on universities to improve graduation rates so as to meet labour market trends. The Commerce Faculty has responded by introducing an Equity Implementation plan to treble the numbers of students on the Commerce Academic Development Programme by 2006. This means the need for appropriate language interventions is likely to grow.

1.3. Objectives of the study

The study rests on the assumption that in order to understand the difficulties that diverse students encounter in trying to gain linguistic and epistemological access to new academic discourses we need to understand more about the linguistic and cultural resources that they bring with them. This has been described as 'the search for the missing voices' (Thesen 2003). But it is not enough simply to identify the missing voices; if we are to provide students with improved access to tertiary

education, we need to devise ways of describing and analysing the new discourses and the ways in which they construct knowledge.

This research has been prompted by an ongoing concern about access to the sought-after fields of Commerce and Business Studies. While the extended course and the support and scaffolding it offers has had some success in improving pass rates at first year level, it is obvious that for ongoing success and long term improvement in graduation rates, we need to know more about what it means to gain linguistic and epistemological access. We need a more in-depth understanding of the problems and issues around access and these are the issues my research questions seek to address.

As the Co-ordinator of the Language and Communications tutorial it is my role to find ways of inducting students from diverse backgrounds into the discourse practices of disciplines in Commerce and to develop courses and intervene in curricula to facilitate students' transition. Therefore my motivation in doing this study was to inform my own practice as a language teacher and that of others working in similar fields.

In addition, as a Language Development/Academic Development practitioner, my role in the Commerce Faculty is to assist teachers of economics (as well as teachers in other Commerce disciplines) in clarifying the language, literacy and learning needs of their students and in suggesting and developing ways in which these needs can be addressed. My intention is that an in-depth study such as this one will provide insights which might assist teaching staff in the Commerce Faculty.

In South Africa, there have been quite a number of case studies (Liebowitz 2001) of how students in various disciplines adjust to the new and rather strange university environment. Studies in tertiary science education and the language of science (Clerk and Rutherford 2000; Adendorff and Parkinson 2001) have also been undertaken.

However, there have been no such studies in the discipline of economics, although economics is becoming increasingly popular as a career path. A considerable

amount of work has been done, particularly by University of Birmingham staff (Dudley Evans and Henderson 1990; Dudley Evans *et al* 1993), in conceptualising and analysing the complex discourse of economics. However, there has been little or no in-depth qualitative research examining the development of economic literacy amongst students and showing the ways in which past discourses influence acquisition of new ones. This kind of study is essential if we are to discover how these discourses can be harnessed to allow students a smoother transition to tertiary studies. Thus it is hoped that the findings from this study will impact on change in the way economic literacy is taught.

1.4. Research questions

Based on my description of the study and my objectives, the central research question is:

What is the relationship between the academic curriculum and student voices in the first year of studying economics at a South African university?

In addition I have developed a set of six subsidiary questions, which the research sets out to address:

- What past literacy and learning practices are students drawing on in their writing?
- What are the discourses and 'cultural/discourse models' that students draw on either explicitly (quoting and referencing) or in more subtle ways?
- What do their discursal patterns suggest about their ways of using language to conceptualise and to build knowledge? What are the difficulties that students encounter in acquiring the new discourse?

- Are students succeeding in integrating past discourses into the language of economics?
- In what ways does their writing shift and change over the first academic year?
- How can the knowledge acquired during the course of this study be fruitfully used to enhance students' access to economics discourse?

1.5. Overview of the thesis

Chapter 2: The Theoretical Framework

This chapter outlines both the theoretical and empirical work which has informed and shaped the framework for the study.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

This chapter justifies my use of interpretive qualitative methods for this study and describes the processes of selection of students for the case study, and methods of data gathering and data analysis.

Chapter 4: The educational context: barriers and bridges to access

This chapter describes the new educational context to which students are seeking to gain entry. This includes the university context, the social structures and discourse practices of economics and the ECO100A course at this particular university.

Chapter 5: 'The winner has a vision and he never forgets his past': The social backgrounds of the case study students.

In this chapter I sketch the home and schooling backgrounds of the students, providing brief biographies of each in order to understand the social and historical contexts from which they come. This section provides background for addressing

the first research question by considering the literacy and learning practices to which the students have been exposed.

Chapter 6: Analysis of the first economics essay

This chapter uses the framework I have designed for analysing the first assignment in the first year economics course. I address the first four research questions by analysing the ways in which students are appropriating features of the academic discourse and using language to build understanding in economics. In the last section I analyse the range of discourses and discourse patterns that students draw on in the process of acquisition.

Chapter 7: Analysis of the final economics essay

This chapter analyses the final assignment in the first year economics course. It uses the framework developed for the first assignment and draws comparisons. It addresses the same research questions as Chapter 5 as well as exploring the ways in which student writing has changed over the period of the first academic year.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

The final chapter summarises the findings and explores ways in which these findings can be used to enhance students' access to the discourse. The chapter concludes by making recommendations for economics as well as language and literacy teaching.

Notes:

ⁱ Although the actual term 'intertextuality' was coined by Kristeva (1986), it was Bakhtin who developed an intertextual approach to the analysis of texts.

ⁱⁱ This term was used by Alison Lee when she reviewed an article which I had submitted for publication to the journal, Literacy and Numeracy Studies.

Chapter 2: The Theoretical Framework

2.1. Introduction

This research project aims to understand more about what it means to gain linguistic and epistemological access to the new academic discourse of economics. It sets out to develop a multi-layered understanding of the linguistic and cultural resources that students bring with them, while at the same time developing ways of describing and analysing the new discourse they are acquiring. A particular concern is to explore the ways in which students use language to conceptualise. My research questions have prompted an exploration of change or development in writing which is difficult to analyse because it is so complex (cf. Chapter 7). Therefore I have drawn on an eclectic group of theoretical concepts to frame the analysis.

In this chapter I will review the ideas of sociolinguists and applied linguists who have influenced this study and whose work has helped me to answer my research questions. My discussion will begin with a brief review of the scholarship relating to the New Literacy Studies (NLS). NLS notions of language and literacy as social practices have been useful for portraying the way students continue to employ past practices and more familiar discourses while adapting to the new ones. The critical approaches to language adopted by theorists such as Fairclough and Kress have provided a framework for understanding the way power works through language to produce, maintain and change social relations, while Bakhtin's notion of the socio-ideological voice and interlinked texts has offered a lens for following the development of meaning making through intertextual references. These intertextual links often provide the clues to the 'situated meanings' and 'cultural models' (Gee 1999) which student use for making meaning and building knowledge.

In what Kress refers to as 'the 'turn' towards a social view of language' (2002:29), approaches in mainstream linguistics have been critiqued for focusing on the relationship between form and function while failing to explore the way social conditions affect the use of language. Mainstream linguistics, it is argued, has looked at the 'what' and the 'how' questions but has not asked 'why' a person

comes to say particular things (Pennycook 1994). Critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 1989, 1992 and 2003; Kress 1985, 2000 and 2002) has gone further towards addressing these issues because it has moved beyond the description of 'language in use' to attempt explanation and has located the analysis of language use in wider questions of social power. Fairclough explains the distinction between critical and non-critical approaches to discourse analysis as follows:

Critical approaches differ from non-critical in not just describing discursive practices, but also showing how discourse is shaped by relations of power and ideologies, and the constructive effects discourse has on social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and belief...(1992:12).

Concurrent with the turn towards the social view of language, has come a new interest in language and discourse because of a shift in understanding of the way academic knowledge is constituted. This is often referred to as the 'linguistic turn' in the social sciences. Jaworski and Coupland describe it in the following way:

...language ceases to be a neutral medium for the transmission and reception of pre-existing knowledge. It is the key ingredient to the very constitution of knowledge. Many disciplines, more or less simultaneously, have come to see the need for an awareness of language, and of the structuring potential of language, as part of their own investigation (1999:4).

The 'structuring potential' is that potential for classification which is seen as central to building knowledge in a discipline (Jaworski and Coupland 1999). In this way it is recognised that language is a key ingredient in learning and conceptualising.

These two shifts in conceptualisation are central to this study which seeks to understand student writing in its social context and to investigate the ways in which they build knowledge through language. In Chapters 4 and 5 I will foreground context through a description of the wider settings in which the student writings are situated, and in Chapters 6 and 7 these texts will be analysed.

2.2. New Literacy Studies

The New Literacy Studies is a collection of research and writing which sees language and literacy as social practices rather than just a set of skills to be learned in formal schooling. The approach grew out of a series of studies in local settings (Heath 1983, Street 1984, Barton 1991 and Gee 1996). Through the New Literacy Studies, literacy has become the focus of interest for disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology, psychology and education. Street (1995) described the notion of literacy as a universal technical skill, as the 'autonomous' model of literacy and contrasted it with the 'ideological' view, which argues that not only does literacy vary with social context but that its uses and meanings are always embedded in relations of power. If literacy is treated as autonomous, then the social features tend to be naturalised and the history and ideology behind school literacy is disguised.

Studies by Gee (1996), Heath (1983) and other ethnographers indicate that middle class literacy practices coincide with those taught in school, while other literacy practices, such as those of the communities of Roadville and Trackton described in Heath's study, do not. This means that schooling creates inequalities and can lead to low attainment of certain groups in the educational context. Street (1997) argues that the findings of New Literacy Studies research indicate that educators need to take account of the literacies that students bring with them and not limit their teaching to only one kind of literacy. But, as Moss (2001) points out, transferring texts and practices from outside the classroom into the school curriculum is a complex process which involves recontextualisation and therefore change.

Much of the New Literacy Studies research investigates literacy above and beyond the level of language. Many NLS researchers claim to use discourse analysis and yet their analyses often exclude the linguistic detail. Until recently, their work has had little relationship to Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). Halliday comments on this, noting that

...while the 'literacy debate' has moved on to higher, more rarefied levels, it tends to be forgotten that reading and writing are activities constructed in language (Halliday 1996:340).

He argues that it is important that the empirical evidence in researching literacy is drawn from the linguistic detail because language is the source from which activities like reading and writing draw their meaning (Halliday 1996). Linguistic analysis can provide sensitive descriptive resources for understanding the practices and the discourses of writers from varied backgrounds. Cope and Kalantzis (1993) emphasise that, in the educational setting, language needs explicit teaching to provide students from historically marginalized groups with equal access to the discourses of power. The insights which emerge from linguistic research provide teachers and students with a metalanguage for talking about language and negotiating the differences and similarities between old and new discourses. NB

A linguistic approach to literacy is revealed in the research described in Literacy and Society (Hasan and Williams 1996) which addresses the literacy debate from the perspective of an SFL based theory of learning. Gee, too, in his later work (1999) returns to a closer look at language. He describes his book as being concerned with 'a theory and a method for studying how the details of language get recruited "on site" to "pull off" specific social activities and social identities' (1999:1). Although his analyses don't assume an in-depth knowledge of grammar, he points the reader to Halliday's SFL. These more recent texts imply evidence of an important shift to link text to context through linguistic analysis. My research has also used linguistic analysis to describe the students' texts more precisely and to substantiate my claims.

Gee (1996), as one of the leading exponents of the New Literacy, recognises that literacy practices are always integrated with wider practices that involve interaction, beliefs and values. Different contexts and social practices allow people to practice different sets of skills and uses of language which are always embedded in the worldview of a particular social group. He believes that if we are to see language in its social context we should move away from focusing on language (discourse) alone. He introduces the idea of 'Discourse' with a capital 'D' which involves much more than just language; it comprises ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing and speaking. According to the different social groups to which we belong, such as the sports group, the church group and the work group, we develop particular 'ways of being in the world'; therefore these 'Discourses' are

'social languages' and they are products of social history. Gee describes a Discourse as

a sort of identity kit which comes complete with the appropriate costume and instructions on how to talk, act and often write, so as to take on a particular social role¹ that others will recognise (Gee 1996: 127).

He suggests that each person acquires multiple social 'Discourses' and multiple social identities which are always in flux.

In the academic context the 'big D' could be regarded as the culture of knowledge of the university and of each individual discipline. A student's discourse (big 'D') is ultimately assessed in terms of how appropriate his/her cognitive and linguistic behaviour is to the cultural context of academia and to the particular discipline he/she is studying. Gee's broadening of the concept of discourse is a very useful one for this research project, however, for the sake of consistency, I will not differentiate between the two types of discourse because a combined d/D meaning is more relevant to the discussion of this thesis.

The studies by Scollon and Scollon (1981), Heath (1983) and others show that changes in a person's discourse patterns as they acquire a new form of literacy involve change in identity which may conflict with the person's initial acculturation and socialisation. Students entering the university experience these conflicts as they start to become members of the new discourses of the university and to take on new social identities, finding that their other social worlds are juxtaposed with the academic world (Clark and Ivanic 1998).

2.2.1. Primary and secondary discourses in the South African situation

Gee (1996) also distinguishes between what he calls primary and secondary discourses. Primary discourses are home discourses and they are acquired early in life and form the base from which later discourses are acquired. Secondary discourses are those acquired from social institutions outside of the home, for

example the church, the school or the office. Academic discourse is thus often referred to as a 'secondary' discourse. The distinction between primary and secondary discourses is not airtight; boundaries between them are blurred because they filter into and saturate one another resulting in discourse change.

Gough (2000) points out that Gee's (1996) distinction between primary and secondary discourses applies in every culture and language, and illustrates this with examples of secondary discourses such as praise poetry, folktales and legal discourse in traditional Xhosa culture. As Gough (2000) and Gee (1996) point out, acquiring academic literacy is not so much about learning a secondary discourse, as about being apprenticed to Western rhetorical norms. They note that this essay-text literacy is linked to the interests of the powerful in our society, and that as Western technology and literacy become more pervasive through the process of globalisation, essay text literacy may weaken and replace other secondary discourses. Gough (2000) says that students entering South African universities may bring with them a 'richly varied repertoire of secondary discourses' which for them is highly valued. However, because teachers are mostly unaware of these secondary discourses and because they may be quite different to academic discourse, students are often given the impression that these other discourses are unacceptable and wrong.

Gee says that when the learner's primary discourse has not scaffolded the transition to a more dominant discourse, the learner may gain a more conscious awareness of what he is trying to do and greater insights into the workings of the new discourse (Gee 1996). He says that this greater awareness comes from 'learning' which he distinguishes from 'acquisition'. He sees acquisition as something that happens within social groups and without formal teaching. Discourses, he says, are mastered through acquisition and not through learning. Learning on the other hand involves conscious knowledge and happens through formal teaching. Gee believes this process is crucial because learning involves breaking down what is to be taught into analytic bits learners can talk about and explain which leads to analytic and reflective awareness:

...we are better at performing what we acquire but we consciously know more about what we have learned (1996:139).

He says good classroom learning should lead to meta-knowledge and giving the learner this meta-knowledge enables him to engage in meta-talk.

Academic development practitioners have found many of these ideas useful for their work in the South African tertiary education context. However, in Gee's earlier work (1990) he seems to allow little room for individual agency and the possibility of transformation. Thesen (1997) is critical of the fact that the NLS research has tended to categorise learners according to a limited set of identity markers, i.e. race, gender, class, ethnicity and language, and argues that these studies have not paid enough attention to students' individual accounts of literacy acquisition. This has resulted in a deterministic view of student identity in terms of the researchers' imposed categories. In her own research Thesen found a discrepancy between the institutional categories used to identify and define students and the ways in which they described themselves, calling for a more nuanced understanding of identity and agency.

My research, in my changing work context, substantiates Thesen's claim that the lines between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' are not as sharply drawn as in Gee's account. He says 'non-mainstream' students 'often gain just enough mastery to ensure that they continually mark themselves as outsiders' (1996:146). The population of first year economics classes at the institution where this study is set has changed considerably over the last ten years and students are now so diversified in terms of race and language background that staff would have difficulty identifying 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. Staff in the economics department are more concerned that students are able to express an understanding of the concepts of the discipline than with worrying about 'the superficialities of form and correctness' (Gee 1996:146).

If students coming into the Commerce Faculty from a diversity of social backgrounds and practices are to achieve the success at university and in the business world that they aspire to, they will need to learn the university's

specialised ways of using the written language and of making meaning. However, students have to learn to negotiate a path through competing discourses and thus they are strongly influenced by their own alternative discourses and values and beliefs. Gee (1996) and others, such as Macken-Horarik (1996:277), emphasise the importance of teachers and students evolving a way of describing and analysing the new academic discourses and the ways in which they construct knowledge. At the same time, teachers need to develop insights into the learner's prior (both primary and secondary) discourses and how these relate to or conflict with the new. These kinds of analyses will enable students and teachers to reflect critically on both the specialised and the prior discourses and, in this way, allow learning and teaching to move beyond the goal of simply socialising students into the established order. My research project sets out to analyse and describe both the new academic discourse of economics and the alternative discourses that students bring with them in order to refine a metalanguageⁱⁱ for relating literacy to learning in economics.

2.3. Critical approaches to language

Acquiring a new discourse entails understanding the power relations inherent in the context of that discourse. As indicated in the introduction to this chapter, the critical approaches to language adopted by Kress (1985) and Fairclough (1989, 1992) are useful for my framework because they reveal the way power works in language. These critical approaches are developed from the foundation of Halliday's functional theory. Halliday's view of language as a 'social semiotic' explicitly links discourses with meaning. His use of the word 'social' in conjunction with the word 'semiotic' strongly conveys the idea that meaning is linked to social context. Secondly, Halliday says that meaning in a text cannot be separated from the form in which it is worded; language is a set of systems each of which offers the writer a *choice* of ways of expressing meaning. The systems are grouped into three functions: the ideational, the interpersonal and the textual. They operate simultaneously to convey different kinds of meaning in any text.

Fairclough takes up Halliday's ideas but the perspectives of critical discourse analysis and SFL do not precisely coincide (see Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999).

Fairclough is concerned to show more explicitly the ways in which social forces impact on the language. He provides a framework for integrating a description of language with a description of its context of production. He sees words as embedded in the social processes and social forces that produce them. Kress (2002:34-35) says that critical linguistics has sought to understand the meanings of the *choices* and thus the meanings of the social environment in which the choices are made. This has opened the way to the understanding that it was power that led to the difference in language use. He notes that the conditions shaping the choices of individuals were not foregrounded in Halliday's theory.

Some central theoretical insights from the work of these and other critical discourse analysts will be highlighted here.

2.3.1. Discourse as social practice

The notion of discourse is the first of these theoretical insights. Candlin's definition is similar to Gee's which was referred to earlier, but it is more specific. For my purposes of analysing students' 'interim' discourses, this definition is useful because it highlights the dynamic and constructive role of discourses as well as the social constraints:

'Discourse'... refers to language in use, as a process, which is socially situated. However... we may go on to discuss the constructive and dynamic role of either spoken or written discourse in structuring areas of knowledge and to social and institutional practices which are associated with them. In this sense, discourse is a means of talking and writing about and acting upon worlds, a means which both constructs and is constructed by a set of social practices within these worlds, and in so doing both reproduces and constructs afresh particular social-discursive practices, constrained or encouraged by more macro movements in the overarching social formation (Candlin 1997:ix quoted in Jaworski and Coupland 1999:3).

The idea that discourse both 'reproduces' and 'constructs afresh' particular social practices is crucial for my study. The students in the study feel the powerful constraints of the new academic 'identity kit' they need to acquire in order to reproduce these practices. But the study is set in a time of shifts and changes in South Africa and in higher education worldwide; therefore these 'macro

movements' impact on social discursive practices and in the process these practices may be constructed afresh.

Fairclough expands on the relationship between discourse and social structure:

...there is a dialectical relationship between discourse and social structure, there being more generally a relationship between social practice and social structure: the latter is both a condition for and an effect of the former (1992:64).

This means that, on the one hand, social structures do have a part in determining discourses but that, at the same time, discourses contribute to the shaping of social structures. Fairclough is interested in change in discourse and he sees discursive practice as contributing to both reproducing and transforming society. As he says, the relationship between discourse and social structure should be seen dialectically. He is concerned that if the constitutive power of discoursesⁱⁱⁱ is overstated, we run the risk of seeing discourse as the source of the social. He believes that Foucault overstates the constitutive power of discourses and that this may be due to the absence of a concept of practice and of text and textual analysis in Foucault's work. He points out that:

... the discursive constitution of society does not emanate from a free play of ideas in people's heads but from a social practice which is firmly rooted in and oriented to real, material social structures (Fairclough 1992:66).

Fairclough's critique of Foucault would also apply to other poststructuralist applied linguists, such as Pennycook (1994), who argues that there can be no social reality existing beyond discourse.

On the other hand, Fairclough says that if the social determination of discourse by structures is overemphasised then discourse can become 'a mere reflection' of social reality. The notion of the dialectical relationship is an important one for my study. Student texts are shaped by social and cultural structures, but they also have the potential to influence these structures, as will be shown in a later chapter. It is power relationships and in the South African context, changing social relations that set the conditions for these transformations to be realised.

Fairclough sees individuals in terms of a similar dialectic. The 'subject', he says, is

socially determined and yet capable of individual creativity; obliged to act discursively in preconstituted subject positions; yet capable of creatively transforming discourse conventions (1989:168).

Fairclough (1992) has developed a framework for situating discourse analysis in the broader context of social theory. His three dimensional framework brings together text analysis, social analysis and processes of text production and interpretation. In this framework the inner layer is the actual text to be analysed.

The middle layer of Fairclough's diagram represents the processes of production and interpretation of the text, which, in my analysis would refer to what the students were doing and thinking in the process of producing their essays. It would also refer to the interpretation process they went through in reading from other texts in order to produce their own. In a later work, Fairclough (2003) refers to this middle layer as the process of meaning-making which is useful for my research. Fairclough (1989) says that the analyst must draw on her own interpretative procedures which should be grounded in social theory, in order to explain how participants draw on theirs. In addition, I have tried to gain access to the meaning-making processes in students' writing through interviews with the students and through observation in tutorials and lectures. However, it seems important to signal that there are difficulties in accessing these meaning-making processes when working with first year university students who are often not consciously aware of their reading, writing and thinking processes and when many of them are not first language speakers of English.

The outer layer of Fairclough's diagram refers to the social context which influences the production and interpretation of the discourse. These are the contesting systems of values, beliefs, norms, conventions and power relations which impact on what is written and spoken. The outer layer can be seen as sets of cultural contexts i.e. the global, the South African, the institutional and departmental contexts that impact on production of the students' texts. The usefulness of Fairclough's framework to my analysis is spelled out further in 3.3.

2.3.2. 'Interest' and 'design'

In his recent work (2000, 2002) Kress has replaced the notion of critique as used in critical sociolinguistics with 'design'. He feels that critical sociolinguistics was a response to an implausible theory of language, which saw form as central and meaning as marginal. He proposes that changes in the semiotic landscape (new technologies etc.) call for a new theory of representation. Language, he argues, is no longer the central semiotic mode and a new theory for a 'changing semiotic landscape' is needed; one which is able to account for changes in use, form and system more effectively. In his recent work, 'language use' is replaced by the terms 'transformation' or 'remaking', and he suggests that changes arise as a result of the interested actions of individuals (2000:155). Thus Kress (2002:36-37) says that 'interest' becomes the motivating force for representation and he suggests that the term captures the following factors:

- the writer's 'social historical formation'
- the writer's stance or commitment and personal and professional investment in the issue
- the way the writer gauges the political context for which he is writing

A brief example from a student's essay may help to clarify my understanding of the notion of 'interest':

South Africa was under apartheid for long time where white were only favourites. This affected many economic systems. For instead. Many of the businesses were owned by state. The people were owned by state, how? There was this document which they called it pass. People were arrested if they didn't pay for their lives or anything else. (Vuyani)

This short passage clearly shows Vuyani's social historical formation as a black South African through his understanding of racial prejudice expressed in *white were only favourites* and his references to the hated pass system in *people were owned by state* and *People were arrested if they didn't pay for their lives*. His difficulties with expressing his meaning in English indicate that he is writing in a second or third

language. He expresses his stance or commitment to the issues through his use of evaluative adjectives such as *long* and *only* and through his categorical use of the past tense. At the same time he has some awareness of the requirements of the new context for which he is writing because he includes economic terms such as *businesses, economic systems*.

Kress says that, on the one hand, the remaking or transformation reflects the individual 'interest' and on the other, it reflects broad social factors, such as the individual's social history and situation. His notion of 'interest' ensures that the agency of the sign-maker is recognised but he emphasises that sign-makers are always working with historically shaped resources and always within fields of power. In this he seems to be echoing Fairclough, who says:

the social and the individual, the determined and the creative, are not paradoxically opposed to one another but facets of a dialectical process of social fixation and transformation (1989:172).

Kress (2000 and 2002) recognises that our 'interests' as sign-makers are never really matched by our linguistic resources, but that 'we choose the most apt forms, the forms already most suited by virtue of their existing potentials for the representation of our meaning' (2000:155) and we transform them. For students, like Vuyani, who are new to a particular cultural environment, there will be more work and more remaking but the remaking never really disappears:

The more the sign-maker is in the culture, the more he or she is 'socialised', the more the shapedness of the social and cultural resources will be in the foreground, but the transformation, reshaping action is always seemingly present, however invisible (2000:156).

Kress's theory of design is geared to the needs of the multiliteracies era (Cope and Kalantzis 2000) with its expanding multimodal communication channels and growing cultural and linguistic diversity. It is also very useful for my analysis of students' 'interim literacies' in economics in the changing social and semiotic landscape of higher education in South Africa. Interim literacies can be seen as an aspect of the broader idea of multiliteracies, as literacies in transition, constantly being remade/reshaped by the students from different backgrounds as they strive to

achieve a particular cultural purpose (i.e. economic literacy). An emphasis on 'interest' allows me to perceive the students as agents as they work with historically shaped resources.

2.3.3. Intertextuality and voice

The concept of voice that often carries a wide variety of meanings is central to this study. Kamberelis and Scott (1992) point out that there are at least four current uses of the term 'voice' including Bakhtin's notion of the socio-ideological voice. They note that most traditional accounts of 'voice' in writing and in writing pedagogy have been rooted in the Cartesian sense of the voice of the individual writer behind the text, pointing to the creativity of the writer, but hiding the fact that writing is a social and political process. However, the Bakhtinian model of voice stands in contrast to the more individualistic notions and I consider Bakhtin's notion of interlinked texts and voices as crucial for understanding the way students weave other voices into their texts in order to make meaning and develop a voice of their own.

Critical discourse analysts, for example Fairclough and Kress, have been influenced by Bakhtin's theory of language as heteroglossic and dialogical. When Kress says 'Each sign-maker is therefore a transformer of the historically shaped resources for representation available in their culture in the light of their interest' (2002:37), these 'resources' he is referring to include 'social languages' or 'voices' in the Bakhtinian sense. Bakhtin sees all texts as 'hybridized' or 'multivoiced' in which the different voices interanimate and define one another (1981:303-306). He views a social language as 'a discourse peculiar to a specific stratum of society (professional group, age group etc.) within a given social system within a given time' (1981:430) and he recognises that all instances of language use have traces of other discourses or social languages.

For this multivoiced and dialogic character of language, Kristeva (1986) coined the term 'intertextuality'.¹ But the notion of intertextual analysis was first developed by Bakhtin, for whom language is dialogic in two senses. Firstly, an intertextual

- blending
- all borrowed

perspective points to each utterance as 'a link in the chain of speech communication'; texts respond to previous texts and anticipate future ones (Bakhtin 1986:84). In constructing a new text, such as the economics essay, students may blend both the economics texts (lectures and textbooks) they are encountering at university and familiar texts associated with their previous home and school contexts. Their texts are therefore addressed to and anticipate their new audience of economic educators, while responding to previous ones.

Secondly, all texts are created out of borrowed language:

...there are no 'neutral' words and forms – words and forms that can belong to no-one, language has been completely taken over, shot through with intentions and accents (1981:293).

Bakhtin

But Bakhtin says that writers play a unique role in shaping their own words and texts:

As a living, socio-ideological concrete thing, as heteroglot opinion, language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language (it is not after all, out of a dictionary that the speaker gets his words!), but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other peoples' intentions: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own (1981:293-294).

Bakhtin

From Bakhtin's metaphors we get a sense of how the writer struggles to develop ownership of the hybrid discourses that enter his consciousness. He needs to 'populate them with his own intentions', 'appropriate' them and 'adapt' them. For Bakhtin, humans are neither entirely autonomous self-directed beings, nor are they wholly shaped by social and institutional forces; rather they are agents who reproduce or transform the socio-cultural resources. Thus, for Bakhtin, the self is discursively mobilised as one's discourses, experiences and practices are integrated. Again we see the notion of structure and agency as a dialectic and as dynamic.

Fairclough is interested in intertextuality because it is compatible with notions of discourse in social change. He illustrates this notion by showing the hegemonic role of the news media in reproducing and restructuring news sources in a disguised and covert form. For his own analytic purpose he refines the notion of intertextuality subdividing it into 'manifest intertextuality' and 'interdiscursivity' (1992:104). In what he calls manifest intertextuality the other texts are explicitly present and may or may not be signalled by quotation marks. Ivanic points out that the key difference between these two types of intertextuality is that in interdiscursivity 'the echo in the new text is not of another specific text but of a recognizable abstract text type or set of conventions; a pattern or template of language use, rather than a sample of it' (1997:48).

My research has focused on both manifest intertextuality and interdiscursivity in the students' texts because an exploration of both these features provides insights into the learning process. The metaphor of all texts being hybridised is a central theme in my research because of the link between hybridisation and meaning making. Students make meaning and acquire new discourses through the interaction between the familiar and the new texts. Thus, intertextuality is a key to tracking the process of sense making in student writing. It provides a way of identifying the source of various oral strategies that students may use, such as repetition, or the variety of oral discourses they may draw on such as political speech making or storytelling.

I will use the term 'voices' in this study in the Bakhtinian sense of a discursive repertoire including socio-ideological aspects. 'Voices' are a set of discourses that the writer brings to the act of writing; they are part of his/her social and historical formation (cf. 2.4.2.) and thus an aspect of the writer's 'interests'. In addition and following Bakhtin, a writer's 'voice' can be considered as his or her unique combination of these discursive resources. Bakhtin says that writers make these voices their own by assimilating, reworking and reaccentuating them (1986:89). This notion of 'transformation' or remaking captures the ways students work to reshape their past discourses in the light of their current 'interests' (Kress 2002) and in this process they may produce something which is entirely new. In times of social change where discourses are more fluid, writers such as these may contribute to the making of history and to changing discourses.

2.4. Building understanding

Students build understanding by drawing intertextually on familiar discourses to allow them to make sense of the new and by expressing the new ideas in their own words. To further strengthen the link between language, learning, identity and the social context, I will draw on the socio-cultural theory of knowledge construction, which originates in the work of Vygotsky (1978). I will then consider the ways in which Vygotskian theory has been extended and developed by theorists from a number of different disciplines^{iv}.

Two basic themes in Vygotsky's writing are a) that higher mental functioning in the individual is rooted in social life and b) that learning is mediated by culturally inherited semiotic 'tools' with language-based social interaction being the most important of these tools. The discourse one engages with 'intermentally' with others becomes internalised as 'inner speech' for intramental functioning such as problem solving and reflection. It is this exchange of discourses that leads to intellectual growth which is why socio-cultural theorists emphasise that cognition is social and cultural in nature.

Wertsch (1991) connects Vygotsky's social view of cognitive development with Bakhtin's idea of appropriation of social languages and speech genres^v (intertextuality). Wertsch says that Bakhtin saw social languages and speech genres as the means by which communicative and mental actions are organised and describes them as a 'toolkit' of 'mediational means':

A toolkit approach allows group and contextual differences in mediated action to be understood in terms of the array of mediational means to which people have access and the patterns of choice they manifest in selecting a particular means for a particular occasion (1991:94).

This notion of 'the array of mediational means to which people have access' and the 'patterns of choice they manifest' provides us with an explanation for diversity and differential access to dominant discourses. As Wertsch says '...different groups may employ similar tools in different ways' (Wertsch 1991:95).

He indicates that the items in the tool kit may not have equal status in a particular socio-cultural setting and he calls this inequality 'privileging' rather than 'domination' as he sees the idea of privileging as more dynamic:

Privileging refers to the fact that one mediational means, such as a social language is viewed as being more appropriate or efficacious than others in a particular sociocultural setting (Wertsch 1991:124).

In the context in which we work in post-apartheid South Africa, students' socio-cultural histories, particularly their schooling histories, may have shaped the mediational means (both the literacy and the learning practices) they have developed, as well as the experiences, beliefs and values they draw on in order to build understanding. Therefore, in constructing my framework for analysis, these contextual issues must be taken into consideration (cf. Chapter 5).

The educational theorist, Wells, points out that Halliday's work in functional linguistics and his understanding of language as a 'social semiotic' complements the work of Vygotsky. Halliday (quoted in Wells 1992: 94) says 'language is the essential condition of knowing, the process by which experience becomes knowledge'.

Wells asserts the link between language, learning and identity when he says:

It is not simply our view of the world that is constructed in the discourses in which we participate but our view of ourselves, our values and our very identities (Wells 1999:120).

Perhaps Wells's central contribution is that he extends the notion of learning through language when he says that while learning is certainly a semiotic process, 'it involves learning to *do* as well as to mean' and that the goal of learning is

...not just the development of the learner's meaning potential, conceived as the construction of discipline based knowledge but the development of *the resources of action, speech and thinking* that enable the learner to actively participate effectively and creatively in further practical, social and intellectual activity (my italics) (1992:48).

Wells emphasises that it is important that students construct their own understanding by using what they already know to make sense of new information so that a learner's transformed understanding is a '*personal reconstruction*', in that it is accommodated within the student's emerging identity. This relates to Kress's notion of the transformation of the 'signmaker's interests' (2000 and 2002). In these interim literacies the remaking of text to reflect the individual's 'interests' is crucial because it reflects a 'transformed understanding' and an appropriation of meaning.

In order for a learner to transform understanding and develop 'a personal reconstruction', the learner needs to draw on earlier experiences and background knowledge to situate the new meanings and make sense of them. This process of building understanding^{vi} is a difficult one for the researcher to access. I have found the student interviews and the tools of inquiry which Gee describes as 'situated meaning' and 'cultural models'^{vii} (1999) useful for getting to this process, while the intertextual references in students' texts can often provide the textual clues to situated meanings and cultural models.

2.4.1. Situated meaning and cultural models

To develop the notions of situated meaning and cultural models, Gee (1999) draws on cultural models theory (D'Andrade and Strauss 1992; Shore 1996) which argues that people make sense of their experiences by applying largely tacit 'theories' or cultural models to them. Words for individual speakers have 'situated meanings' related to the specific contexts and to the images and patterns that speakers associate with them from their past experiences. Situated meaning is then linked to a 'cultural model' or 'schema', which Gee (1999:44) describes as an 'explanatory theory or 'story line' connected to a word and rooted in the practices of the socio-cultural group to which the person belongs'.

So, for instance, the child who has only ever seen milk in milk bottles on the supermarket shelf will have a theory of milk originating in milk bottles, while the rural child who has watched cows being milked will have a completely different

cultural model. The city child's theory will change when she is taken to visit a dairy farm and develops a new theory about where milk comes from. Therefore situated meanings and cultural models are not fixed but are constantly growing and changing. Gee says these models are like 'videotapes in the mind' and we are usually quite unaware we are using them. Because meanings are rooted in communities, cultural models differ across diverse groups and the models from different socio-cultural groups 'can conflict in their content, in how they are used and in the values and perspectives they carry' (1996: 88).

I understand situated meanings and cultural models to be aspects of the sign-maker's 'interest' (Kress 2000 and 2002). They provide insights into the social and historical formation of the writer and they are of particular importance in this study with its focus on language and literacy as a tool for learning in economics.

2.4.2. Life world models vs scientific concepts and economic concepts

Gee points to the distinction between 'everyday models'/ 'life world models' and 'scientific models' and the way scientists and 'everyday' people understand the same word in different ways. He illustrates how the discourse of physics has a different set of situated meanings for the word 'light' than do life world discourses. He tells how children who were asked 'How far does the light from the candle go?' described light as going just a short distance because their situated meaning associated with light had to do with illumination while one of the multiple situated meanings for physicists is that light waves travel indefinitely. He argues that denigrating everyday ways of knowing is dangerous and may be one of the reasons so many children do poorly in science at school. The life world form is not a mistaken version, but rather each version is correct in different ways (Gee 1999: 44-46).

As I have indicated, Gee's notion of cultural models provides tools for analysing understanding at a particular point in time and for probing the ways in which first year students are learning and making meaning in economics. However, research

done by economic educators (Thomas 1989; Henderson 1989) indicates that 'everyday life does not necessarily present formal tools required to analyse events in the world' (Henderson 1989:38) and that experience of the economics world may result in both economic conceptions and *misconceptions*. This is because economics is a social science rather than a natural science, and therefore theorising is made even more complex than in physics. Physics is characterised by universal laws, which can be verified by checking against the facts, through observation and experimentation. In order to make economics more 'scientific', economists have followed the procedures and practices of the natural sciences. They have developed mathematical models, which abstract from reality in order to reduce 'reality to manageable proportions', so as to make theorising and predicting simpler, especially with a computer (Papps and Henderson 1977). The model is a fiction but it is a fiction that helps us to predict and thus to begin the process of understanding (Henderson 1989). This means that application to the 'real' world is never as simple and clear-cut as the theoretical model might suggest (cf. 6.3.2.) and, as Papps and Henderson (1977) point out, students find matching the theory to the real world confusing.

The notion of 'price' is one example of the way the theoretical economic model fails to match the everyday experiences that students have had of the economy. Before students are introduced to theoretical economics they recognise price as what you pay for an article when you purchase it; they understand that the price on the price tag is fixed by the store-owner. But in economics they are told that price is a function of demand and supply and that they must learn about the hypothetical model for demand and supply. The leap from the real to the hypothetical is often quite a complex one. Thomas' description of this leap is insightful:

Paradoxically, the fact that our students do create an order out of and impose some sort of sense on their experiences may prove to be the greatest challenge for economics teachers. It is certainly possible to predict that economics understanding will never be easily achieved since, at the very least, it requires some redefinition of terminology, a realignment of attitudes towards the nature of economic argument and reformulation of concepts in operational terms.

It is possible to argue that the data that are produced as a result of experience of the physical world incorporate that form of understanding that is labelled

scientific understanding. It is not valid to argue that the data that are produced as a result of experience of the economic system necessarily incorporate that form of understanding that is called economics understanding (Thomas 1989:54).

2.5. Conclusion

This chapter has foregrounded concepts that are central to my study. The theorists I have reviewed recognise literacy as a social practice and many of them recommend a linguistic approach to literacy studies and the development of a metalanguage for 'semioticising' learning (Macken-Horarik 1996). Critical language approaches argue that on the one hand the remaking or transformation of discourses reflects the individual 'interest' and on the other, it reflects broad social structures. In order to understand both these aspects of the writing process, in Chapters 5 and 6 I have provided detailed descriptions of both the discourse and institution to which the students are hoping to gain access and of their backgrounds. Critical language theorists point to intertextual analysis as a way of identifying the voices students draw on as they reshape the language in the light of their 'interests'. This reconstruction is part of learning and acquiring the new discourse.

Applied linguists have developed approaches to discourse analysis which are very useful to us. But while the British and American contexts have many similarities with ours, there are also very significant differences and, for this reason, it seems crucial that we develop approaches to suit our particular context. In this study tools for linguistic analysis have been drawn from the work of Bakhtin, Fairclough, Kress and Gee, recontextualised and applied in the analysis of interim literacies of South African students gaining access to tertiary education. An analysis using this model should provide academics working at the first year level in South African tertiary institutions with a detailed understanding of the resources that new students bring with them as well as the processes by which they acquire new discourses.

Notes:

ⁱ Fairclough (cf. 2.4.1) prefers to use the term 'subject position' instead of 'social role' or social identity (1989:38)

ⁱⁱ 'metalanguage' refers to the language used to talk about language, for example the word 'connector' might be regarded as a metalinguistic term.

ⁱⁱⁱ 'the constitutive power of discourses' refers to the power of discourses to shape practices.

^{iv} Moll (1990), Wertsch (1991), Wells (1992), Halliday (1978) Gee (2000)

^v Bakhtin's notion of 'primary speech genres' (1981) seems similar to Gee's primary Discourses (1990).

^{vi} The process of building understanding can be seen as part of Fairclough's middle layer where the participant interprets and produces new meanings.

^{vii} Gee says he would prefer to use the term 'Discourse model', because, he says, 'culture is connected to too many controversial meanings and these theories or models are connected to groups rather than cultures' (1999:43). However, he retains it because the term cultural model or schema is used in the relevant literature. Despite my discomfort with the controversial notions of culture, I have also used the term 'cultural model' to avoid confusion with other uses of the term 'discourse'.

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Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

3.1. Introduction

In Chapter 2 I reviewed the work of literacy and language theorists, such as Fairclough, Gee and Kress who see language and literacy practices as embedded in sociocultural contexts and linked to identity and the notion of 'interest'. The specific questions guiding my research are detailed in Chapter 1. The project sets out to investigate the relationship between the academic curriculum and student voices in the first year of studying economics. The focus is on the extent to which students are building on the resources and understandings that they bring with them as they try to appropriate the discourse of economics. In addition the research probes the changes that occur in academic writing over the first year. In Chapter 1 I argued that a study that sets out to accomplish this, needs to explore the social context from which the students come as well as the social structures and discourse practices of the new context to which they are seeking to gain entry.

Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) advise that researchers should fit their approaches to the purpose of the study.

What is important for researchers is not the choice of a priori paradigms, or methodologies, but rather to be clear about what the purpose of the study is and to match that purpose with the attributes most likely to accomplish it. Put another way, the methodological design should be determined by the research question (1991:14).

My research questions and the theoretical paradigm described above have informed my choice of the interpretive qualitative tradition as the methodological approach to my analysis.

In Part One of this chapter I briefly describe the interpretive qualitative paradigm and the main characteristics of the framework for discourse analysis, which I have used. I look at some of the criticisms of this framework and describe the ways in which I am using it. I then look at the role of the researcher and some of the

evaluative criteria used to judge qualitative research. In Part Two I describe the research process, including the pilot study, selection of students as case studies and the process of data collection and analysis.

PART ONE

3.2. Interpretive Qualitative Research

It is sometimes argued that the quantitative-qualitative dichotomy is a crude oversimplification and that research projects often combine both techniques. However, Nunan (1993) suggests that the distinction is a philosophical one because different understandings of the nature and status of knowledge underpin the development of the quantitative and the qualitative research traditions in their pure forms. Underlying the quantitative paradigm is the positivistic belief that research will uncover an objective truth, whereas the qualitative tradition questions the notion of an objective reality. It is essentially my understanding of knowledge as socially constructed that has guided my choice of the qualitative research tradition.

Guba and Lincoln (1989) argue that researchers often confuse tools and techniques (methods) with overall guiding strategies (methodologies). The same research *techniques* can be used by researchers with a positivist orientation and by those with an interpretive orientation. For instance, researchers using an etic (outsider) approach would analyse the data according to external perspectives using categorisation schemes determined in advance by the researcher, and would interpret data according to external criteria. Conversely a researcher who was using an interpretive qualitative approach would make use of the concept of 'thick description' which implies an emic (insider) perspective and requires that the description involve the actors' interpretations (Davis 1995).

Researchers (Hammersley 1995, Davis 1995 and Erickson 1986) indicate that meanings of the terms 'ethnographic', 'qualitative', 'interpretive' and 'naturalistic' overlap, requiring more precision on my part in the use of these terms. My decision to examine the language of the student texts from the perspective of a functional

theory of languageⁱ necessitated an understanding of the social influences on language acquisition. As Davis (1995) indicates, socio-culturally-oriented qualitative researchers take a semiotic perspective, now referred to as an 'interpretive approach' (Erickson 1986). Erickson indicates that what distinguishes an approach as interpretive is description that involves 'the immediate and local meanings of action, as defined from the actors' point of view' (Erickson 1986:120). In my project 'action' would refer to the students' writing. I have interviewed the case study students and given them the opportunity to act as 'expert witnesses' (Herrington and Curtis 2000) who help me to analyse and interpret their writing. In this way, I believe I have made the 'meanings of action, as defined from the actors' point of view' of central interest.

Davis differentiates between interpretive and ethnographic studies by pointing out that interpretive qualitative studies usually focus on the construction or co-construction of meaning within a particular setting such as the classroom, whereas ethnographic studies focus on 'the shared meaning of a particular social group and/or on interactions among cultural groups' (1995:433). However, she says that these distinctions are being challenged as boundaries around cultures become blurred due to cross-cultural interaction. My students represent different groups from different socio-cultural contexts in South Africa who are co-constructing meaning in the classroom. The research could certainly not be described as a full ethnography. Therefore, following Erickson (1986), I prefer to describe it as 'interpretive' and 'qualitative'.

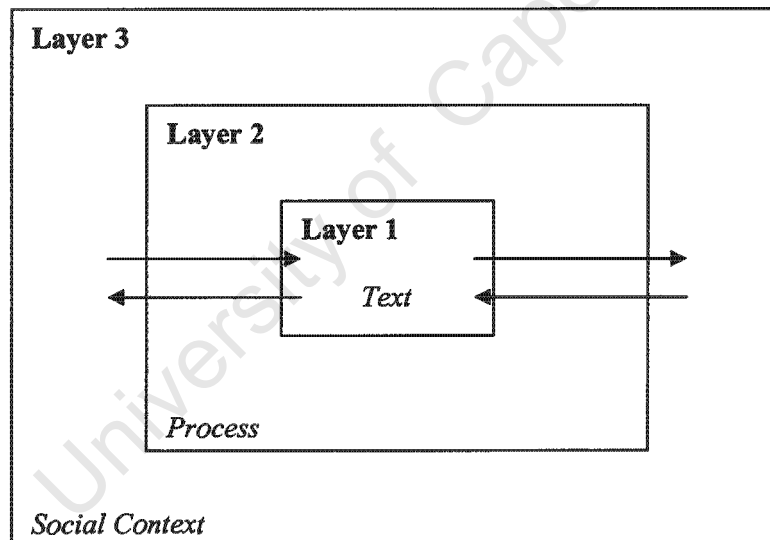
3.3. Framework for Discourse Analysis

Since my research questions call for an analysis of student writing in a particular context, I have chosen to use the framework Fairclough (1989, 1992) has developed for analysing the relationship between a linguistic text and wider social processes. Fairclough's framework comes under the broader description of critical discourse analysis (CDA), which includes a variety of methodological and theoretical procedures (Wodak 2001). One of the defining features of the CDA methodology that make it appropriate for my research, is the focus not only on the text as the

object of inquiry, but on discourse as social practice and therefore on the links between the text and context (Wodak 2001). This is one way in which CDA contrasts to other approaches in discourse analysis.

In addition to a description of text, Fairclough (1989, 1992) calls for an interpretation of the social processes that give rise to the production of the text as well as of the socio-historical conditions within which participants are situated (Fairclough 1989). This multi-layered way of thinking about discourse forms the foundation for his three part model of discourse analysis. The model is illustrated below (cf. Chapter 2):

Figure 3.1. Discourse as text, process and social context (adapted from Fairclough model (1992:73))



Fairclough says that this model with its 'embedded boxes' emphasises the interdependence of the three dimensions of his method of CDA analysis. Thus, it can be characterised as a hermeneuticⁱⁱ approach. According to Fairclough, the text analysis (the inner layer) would require description, while the processing analysis (the middle layer) would require interpretation and the social analysis (the outer layer) would require explanation. Janks' (1997:7) suggestion is that the researcher should move backwards and forwards between the different types of analysis, working with them simultaneously rather than sequentially.

The study analyses and describes the students' texts (inner layer) using the student interviews to provide insights into the processes and practices of their text production. In these interviews, the students assist me with the interpretation of their texts and allow me more of an 'insider's' perspective (the middle layer). For the social analysis or the explanatory outer layer of the model, I have drawn on the student interviews and reflective writings as well as my own observations and experience over many years of teaching in the Academic Development Programme at this institution. This kind of research calls for multiple techniques and presents a challenge, in terms of the knowledge and skill required by the researcher. As suggested by Janks, I work simultaneously, rather than sequentially with the different types of analysis. Therefore Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 involve moving backwards and forwards between description, interpretation and explanation.

Many researchers (Myers 2001, Titscher *et al* 2000 etc.) suggest that the concept of *context*, so central to CDA, must inevitably include sociological, psychological, political and ideological components. Fairclough's notion of 'orders of discourse'ⁱⁱⁱ is useful for understanding the relationships and the shifting boundaries between discursive practices of a social domain. Texts draw on diverse discourse practices, a property of texts that Fairclough describes as intertextuality (cf. Chapter 2). Fairclough (1995:28) sees intertextuality as mediating the relationship between the social context (genre analysis) of a text and the language of a text (register analysis).

...the intertextual analysis maps the text onto the social network of orders of discourse – it identifies genres and discourses that the text draws upon and the ways they are articulated together (1995:28).

Another way in which CDA differs from other sociolinguistic approaches is that 'the social is seen as a field of power, and the linguistic action of socially formed and positioned individuals is seen as shaped first and foremost by differences in power' (2002:35). Meyer says that many critical discourse analysts set out 'to make explicit power relations which are frequently hidden', arguing that CDA scholars tend to determine their concerns in advance and 'play an advocacy role for groups who suffer from social discrimination' (2001:15). My project has similar goals in that I, too, am concerned with social equity. I believe we need to understand more

about unevenness and change in student texts because these texts relate to different social contexts. To do this we need to develop sensitive descriptive resources to enable a deep analysis of student texts and the tools of CDA (particularly Fairclough's framework) can be used very effectively to this end.

However, my approach differs from standard CDA research in that my interest is not in demystifying hegemonic texts, in order to uncover hidden power relations. This does not indicate a lack of interest in power relations. My focus rather is on the ways in which students relate to powerful ideologies such as those of economics, and my research explores the difficulties students have in acquiring these discourses. The research questions whether students are positioned by these discourses and end up reproducing them, or whether they too can transform them. The project also focuses on the ways teachers (both economics and language teachers) can adapt their teaching methods more effectively to address the needs of students from different social backgrounds.

My reservations about standard practices in CDA analysis are similar to, but not as strong as, those of Widdowson (1998) who criticises CDA for being an 'ideological interpretation' and therefore not an analysis: he sees it as prejudiced on the basis of some ideological commitment and argues that it then selects for interpretation (1998:169) such texts as will support the preferred interpretation. Fairclough (1996) counters this accusation by pointing out that, unlike other approaches to discourse analysis, CDA is always explicit about its own position and commitment. My research project has attempted to avoid the problems Widdowson identifies by not selecting texts in order to support a favoured interpretation. I asked students to volunteer to have their texts used for analysis and then made selections so as to ensure that the students chosen for the case study would reflect the diversity represented in the economics class.

Critical discourse analysis has also been critiqued by Blommaert (2001) because he says the treatment of context in some CDA work could be regarded as largely backgrounding and narrative. Blommaert feels that contextual information that needs critical scrutiny is often simply accepted as fact to frame the discourse samples that are to be analysed; he cites examples of *a priori* statements on power

relations, such as 'politicians are manipulators', 'power is bad' (2001:15) which are used to frame the discourse analysis and says that it leads to highly simplified models of social structures and patterns of actions.

My research project has attempted to avoid this pitfall by trying to understand and critique the contexts more fully. My case study students come from very different socio-cultural contexts and I could not presume that my assumptions and interpretations of their texts were correct. I needed to be asking questions about who these students were and why they were using language in particular ways. Attempting to answer questions like these would be impossible without reference to the students themselves. This seems particularly important in the South African context, where students' difficulties with English and with academic writing are often a consequence of language inequality and apartheid schooling. For my purposes then, the 'interpretation' and 'explanation' layers of Fairclough's model necessitated a more qualitative approach in order to gain a deeper understanding of the processes of production of the texts (Fairclough's middle layer) as well as the social conditions under which the texts were produced (Fairclough's outer layer). This, I believe, has been achieved by lengthy interviews with the students that have helped me to understand more about the social context in which they are writing as well as the social contexts from which they come. Then, finally, I have interviewed the key players in the economics department to understand the context in which the data is produced, in terms of epistemological issues, the privileging of particular economic discourses and traditions in the department, course content, teaching methodologies and attitudes to writing (cf. Chapter 4).

Other analytical tools that have been very valuable for my analysis are the tools of inquiry that Gee (1999) labels 'situated meanings' and 'cultural models'. According to Gee, words are given meaning within specific situations and these meanings are linked to social and cultural groups. He emphasises that meanings are not fixed and stable, but constantly developing and changing, as the situation changes. He explains the notion of 'cultural models' as explanations or theories which we use to make sense of our world; these everyday theories are often unconscious and they too are embedded in the practices of the social group to which the learner belongs. My analysis has used these tools to track back and understand how students' use of

situated meanings and cultural models can sometimes assist them in making sense of new concepts, while, at other times they may get in the way of their acquisition of a concept.

3.4. The role of the researcher

Qualitative researchers are often accused of producing data that lacks scientific rigor. But Cameron *et al* (1994) argue that social science is never a neutral, objective inquiry into human behaviour and institutions. Observation is theory-laden because researchers cannot help being socially located people who bring their values and interests to observation. As a white middle class lecturer conducting this research, I brought my own biography and subjectivity to every stage of the research process. They have influenced both the questions asked as well as the methods used to try to find answers. Cameron *et al* (1994:5) would argue that this is not undesirable as they see research as a social interaction and the role of the researcher as just one element in the process. In the same way the researched are not objects, but elements in the interaction since they too have insights into their situations and experiences.

Qualitative researchers agree that procedures must be set in place so as to validate the research, but there is much controversy about how this should be done (see Scott and Usher 1996). Guba and Lincoln (1985) have attempted to substitute different criteria for judging qualitative research so as to complement but not replace traditional positivist criteria. They substitute credibility for internal validity, transferability for generalisability, dependability for reliability and confirmability for objectivity. Scott and Usher (1996) critique Guba and Lincoln's approach because they say that by using these categories, they are implicitly adopting positivist assumptions, thus giving the impression that research is objective, representative of reality and capable of being replicated. They argue that the social world differs enough from the natural world that different evaluative criteria are required. While I agree, in principle, with this argument, I have found some of the tools recommended by Guba and Lincoln useful for ensuring against researcher

bias. This section of the chapter discusses some of the methods used to ensure that my research is both plausible and convincing.

It is necessary to research my own context in order to understand more about the students and the constructs they bring with them. Insights gained from this kind of research will enable those of us involved in language development work at university level to develop more effective ways to address their needs. At the same time, the Language and Communications adjunct tutorial is so closely linked to the microeconomics course, that this research may also impact on the way economics is taught as well as the way language and writing are integrated into the teaching and learning in the course.

There is a definite tension in my dual role as tutor and researcher which leads to consideration of both the advantages and disadvantages that pertain to this. One advantage was not having difficulty gaining access to the research site and being able to get an in-depth understanding of the processes involved in the writing of the assignments. I realised the tremendous advantages of this insider's view when I went on sabbatical leave in second semester and had to work from outside of the teaching and learning context. A second benefit is that the findings of this research should feed back into and improve the teaching in both the language module and the economics course.

One of the disadvantages is that six of my case study students were in my language and communications tutorial for the first semester and, therefore, saw me as their tutor when I was conducting research interviews. In my interviews and discussions with them it was explained that I would not be tutoring them in the interview sessions, that I was playing a different role as a researcher, and that we were jointly conducting an investigation into their writing. Although their sense of me as their tutor probably never disappeared, we developed a good, open relationship. The students probably saw the research partnership in a positive light. It boosted their self-confidence and they felt proud that they were getting further individual attention paid to their essays^{iv}. It was certainly a valuable experience for me, not only for my research purposes but because the interviews provided the opportunity

to get to know the students really well and to observe them both in the classroom and outside of it.

Researching both my own context (the language and communications tutorials) and a context that had become fairly familiar to me over the past six years (the economics course), necessitated ensuring against researcher bias. For this purpose I have used a technique referred to by Guba and Lincoln as

debriefing by peers i.e. systematically talking through research experiences, findings and decisions with non-involved professional peers for a variety of purposes – catharsis, challenge, design of next steps or legitimation, for example (1989:109).

Cameron *et al* support this procedure. They indicate that because researchers bring their own values and interests to observation, ‘the social scientist must validate her understandings and interpretations with the researchers of which she is part...’ (1994:12). Firstly, I have discussed my research experiences with non-involved peers as frequently as possible; colleagues have read and given feedback on written drafts of this thesis, and I have presented my findings in seminars and colloquia in order to receive feedback from peers.

Secondly, I have tried to establish research credibility by prolonged engagement, persistent observation and triangulation (Guba and Lincoln 1985, Davis 1995) to build trust with respondents and test for misinterpretation introduced by both researcher and researched. Davis (1995) says that most interpretive qualitative studies take a year or more. Most of my data was collected over the period from March to October 2001, but the period of data collection was extended to include interviews with the students in October 2002. In these meetings I reported back to them on my research process and we reviewed their literacy practices during two years of university study to prepare them for writing a literacy reflection. This project uses multiple examples of student writing on diverse assignments as well as interviews and tutorial observation, a process which Davis (1995) and Vulliamy *et al* (1990) have described as triangulation. Because many of my case study students are African language speakers (2 Zulu speakers, 2 Xhosa speakers and 1 Sotho speaker^v) and have sometimes found it difficult to express their ideas in English, I

have encouraged them to use words and phrases from their own languages. Two of my colleagues, Bongi Bangeni and Mncedisi Mashigoane, who are first language Xhosa speakers, have both explained terms and facilitated my own understanding of some cultural issues.

The interviews allowed me to gather insights into the processes of production and interpretation that students had been through in their reading and writing. However, sometimes information gleaned in interviews led me to rethink my textual analysis. Therefore I found that in doing my investigation, I had to move back and forth between the interview (collaborative) process and my own independent analysis. I observed that students sometimes found it difficult to explain why they had written something in a particular way because their writing processes were simply not conscious enough. This was exacerbated by the fact that many of the students in my case study were speakers of English as an additional language. On these occasions, it was necessary to fall back on doing my own interpretations and analyses.

Cameron *et al* (1994) recognise that the researcher moves between interactive analyses (emic) and more independent solitary analysis (etic). However, they emphasise the importance of a 'feedback session' with the research subjects in order for the researcher to share his/her findings and get feedback on them. In the cyclical process of this research, I returned to the essays we had discussed in earlier interviews to share my findings and check my independent interpretations and analyses with the research subjects. This is a particularly valuable way of making one accountable to one's informants. It seems similar to what Guba and Lincoln (1985:109) have called 'member checks' i.e. 'referring data and interpretations back to data sources for correction/verification/challenge'.

The final interviews conducted in October 2002 also acted as 'feedback sessions', while the literacy reflections that they wrote subsequent to these interviews gave them the opportunity to review their perceptions of their literacy acquisition and provided useful data for my research project.

PART TWO

3.5. The research process

The following narrative of my research process explains the pilot study, the selection of students and the processes of data collection and analysis. Through the research process I have tried to gain a sense of the socio-cultural histories of my students and the ways in which they are negotiating the new academic context. In addition the research has required that I develop insights into the culture and politics of the department and the power play behind their decisions. It has also been necessary to familiarise myself with the thinking behind curriculum design, teaching methodologies and choice of textbooks. But perhaps one of the greatest challenges of the project has been making the discourse of economics accessible to language specialists and the discourse of linguistics and literacy studies accessible to economics specialists.

3.5.1. The Pilot study

In 2000 I conducted a fairly extensive pilot study, observing ten tutorials in the economics class and interviewing twelve students and one tutor. In addition, I collected and analysed the final assignment these students wrote on a multimedia project called the 'Industry Research Project' which was run in the Language and Communications module in ECO100A in the second semester of 2000. This pilot project was very valuable, because it shifted the focus of my research.

The tutorial observation provided me with very useful insights into the problems and politics of classroom observation. However, the way tutorials were structured in economics did not give me the anticipated opportunities for observing the students interacting with the academic curriculum. Tutorials, both in the mainstream and the extended programme, follow the same format. Students complete and hand in 60% of the weekly assignment before the tutorial; these are then marked by tutors and returned to students at the start of the session. The remaining 40% of the assignment

consists of questions for discussion during the class. However, in practice, tutorials are structured so that tutors spend most of the time during the tutorial going over the sections of the assignments that have already been marked and re-teaching the concepts that have not been understood. Therefore the classroom was dominated by tutor-talk and there was not much real discussion or interaction between students or between students and the tutor. Where there was classroom talk, it seemed to be dominated by students who were English speaking and from more privileged schooling backgrounds. This censoring of student discourse in the economics tutorial prevented the collection of much useful data for my research project (cf. 4.4.).

On the other hand, my analysis of the written assignments provided a very rich source of data for the project. Interviewing the students about their written work allowed me to develop my interviewing skills, and I learned that it was important to interview students *after* a detailed text analysis that enabled me to probe and check whether my interpretations were correct. Thus the students were becoming partners in researching their writing because they were able to assist in the identification of discourses and the analysis of the text.

Interpretive studies adopt a cyclical process, by which the design is constantly emerging and the study may change direction in terms of the questions being asked and the theoretical perspectives which frame it. The pilot study for this project was the start of this cyclical process and the PhD project was designed on the basis of what I learned from the pilot. For instance, I found it necessary to alter some of my original research questions. Although I decided not to include a full analysis of the tutorial observation in the main study, I have illustrated some of the practices of these tutorials by discussing data from the pilot study in Chapter 4.

The final assignments, analysed for the pilot study in 2000, produced some very interesting data which contrasts quite strikingly with the final assignments in 2001 (the essays on monopolies). These assignments were the products of a rather new and exploratory venture into multimedia education and online discussion forums, run as part of the Language and Communications tutorials in 2000, and they seemed to encourage an unprecedented level of participation and creativity from students

(cf. Paxton 2003). These assignments are, however, beyond the scope of this dissertation study.

3.5.2. Selection of students as case studies

I collected data for the project over a period from March 2001 until October 2002. In early March 2001, I called for students to volunteer to act as research subjects for my research project and broadly outlined the purpose of the project so as to establish credibility and receptiveness. Eighteen students volunteered and I arranged to meet with them in groups of three or four. The purpose of these interviews was to get to know students in a non-threatening environment as a preparation for the more detailed study of their writing. My experience of group interviews in earlier research confirmed that students relaxed more in a first interview when they were with their peers, rather than alone with the researcher. The group interviews again proved to be a good move. They were quite informal and helped to break the ice. Students chatted very easily, gaining a better understanding of the research while I learned more about them.

In the meetings we discussed the role they would play in my research project. I explained that the project would involve analysing and interpreting their written assignments in economics and that I would like them to assist me in this process. I said that I saw them as partners in the research process because they would be acting as 'expert witnesses' (Herrington and Curtis 2000) to explain issues in their writing which I might not be able to understand without their help^{vi}. I explained that I would need to select about eight case study students from the group of eighteen. I had decided to do this so as to ensure a range of backgrounds in terms of language, gender, race and schooling and so that the range would reflect the composition of the economics class. All students would be paid a small amount for each interview in return for the assistance they had given me. This has become common practice in ethnographic studies because it is felt that participants are entitled to some kind of return for their time and the contribution they make to the research. I also guaranteed that their anonymity would be ensured. This is regarded as an important ethical issue in research pertaining to schools and universities (Davis 1995).

These initial group interviews mostly provided material for the background biographical descriptions of the case study students. We discussed their home and school backgrounds, why they had chosen to come to this particular university and to study economics. We also discussed some newspaper headlines from the business sections of local newspapers and newspaper cartoons, in order to probe their understanding of common economic concepts, such as how rising prices of air tickets might affect workers' salaries or the effect of declining rand /dollar exchange rates. This allowed me to gain insight into some of the common sense understandings they had brought with them.

From the eighteen students I first interviewed, eight were selected for follow up. Only South African students were chosen because I was interested in the South African educational context. I was also keen to select students who would be likely to complete the year. However, this proved difficult to predict. One of the students, the only white male student, Tony, who seemed very articulate and strong academically, dropped out before mid-year for personal reasons. Philip was then selected, because Tony had not completed any of the assignments. A second student, Ayanda, was diagnosed as having a schizo-affective disease at the beginning of 2002, his second year, and had to be institutionalised for treatment (cf. 5.6.1.). This has meant he had to postpone his studies. I have included him in the study as I had collected all his essays through his first year and conducted extensive interviews with him.

3.5.3. Data Collection

In the data collection phase, I collected all three of the formal coursework assignments for Economics 100A written by the eight case study students. These assignments, which were designed by the convenor of the course and then sent to me and other lecturers for approval, were written in March, May and September. In addition, I assembled short pieces written in the first Language and Communications tutorial where students wrote about their experiences of learning a second language. These accounts have added to the literacy histories gathered from

students in the interview sessions and served as an example of their non-academic writing.

I chose not to tell students which essays would be used in the research, so as to ensure that their participation in my research project would not influence the writers' approach to the task. This was an important consideration in terms of understanding the process of production of the text. Towards the end of the process, they would probably have guessed that all the essays were being used as research data, because I had discussed them all in the interviews. However, it seems unlikely that the research would have impacted on the way the essays were written, because, for the students, the chief motivating factor was that the essays were part of the economics curriculum and were being written for coursework marks.

I interviewed all the case study students, except Philip, after they had written their first two essays and again after the last essay (two interviews per student, each lasting between 45 minutes and one hour). Philip was only selected as the eighth case study student when I discovered that Tony had dropped out of the course. Therefore, when I interviewed him, we discussed all the essays. I tried to arrange the interviews so that they took place after the essay had been completed, but before it had been assessed^{vii}. I did this because I felt that if the students knew their marks it might influence the way the discussion went as they would be too focused on the mark, rather than on other aspects of the essay.

I also tried to ensure that I was not the tutor assessing the essays of the case study students, because I did not want to be seen as sitting in judgement over the essays, but rather, as the researcher working in collaboration with the students to interpret and explain them. In some cases, as the student's tutor, I had discussed the essay with the student at the drafting stage. However, the interview discussion was based on the final version. These interviews were recorded but students were always asked for permission before using the tape recorder. They seemed to become oblivious of the recording as we became involved in discussing the intricacies of their essays.

All the interviews were semi-structured allowing for digressions and long responses from the interviewees. Building trust and establishing rapport is ongoing throughout

the study and I feel that I established a good relationship with them, such that they almost came to regard me as a researcher, rather than a lecturer. Many of the students registered for a course that I offered in the last quarter of 2002, around the time of my final interviews. This provided me with opportunities to teach and interact with the students once again. An outline of the interview questions is provided in Appendix A, but the discussion sessions were fairly flexible and open and we did not necessarily stick to these questions.

We began the interviews by discussing the role of language and literacy in their lives, which languages they spoke at home and at school, literacy in the home and at school, their memories of learning to read and write and their current literacy practices, all matters that would help me to understand the intertextuality in the students' writing. We spoke about their families and school experiences, and their feelings about their present circumstances, their friends, their courses and their relationships with their families. These discussions were mostly chronological, tracing the students' lives from birth to the present day and provided a vivid and textured picture of who the students were. This information has been included in the biographical sketches of the case study students (cf. 5.6.).

We then moved on to discuss the essays and the process they had gone through in writing them, what had assisted the essay writing process and what had not. The linguistic data in the essays was my starting point for discussing the discourse characteristics of the texts. Students were asked to identify parts of the text that had been problematic or troublesome for them as this often provided a lead into the texts. We would discuss issues identified in my initial analysis, so that I could verify interpretations and check on intertextual references. I have mentioned that, because many of the students are speakers of English as an additional language, they sometimes had difficulty explaining their reasons for expressing understandings in a particular way (cf. 3.4.). At these times my inability to speak some of the students' first languages was a drawback for the interviewing process. However, there were many times when our discussions proved to be very enlightening. For instance, one student explained that he felt that the reason his essay had lacked coherence was that he had been drawing on a number of different sources and had had difficulty synthesising from them. I found that the interview process became cyclical in that I

mentioned in the biographical data (5.6.) six of the students were on the Commerce Academic Development Programme and, as one of the lecturers on this programme, I have had access to students' programme evaluation sheets etc., on condition that I maintain student anonymity. All this information has been collated in a portfolio file for each student.

I have collected and read all the necessary course information and data from the economics department as well as statistical information on student marks. In addition I have interviewed six lecturers in the economics department. My interviews and meetings with the two economics lecturers^{ix} who taught on and convened the ECO100A course have extended over a long period and served two purposes. Firstly, these lecturers have assisted me in developing an understanding of the epistemology and methodology of the discipline of economics. Secondly, we have met fairly regularly to discuss student writing and the role of writing in building understanding, difficulties students have with acquiring the discourse of economics and in expressing their understandings of economics, choice of register, text books and teaching methodologies that may or may not contribute to this.

To understand some of the broader political issues beyond the confines of this first year course, I interviewed four members of the department who are not involved with this course. In these interviews I have asked quite critical and searching questions about which economic discourses and traditions are privileged at this university, whether different traditions have different educational implications and what the lecturers' perceptions were of how students respond to highly decontextualised content. I have also tried to get a general sense of how they saw the role of writing in the discipline, what they saw as students' writing problems and how they believed these should be addressed. These interviews have enabled me to collect and analyse the contextual information on the discipline of economics, its institutional discourses, which I present in Chapter 4.

3.5.4. Analysis

categories will overlap. Although I focus explicitly on intertextuality and coherence under the category of 'academic discourse', these concepts are pertinent to all three major categories. For instance, coherence breaks down when students draw intertextually on more informal spoken discourses rather than using the appropriate academic register. However, I have chosen to focus on 'the range of other discourses' as an independent category because as I have indicated, I believe students reveal their 'interests', not only through *what* they write but also through the practices and the discourses they draw on as they write. Furthermore, I believe these borrowings from the past are an important stage in conceptual growth and the development of interim literacies.

Notes:

ⁱ As discussed in Chapter Two systemic functional theory indicates that language is socially shaped, that individuals make choices in terms of form and these choices produce meaning.

ⁱⁱ The hermeneutic circle implies that the meaning of one part can only be understood in the context of the whole and the whole in the context of its parts.

ⁱⁱⁱ Fairclough uses the term 'orders of discourse' to refer to the discursive practices associated with an institution or social domain and the particular relationships and boundaries which obtain between these practices (1995:27).

^{iv} One of the students asked whether he could put the research project down on the CV he was drawing up.

^v These students are all multilingual but the home language for Sibongile and Ayanda is Xhosa, while for Nomsa and Vuyani it is Zulu and for Thabo it is Sotho.

^{vi} Earlier in the chapter, I have described this as the 'emic' approach.

^{vii} It was not always possible for me to get access to the essays and copy them before they had been assessed.

^{viii} Ayanda had been granted a leave of absence from the university in 2002 and Philip had left.

^{ix} The convenor of the course is currently one of the authors of a new first year economics textbook for South African students, for which I am the language consultant. This textbook is to be published by Oxford University Press in time for the 2005 academic year.

Chapter 4: The educational context: Barriers and bridges to access

4.1. Introduction

As I have indicated in Chapter 3, Fairclough's multi-layered model (1992) points to the importance of understanding the social contexts within which these student writers are situated. Any social act such as a written text is embedded in a set of contexts, so that students' written texts are set in their social histories as well as in the new academic context to which they wish to gain access.

This chapter describes the university and the discursive context of economics and the chapter that follows offers a description of the socio-historical backgrounds of the students. Therefore both these chapters contribute strongly to the outer, explanatory layer of the Fairclough model, but the chapters will also, at times, describe the processes of text production and therefore contribute to the interpretative, middle layer of the model.

The explanatory layer is particularly important in a South African context where students' difficulties with English and with academic writing are often a consequence of unequal access to languages and apartheid schooling. The contrasts between the students' backgrounds and the university environment are striking. For many students commerce and economics are seen as the keys to power and status and the pressure to succeed is enormous but, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, the new environment is very alien and the discourses unfamiliar.

Several key questions will inform this chapter:

- a) What is the institutional context in which these texts for analysis are set?
- b) What are the social and literacy practices of the discourses of economics?
- c) What is the approach to teaching 'economic literacy' in the economics department?
- d) How are economics tutorials conducted?

- e) How does the ECO100A course approach the teaching of economics?
- f) What is the role of Language and Communications in the course?

4.2. Institutional Setting

Universities in South Africa are feeling the pressures of a higher education environment that is changing, both nationally and globally. One of the key challenges facing the South African Higher Education system is the need ‘...to redress past inequalities and to transform the higher education system to serve a new social order, to meet pressing national needs and to respond to new realities and opportunities’ (Education White Paper 1997:1.1). The first of these challenges, ‘transformation ...to serve a new social order’ has been high on the agenda at this university and in the 2001 Annual Report, the Deputy Vice Chancellor noted that the number of black students had increased to 48% of the student body. One of the ways in which the university has increased the population of black students has been through funding talented but disadvantaged studentsⁱ. The Alternative Admissions Research Project (AARP) was developed during the apartheid years with tests designed to show the potential of students who would normally not qualify for access to the university on the standard matriculation points scale. The Proficiency Test of English for Educational Purposes (PTEEP) is based on the notion of language proficiency and focuses on the role of language in learning. AARP has had an impressive track record in identifying students who are likely to graduate (Yeld and Haeck 1997, Polakow 1999). It has meant that relatively low-risk but mediocre students have been replaced with potentially excellent, high risk students and it has led to the university having ‘arguably the greatest bipolar distribution of results in the country among its annual new registrations’ (van Pletzen 2001:4). Inevitably in South Africa this division still takes place along racial, socio-cultural, language and class lines.

For students from different social environments, studying at this university presents a multitude of difficulties. The teaching staff is still predominantly white and English speaking, the architecture and traditions are unfamiliar and students face huge difficulties in trying to gain access to the discourses of the academy. In

addition, many of the students entering the university are speakers of English as an additional language (EAL)ⁱⁱ. It is of particular concern that in several programmes/degrees, the discrepancy in throughput rate between English first-language and second language students is currently over 20% (Toward a Language Plan 2003). The university's language policy was reviewed in 2003 but English has remained as the medium of instruction and examination. However the new language implementation plan (Toward a Language Plan 2003) commits itself to ensuring that all students and staff have access to effective literacy in English. At the same time, it recognises that language diversity is a resource and that students' home languages should be valued.

A second challenge for the higher education sector, outlined in the White Paper (1997), is that of '...meeting pressing national needs...', which refers to the need to improve graduation rates. The National Plan for Higher Education (2001) highlights the fact that the tertiary sector is not producing sufficient graduates to meet labour market trends. In future, funding of tertiary institutions will be linked to graduation rates rather than enrolment trends and the proposed graduation benchmark is 25% for three-year undergraduate qualifications (Naidoo 2003). This will indeed be a challenge for the Commerce faculty, where over the four-year period from 1995 to 1998 the average graduation rate for students completing the degree in three years was 14% and only about half of those graduates were black.

There are a number of reasons for poor graduation rates in the faculty, but perhaps the most important factor is the shortage of resources in terms of teaching staff in the faculty. It is difficult to attract accountants, economists and information systems specialists to teaching positions when teaching salaries cannot compare with those in the professional workplace. At the same time, a degree in Commerce has become a very popular option as it is seen as the key to a job and to wider mobility. Every year many more students apply for admission than can be enrolled and in 2003, 4331 undergraduate studentsⁱⁱⁱ were enrolled in the faculty. This leads to enormous teaching and learning challenges because first year classes are very large and the environment is impersonal. The mainstream microeconomics first semester course (ECO100B), which registers about 1500 students annually, is an example of one of these large classes.

4.3. The discourse of economics

The discourse of economics forms one of the barriers to access for all students, but particularly for students from under-resourced environments, and one of the keys to providing better access is to make the 'ways of knowing' of the discipline explicit. Ballard and Clanchy (1988:8) approach academic literacy from an anthropological point of view and they point out that the cultural understandings of the discipline 'mediate crucially between the students' own knowledge and intentions, and the knowledge and potential meanings that exist within the university'. However it is often difficult for discipline specialists to do this mediating, because the 'culture' is so intuitive to them and because making beliefs and values explicit is not easy: 'it means objectifying our own culture, making a deliberate act of imaginative and intellectual disengagement' (Ballard and Clanchy 1988:13). Therefore it is often the role of the language specialist to investigate what it means to think like an economist and uncover the tacit rules of the discourse, in order to make it known to the students (See Johns 1997).

This has become my task as the language specialist in the extended first year course in microeconomics (ECO100A). Over the last seven years I have worked closely with the two economics specialists who have convened the course. In the process of this partnership I have endeavoured to build an understanding of what the literacy practices of the discipline are and how they are embedded in the discourse, in order to assist students. For this study I have extended the focus in an attempt to get a broader vision of the department, its beliefs, values and teaching activities. I observed ten hours of economics tutorials in both the extended course (ECO100A) and the mainstream course (ECO100B) and recorded these on an audio-tape recorder. In addition, I conducted interviews with four members of the economics department who have taught undergraduate mainstream courses at first, second and third year levels but who have never taught with me in the extended course. Finally, I analysed five published professional articles in order to understand writer stance in economics research articles.

In the section that follows, I discuss some of the literacy practices which my informants and/or I have found to be unfamiliar or difficult for students of economics. These are:

- the beliefs, values and attitudes which economists (lecturers and textbooks) present to students;
- the discourse practice of abstract modelling in economics;
- the language of modelling;
- the genre of the economics textbook;
- writer stance in economics writing.

4.3.1. Beliefs, values and attitudes

Economics seems to straddle the boundaries of hard vs. soft^{iv} and pure vs. applied dimensions of academic disciplines (Becher and Trowler 2001). It started out as a predominantly soft discipline but after the Second World War it began to aspire to the scientific standards of the natural sciences, because it was felt that objectivity and mathematical precision would give greater scope and credibility to the discipline. Since then economics has become more strongly theory-orientated and mathematically sophisticated and thus 'harder' (Becher and Trowler 2001).

In attempting to categorise the social features of knowledge communities, Becher and Trowler (2001:5) identify the 'convergent' and 'divergent' dimensions, describing economics as a convergent or 'tightly knit' discipline because there is a clear consensus about method of judgement, a common basic training and a sharing of the same fundamental principles. They claim that because of this convergence, economists are favourably placed to advance collective interests and this has meant that they have a privileged status and are often seen as an academic elite.

Gee (1996) observes that discourses are related to distribution of social power, and that having fluency in a dominant discourse such as economics leads to the acquisition of social goods in a society. He notes that, as one takes on a dominant discourse like that of economics, one often finds that beliefs which are central to other discourses with which one is familiar become marginalised. I note, in Chapter

5, that students often do their utmost to hide the conflicts and tensions they experience in acquiring the new discourse of economics, but that these tensions do reveal themselves from time to time.

My interviews with economics staff provided further insights into the beliefs, values and attitudes of economists. The discussion that follows will show that my interview questions often led to shifts between the explanatory level and the interpretative level of the Fairclough model; for instance, the interview conversation might move to a consideration of how beliefs, values and attitudes can affect the students' interpretation and production of text.

I questioned economics staff in my interviews about the discourse tradition taught in the economics department and whether teaching a particular knowledge structure, such as the neo-classical tradition, had implications for education. All the lecturers agreed that there is an uncritical reliance on neo-classical economics in the first year textbook, which has the effect of naturalising the neo-classical paradigm. No alternative theories are presented and students tend to assume that 'this is economics'. Interviewee A felt that because the textbook presents a strong 'free market' perspective, students from working class backgrounds might experience some conflict in taking on the new ideologies. Interviewee C felt that students did not experience these conflicts in first year, but later in their studies. Interviewee D believed that in order to think critically students needed a strong foundation in neo-classical economics. The neo-classical paradigm is good at forcing students to develop analytical skills and, as she pointed out, 'to argue with the enemy you need to understand the enemy's point of view'. However, she felt that it is unfortunate that once the foundation is established, students don't have an opportunity to critique it until they get to postgraduate level. Both she and interviewee B felt that at this university there were fewer and fewer students who question values like those of self-interest, profit-maximisation, etc. This may be because recently the number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds has been declining at the university^v. In the post-apartheid era it has been seen as a very elitest institution; the fees are higher than at other institutions in the country and even students on financial aid have to pay the family contribution, all of which has led to a drop in the number of working class students who enrol.

A previous course convenor of ECO100A expressed the opinion that the consensual view that is projected in the textbooks is by no means a true reflection of the discipline, giving students a false impression because the discipline is fraught with dissension and debate. Many of the interviewees felt that it was a problem that there was no recognition of historical perspective of economic thought in current textbooks, such as Economics (McConnell and Brue 2000), or in first year courses. Interviewee C said that the different schools of thought were touched on in second year, but not in a focused way, and students were so busy trying to understand the basic Keynesian model that the bigger ideological picture was lost on them. It was thus not until postgraduate studies that ideological perspectives were discussed and she felt that the absence of a historical perspective left many students confused.

4.3.2. The discourse practice of abstract modelling

When economists talk of 'theory' they mean an abstract mathematical model, which is often presented in the form of a graph or diagram. Abstract modelling is a new practice to first year students of economics and a number of economists and educators (Papps and Henderson 1977, Hewings and Henderson 1990, Hewings 1990 and Meyer and Land 2002) have identified economic models as a potential source of difficulty to students.

Economists employ the notion of *ceteris paribus* (controlling all variables) and test their hypotheses in an abstract world but the 'real' world to which findings are applied is, in fact, far more complex. In first year economics textbooks, this discrepancy leads to shifts between the concrete world of reality and the ideal world of their models so as to illustrate generalisations, and these shifts are not always made clear. This can be confusing to students unless they understand that economics is a social construct and that models are approximations of what really happens in the economy.

Meyer and Land (2002) found that economics educators in British tertiary institutions described modelling as a 'threshold concept' or one that opens up a new

and previously inaccessible way of thinking about something. One of their respondents commented on the difficulties of modelling in economics in the following way:

Within Economics I sense that sometimes students see abstract models as abstract models and don't see the link between them and the real world so that students would be quite happy talking about problems of inflation, unemployment and so on, but as soon as you say "Good lets have a look at the model", they sort of switch off. They think that's a completely separate issue. "I don't want to do the model, I just want to talk about inflation or unemployment" so the idea that models which look abstract – can be looked at abstractly – actually talk about the real world, perhaps that is a crucial factor. I mean they tend to put models into one box and then the discussion about the policy issues in another box. They don't necessarily see that the two must be linked. Perhaps that's a threshold issue... (ETL Respondent 4) (Meyer and Land 2002:12).

I did not specifically ask about modelling in my interviews with economics staff, but interviewee D did point out that she thought the language used to explain the model did not always need to be so complex and that it was sometimes used to obscure the fact that the model is not a very good one; it does not work very well. However, because in the first year textbook, information is reified as fact, students are indoctrinated to think that the model is always right. No alternative models are presented to students to show that there is more than one model and they are not told that the one they have been taught may be limited.

4.3.3. The language of modelling

The method of abstract modelling in economics is matched by abstractions in the language. Mason (1990) has developed a linguistic analysis of economics writing to show how features of the abstract language of economics are used to present the model of supply and demand. She found that this abstract language involves changes in word class, use of the passive voice, metaphor and personification, noting that the use of this kind of language tends to leave gaps in the message which can be confusing to the learner. Hewings and Henderson (1990) take this analysis further by using computational text analysis of two economics textbooks to identify the frequency of the use of these features of 'abstract' language. They found that

intransitive forms, nominalisations and passives were most frequently used to remove the agents in economics writing.

I have chosen an extract from McConnell and Brue (1999), the textbook used in the ECO100A course, to illustrate the way in which features of transitivity^{vi}, mood systems of the verb^{vii} and nominalisations^{viii} are used in order to develop the model of supply and demand. Key to the development of this model is the mathematical aspect represented in the graph:

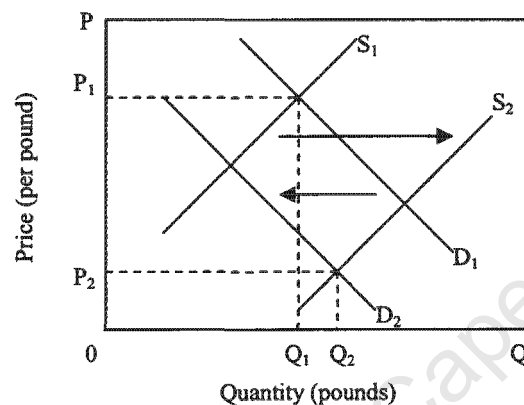


Figure 4.1

The demand for pink salmon

Since the early 1970's the supply of pink salmon has increased and the demand for pink salmon has decreased. As a result, the price of pink salmon has declined, here (in the graph) from \$60 to \$10 a pound. Since supply has increased more than demand has declined, the equilibrium quantity of pink salmon has increased, here from q_1 to q_2 (McConnell and Brue 1999).

By using 'demand' as a noun, the need for a subject for *demand* is avoided. This allows the writer of the text to develop the technical apparatus of the supply and demand model of price that is being built; however the absence of actors creates gaps in the message. Similarly, verbs like *increased*, *decreased*, *declined* do not have a person or thing acted upon because they are intransitive. Again, this allows the writer to concentrate on development of the supply and demand model and, as Hewings and Henderson (1990) indicate, isolating the model from any direct human causality may facilitate the process of generalisation. In my experience this problem reveals itself when students, confused about the absence of an agent, refer to 'demanders demanding' as in the following extract from a student's text:

Supply is able to supply only up to 6000 because increase in tax decrease demand...tax also decrease demanders who will fall and supply price will also fall because there are less demanders (illustrated in Paxton 1998).

The extract from McConnell and Brue (1999) also illustrates the use of nominal groups such as *the equilibrium quantity of pink salmon*, which is shorthand for a much more lengthy explanation of the concept. In order to interpret this compression, students need to carry with them the workings of the supply and demand graph. Hewings and Henderson (1990) point out that abstraction is expected and, in fact, necessary in academic writing, but what is unusual is 'the extent of the reliance on such forms of usage in elementary economics' (1990:45). However, it is important to note that the language of the McConnell and Brue (2000) textbook uses fewer abstractions and is a lot more accessible than the language in the extracts from Lipsey (1983) and Samuelson and Nordhaus (1985), which are analysed in Hewings and Henderson (1990). Possible reasons for the increased accessibility are that the new textbook makes less use of the passive and uses fewer long nominal groups than the older books. Many of my interviewees in the economics department supported my suggestion that the language used in first year economics textbooks is changing.

The change in the language of the textbook coincided with the fact that textbooks have become increasingly visual over the past few decades. In order to explore this issue, I conducted a brief comparison of the presentation of models/diagrams in two textbooks, the current ECO100A textbook, the 15th edition of McConnell and Brue (2000) and an older textbook, Mabry and Ulbrich (1989). I found that in the 14 page chapter on monopolies in Mabry and Ulbrich, the authors used only 7 graphs, while the current textbook uses 12 graphs in an 18 page chapter on the same topic.

As the textbook pages in Appendices C and D illustrate, the graphs are larger in proportion to text in the new textbook (Appendix C), and the graphs are much clearer and easier to follow because there has been more effective use of a variety of colours to present the different and quite complex graphic curves. In addition, in the current textbook the graphs have been foregrounded on a different colour background and drawn on squared graph paper. These details of layout and presentation point to the high content value of the visual in the new textbook. More

information, including a Quick Quiz, is provided adjacent to the diagram in the new textbook and there is less information in the body of the text. All these changes are indications that the function of the visual has changed in the newer textbooks and now carries more of the ideational function. Words no longer carry all the responsibility for content and teaching because the visual is doing more of this work. These changes confirm research by Kress and others (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, Jewitt and Kress 2003, van Leeuwen and Humphrey 1996), which indicate that textbooks are changing and that the visual mode is becoming more salient. However the visual aspect is beyond the scope of my study and I will not be exploring it further.

4.3.4. The genre of the economics textbook

Introductory economics textbooks, like physics, chemistry and biology textbooks at the first year level, tend to present a harmonious ideological and methodological picture of the discipline. This is done in order to simplify and avoid confusion (Myers 1992) but also, as Klamer (1990:131) observes, in the case of economics, to 'convey the impression of consensus among economists, of a discipline that meets the standards of a hard science'. Brown (1993:70) shows how Bakhtin's concept of canonization provides a framework for understanding how economic concepts have been formed from the 'heteroglot discourses and multivariate voices of different historical periods'. She argues that the standard introductory textbook has become monologic and is a prime exemplar of 'canonizing discourse'. Students get no sense of the ways in which economic researchers conduct their inquiries or that economics 'involves the art of argument and that disagreement is the spice of economic discourse' (Klamer 1990:152). Textbooks achieve this by 'their scientific employment of graphs and equations; by their avoidance of uncertainty and controversy; and ... by their longevity' (Swales 1993: 223). Myers (1992) points to the absence of hedging^{ix}, the lack of references to the primary literature and the wide use of the present tense as some of the techniques chosen by textbook writers to convince their readers of the certainty of what they are describing. The following two examples from McConnell and Brue (1999), the first year economics textbook, which is now in its 15th edition, illustrate the absence of hedging, use of the present

and future tenses (underlined) and provide a sense of the 'texture' of a typical first year economics textbook:

Example 1:

In any specific time period, each buyer of a product will derive less satisfaction (or benefit or utility) from each successive unit of the good consumed. The second Big Mac will yield less satisfaction to the consumer than the first, and the third still less satisfaction than the second. That is, consumption is subject to diminishing marginal utility. And because successive units of a particular product yield less and less marginal utility, consumers will buy additional units only if the price of those units is reduced (1999:43).

Example 2:

Self-Interest

The primary driving force of capitalism is self-interest. Each economic unit attempts to do what is best for itself...Workers attempt to maximize their utility (satisfaction) by finding jobs which offer the best combination of wages, fringe benefits and working conditions. Consumers, in purchasing a specific product, seek to obtain it at the lowest possible price... (1999:63).

Discussing elementary textbooks in the sciences, he says that textbooks 'reify and codify statements as facts': statements do not find their way into textbooks because they are facts, but rather, a statement is taken as a fact because it is in the textbook.

It is important at this point to consider what impact the features of the textbook genre have on the processes of interpretation and text production. The aim of the textbook writer is to make the textbook easier to understand. However, the monologic nature of textbook writing does not prepare students for other texts they may have to read. Neither does it foster critical reading. Hyland (2000) points out that the metadiscourse^x practices used by textbook writers to assist knowledge transfer may make it difficult for students to develop the appropriate rhetorical skills in their writing. Students learn how to write academic arguments by reading well-structured models of economics writing, and by understanding how knowledge is constructed and contested. Therefore if students have only ever been exposed to the canonized discourse of the economics textbook, they may have difficulty learning to present an argument in an economics essay. If they have had no good models to demonstrate the multivoiced nature of texts, they may have little sense of how to

weave together and acknowledge the voices of different authorities in their academic essays.

4.3.5. Writer stance in economics writing

Students also need to position themselves in relation to other authorities. If novice writers are to learn how to establish an authorial presence in their texts, they will have to develop a sense of how expert writers do this. However, I have found very little research on this aspect of economics writing, other than an article by Bloor and Bloor (1993), who found considerable variation in the exploitation of hedging devices in research articles and came to the conclusion that the issue of hedging in economics writing is very complex.

Many researchers have classified economics as a 'hard discipline'. Therefore Hyland's (1999 and 2000) research into disciplinary discourses, particularly his comments on the discourses of the 'hard disciplines', seem relevant to this discussion. Hyland says that conventions of stance (authorial presence) illustrate the discourse community's beliefs about knowledge, and that in the hard knowledge areas 'researchers typically conceal their rhetorical identities behind a cloak of objectivity, masking their involvement with an array of linguistic detachment' (1999:115).

This reluctance to portray a prominent authorial presence is achieved in a number of ways. Firstly, there is little use of attitude markers (expressing the writer's affective attitude to propositions e.g. *I agree, we prefer*) and relational markers (concerned with the writer's attempt to invoke reader participation e.g. *Consider, let us now turn to*). Secondly, although all disciplines use hedges, they are used more frequently in the soft disciplines. When hedging their claims, writers in the hard knowledge areas tend to suppress the acting subject and to use modal verbs. In this way they can be less specific in attributing a source to a viewpoint e.g. *It seemed to be possible to discern...* (Hyland 1999).

Hyland (1999) indicates that the choice of first person allows writers to construct a more authoritative discursive identity and adopt a more accountable stance. He suggests that suppression of personal agency is considered a means of concealing the social constructedness of accounts in academic writing which is normally associated with the sciences.

A brief survey of published professional economics articles has confirmed that much of what Hyland (1999 and 2000) indicates about authorial presence in the hard knowledge areas of the sciences, engineering and biology, is true also of writing in economics. In the survey I found that the authors avoided the use of the first person, instead making frequent use of third person markers such as *The purpose of this study...is, ...it could be argued..., It is clear that..., ...it is advocated.* When attitude markers were used to express the writer's affective attitude to propositions they were used in the third person: *Many of the assumptions are open to debate but in the view of the authors, the assumptions are on the conservative side.* I found no examples of relational markers in the five articles surveyed. An extract from the conclusion to one of these articles illustrates how the writer, while presenting his material objectively, uses emphatics^{xi} to make a strong claim so that the reader is left in absolutely no doubt of the writer's position on the South African government's Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy:

While many factors influenced the performance of the economy during 1996-8 there is a prima facie case that the GEAR policy package made a significant contribution to the collapse of growth in South Africa, owing to its emphasis on deficit reduction...

My discussions with staff in the economics department provided further insights into the ways that professional economists establish authorial presence in their writing. The convenor of the ECO100A course said that the first person singular is used rarely, if at all in economics writing but he pointed out that expert writers might sometimes use the plural 'we'. The other interviewees agreed that it is unusual to see the first person used in economics research and interviewee D commented that the reason for using 'we' is that it allows researchers to *share the blame*. However there does not seem to be consensus about what lecturers or tutors

expect from students. I have quite often observed that the economics tutors in the ECO100A course indicate in written feedback on students' essays that the use of the first person is not acceptable in economics. In contrast, some of the lecturing staff were more flexible. Interviewee D indicated that she did not have a problem with students saying *I think that...* in an essay but she felt that it was a problem if the student was taking someone else's ideas and claiming them as her own. Interviewee B seemed to change his mind as we talked through the issue, but he eventually concluded that it depended on the genre of the piece of writing, as this extract from his interview shows:

Interviewer: *What is your attitude on the use of the first person?*

Interviewee D: *I discourage it at undergraduate and postgraduate*

Interviewer: *And postgraduate?*

Interviewee D: *Yes. At postgraduate a lot depends on the type of the piece of writing. If, particularly it's an argumentative piece then that's okay. Come to think of it in the last batch of second year essays that I marked, they gave a lot of their opinions. I didn't mind that because the question was titled around the appropriate measures for the policy framework. I was pleased that they could have their own ideas.*

Interviewee A felt that she was probably *on the fringe*, but said that she wanted to see the emergence of students' *voices* in their writing particularly at postgraduate (Honours) level. She considered that taking a position did not necessarily mean that they needed to use the first person but expressed frustration at the fact that students regurgitated information from other authorities and did not take a position. She wanted to see students relate to their own contexts and understandings more – to contextualise their writing. These discussions and my observations of the style prevalent in economics journals seem to indicate that students may be receiving mixed messages about how to take ownership of their ideas and establish an authorial presence when writing in economics.

4.4. Literacy instruction in undergraduate economics

In this section I will discuss the notions of literacy and literacy instruction held by academics in the economics department. I will also describe what I learned about the social practices of economics tutorials during my pilot study in which I observed

these tutorials. This will provide some background for the initiatives we have taken to integrate academic literacy instruction in the ECO100A course and to design the Language and Communications tutorial which is offered as an adjunct to the first year extended course in microeconomics.

Many academics in the economics department still seem to understand 'language' and 'literacy' to mean surface grammatical correctness, failing to recognise that literate behaviour grows out of a set of cultural understandings in their discipline. Literacy is seen simply as the ability to read and write and they assume that once students have learned this set of skills they can simply transfer them to any context. They do not realise that all students, but particularly those from historically excluded groups, may need to be taught literate behaviours and given opportunities to try out the very complex practices of this discipline. One lecturer commented to me recently that students *don't know how to read anymore* and indicated that he wanted to test reading ability in his next economics exam, never considering that it might be necessary to teach before testing.

Until recently essay writing has been avoided in the undergraduate curriculum because of the difficulties of marking and moderating large numbers of written assignments and detecting plagiarism. Interviewee B confirms this but also reveals the common assumptions of many staff that writing is not specifically related to ways of knowing in economics and that it could be *picked up somewhere else*:

You see the incentives and the whole thing, the department is against that because the trend is against that. The trend says that it is less writing. It seems to me the assumption is that it'll get picked up somewhere else.

However the department is changing. There is a group of new and enthusiastic young lecturers and some of these, including Interviewee B, have been breaking the trend and introducing essays and writing assignments at both the second and the third year level. Interviewees A and C have integrated some teaching of writing into their curricula. Interviewee B said that even some of the senior lecturers had indicated that writing needed to be taught by means of written feedback:

Yeah we had an interesting debate last year...I raised the issue in a staff meeting with respect to the Honours papers. What was the role of the supervisors? Were we expected to correct these language issues because I find that to be such an onerous task and, interestingly, two of our most senior members of the department, the ones who have been here a long time, said yes, it was, that really we couldn't expect the students to have acquired the skills anywhere else. And it was only through liberal use of the red pen showing them what their mistakes were and how to write properly, that they would actually learn. Now I was at that stage mainly thinking about this one Chinese student in particular because I ended up basically rewriting the entire paper... I mean its just where do you draw the line?... I'd like to see them having more opportunity to write, but then they also need feedback...right from the early years. And I think that's where the system has got so large in first and second year, that we have simply got out of the way of giving them many written things.

Nevertheless, the mainstream first year course, ECO100B, still offers no formative experience in essay writing and assessment remains heavily weighted in favour of multiple choice type questions (75% of final mark), which do not provide students with a good foundation in economic literacy. I have argued elsewhere for a broader and more diverse range of assessment measures in economics first year classes because multiple choice questions develop only reading and not writing skills (Paxton 2000).

I became interested in the social practices of economics tutorials because it seemed that tutorials rather than lectures might be the environment in which students would have opportunities to 'try out' and practise the new discourse of economics, while the weekly tutorial assignment might provide possibilities for developing academic writing. Therefore as part of the pilot study for this research project (cf. 3.5.), I obtained permission to observe four economics tutors in the first year microeconomics tutorials, who had been recommended to me as 'good and experienced tutors'. As I indicated in Chapter 2, constructivist theories emphasize that knowledge is constructed by the student through an interaction between what is already known and new experience and this knowledge construction is helped by social interaction. Classroom observation theorists, such as Edwards and Westgate (1994:1), note that classroom language is central in the process of learning. Talk gives students opportunities to make their meanings clear to themselves and to others. This practice seems particularly important for students who are not only new to the discourse, but are learning in a language that is not their mother tongue.

As mentioned in my description of the pilot study (cf 3.5) the tutorials all have a set format, which entails reviewing the assignment which students have completed and submitted before the tutorial. The assignment usually takes the form of a number of short answer questions such as multiple choice or true/false questions, followed by a longer 'discussion' question. The tutor spends most of the tutorial focusing on the issues that appeared to be a problem for the students and re-teaching the concepts. Typically the tutor would go around the room repeating the assignment questions, which students had answered for homework and would simply answer by reading from their own scripts. The students' answers often seemed to have been copied directly from the textbook. An extract from one of the tutorials I transcribed illustrates this:

- 1 Tutor: (explaining question 4, the definition of a 'demerit good') ...*yes society*
2 *deems or we feel that a particular thing is bad for us like... something like*
3 *pornography... that's an example most people mention or... drugs. Okay so there*
4 *will be individuals who feel that it might be good for us, I may feel that taking*
5 *drugs is good for me but society as a whole may be against...(class is briefly*
6 *interrupted by a group of students from another tutorial) ... Okay where were we?*
7 *Society places its value on it, deems it bad. It may not be bad. Some people may*
8 *not feel that it is bad. Um... a lot of people [students] said it was bad and I didn't*
9 *give a mark for that and in fact a lot of you would have got 3 out of 4 because you*
10 *said it is bad, you didn't say that society sees it as bad. Do you understand the*
11 *difference there? You don't look very confident there Lusanda? (Student assures*
12 *tutor that he does understand) You do. Okay everybody else? Alright. The final*
13 *definitional question was public goods. Tebogo? What is your understanding of*
14 *public goods?*
15 *Tebogo: (reading from his assignment) consumption of the good by one person*
16 *does not prevent the consumption of the good by another person*
17 *Tutor: that is a very important characteristic of a public good. Okay. Did*
18 *everybody get that? The consumption by one person does not prevent the*
19 *consumption of that good by another person. There's a word for that particular*
20 *characteristic. What is that word? Anybody? Non excludability, okay, sometimes*
21 *the answer is very obvious. Okay that is one of the main characteristics of a*
22 *public good. Can anybody give the other characteristics? (tutor waits for a*
23 *response) Can we measure how much do we each consume of a public good?*
24 *Okay can you take an example? Give us some examples*
25 *Student: Roads*
26 *Tutor: pardon? Roads okay*
27 *Student: streetlights*
28 *Tutor: streetlights yes. We can't measure how much Mark uses a particular road*
29 *or whatever. We can't add a value onto it and we call that non-divisibility. Have*
30 *you got that Sindiswa? (tutorial recorded 17/3/2000)*

The above short extract from Tutor M's tutorial is fairly typical. Tutor M has had experience working with second language students and it is interesting to note the way he not only teaches content but also mediates the language. Here he is explaining the new economics terms, 'demerit goods' (goods that society thinks everyone ought not to have, such as cigarettes) and 'public goods'. However, the consequence of this very structured tutorial format is that the tutor is asking most of the questions and doing most of the talking, even to the point of answering his own questions when no answers are forthcoming. In line 20 he answers his own question and then in line 29, despite the fact that he has given students some clues, he ends up answering his second question. When students do answer questions they frequently regurgitate the answers they have prepared earlier (line 15), which often appear to have been taken directly from the textbook.

It was interesting that as young postgraduate students, the tutors were assuming the traditional classroom 'teacher' roles, despite the fact that there were often only 7 or 8 students in the tutorial and the rooms were arranged fairly informally. For instance, tutors tended to stand or sit at the 'front' of the room and teach, and some, like tutor M in the extract above, were very good at explaining and used the time to teach concepts or problems that had not been understood. However, this inevitably meant that there was limited time for student discussion and interaction. Students were called upon to display a very limited range of skills in tutorials; they were mostly reading from scripts, defining terms or giving yes/no answers.

The last part of the tutorial assignment consists of 'discussion' questions. Answers to these are not completed prior to the tutorial which means that students are not given any practice in doing extended pieces of writing and getting feedback from tutors. Nevertheless, if the questions are used for 'discussion' in tutorials they should provide more interesting opportunities for social interaction and the 'trying out' of the spoken discourse. In one or two tutorials that I observed, students were organised into small groups to work through the questions and report back to the class and it was very clear that students were struggling to find the appropriate words to express themselves in the new discourse. However, in most of the tutorials I attended these discussion questions were left to the last 15 or 20 minutes or tutors

found they ran out of time and never got to the discussion questions. Tutor M's comment at the start of the tutorial which is transcribed above indicates that the discussion questions are not seen as a priority:

Tutor: Alright so if we can get started on tutorial 1 then. So we start with you, Jo. Um okay when we get to the discussion questions I am going to focus primarily on question 1 and question 5 because we may not have time to finish the whole tutorial...

When I reported on my findings from the tutorial observation to a meeting of the economics departmental staff one of the long-standing members of the department explained the historical evolution of the tutorial in economics, as follows:

The purpose of these tutorials was not to introduce discussion, they were introduced in order to prepare students for exams, this is why the assignments take the form of exam type questions

Another member of the department commented that discussion type tutorials could be introduced with students in the mainstream ECO100B course who had completed A levels (a post matric qualification) and were in need of further stimulation. The implication of this observation is that one requires mastery before one can have discussion! It certainly gave the impression that the discourses that students bring with them are not given much space in the academic context of economics and that some members of the department do not consider it important to give students the opportunity to develop an understanding of new concepts through talking and thinking about them (cf. 2.4.).

In reality these are probably just a few isolated voices in the department, because over the last eight years the department and the Centre for Higher Education Development have co-operated in the development of the ECO100A course, thus providing students with opportunities for developing language and literacy through the introduction of double period language tutorials, running as an adjunct to the course.

4.5. Language and Communications in Microeconomics (ECO100A)

The ECO100A course has evolved from a one semester bridging course, Principles of Economics, (Principles) first offered to students on the Commerce Academic Development Programme in 1995. Principles was designed as a foundational course on which future skills would be built. It introduced students to basic, broad principles of economics, while at the same time developing language, literacy and numeracy skills. If students passed Principles, they would advance to the mainstream microeconomics course ECO100C (second semester). This was the first attempt to integrate language and literacy into the economics course and it was at this point that I began to work with the convenor of the course. We designed and developed written course assignments for the Principles course, around which the language and communications tutorials, first offered in 1996, were structured. These two one-hour tutorials aimed to build students' academic literacy with a specific focus on the three economics essays which form part of the coursework mark. This is a similar model to the 'adjunct Content Based Instruction model' described by Johns (1997:83).

In 1999 the Principles course was dropped and the extended two semester microeconomics course 110H was introduced. This change came about because the Principles course followed by microeconomics (ECO100C) had involved a lot of unnecessary duplication of content. The same basic course structure was maintained, but because the writing of the essays was extended over a full year, the new structure provided for language and communications throughout the year and thus there was more time for the development of academic literacy skills. Since 1999, the course has included students who are on the Gateway Programme in Humanities (cf. 5.3.) This has increased the enrolment of the course, which now varies between 150 to 220 students. In addition it has meant that students come from a wide diversity of socio-economic and schooling backgrounds, ranging from some of the best private schools to the poorest rural schools. In a questionnaire sent out in 2000, 39% of the students said English was not their first language and they identified eight other South African languages and Portuguese as home languages.

In 2001 (the year that this study was conducted) the tutorial followed a slightly different format because more and more students who were first language speakers of English were joining the ECO100A course and it was felt that they did not need a full year of language and communications. Therefore we offered an introductory four week course to all students after which they all wrote an in-class essay. This essay (the Transition essay) was used to identify which students needed to continue language and communications for the remainder of the year. Those who were exempted could make use of the Writing Centre if they felt they needed assistance and the economics lecturer and I worked together to present a lecture in preparation for each academic essay.

The Language and Communication course is geared to helping students learn the discourse of economics and develop academic literacy skills. Both the design of the course and our approaches to teaching literacy reflect three major literacy teaching methodologies which have been popular over the last thirty or forty years: the skills based approach^{xii}, the process approach^{xiii} and the genre approach^{xiv}. In my experience it has always worked best to draw on an eclectic mix of approaches. In the Language and Communications course we employ aspects of all three of these methodologies. These approaches to literacy teaching have been influenced by a series of theoretical understandings related to the broader social and linguistic theories which I have discussed in Chapter 2. As teachers on the course, we understand reading and writing in economics as a set of social practices. Through acquiring and learning these practices, students make meaning, gain new understandings and construct new identities. In Language and Communications in economics, we have to deal with a problematic tension. On the one hand, we want students to develop as critical readers with a sense of the contested nature of economics thought, but on the other hand, our ultimate goal is to develop students who are academically literate and successful in economics and this requires that they 'take on' the dominant discourse. At the first year level students are not being asked to contest the economic content; instead it is seen as a set of building blocks which they must acquire before they move on.

Students from the more poorly resourced schools have had little experience of working with academic texts (cf. Chapter 5). A primary goal for me has been to provide students with a space in the Language and Communications tutorial, where they can participate and not feel dominated by more fluent students, so that they feel safe to 'try out' the new discourse of economics in a non-threatening environment. We work with students in groups of 20 and encourage them to explore economic understandings through discussion and through informal and formal writing.

4.6. The essays

The Language and Communications curriculum is set out in the course outline (Appendix B) and details are provided in some of the worksheets in the appendices. Therefore in this section I will very briefly describe the topics and aims of the essays, two of which are analysed in detail for this research project, and indicate the ways in which we have responded to some of the language and learning issues in economics, identified in section 4.3.

To introduce students to the new discourse we familiarise them with the notion of social discourses and they do a group exercise where they try to identify a range of different discourses e.g. religious, political, advertising, legal and economic. In identifying these discourses they are encouraged to select the grammatical and lexical clues that led them to their decisions. They also practise 'translating' economics textbook discourse into everyday English and vice versa (cf. worksheets).

4.6.1. The Transition essay

As we prepare for the first ECO100A assignment (cf. Chapter 6: Analysis of first assignment) on South Africa's transition from a more command based to a more market based system, we focus on developing academic reading skills. This involves an introduction to the economics textbook, Economics, by McConnell and Brue. Students are shown how to develop a sense of the themes and structure of a text by looking at headings, subheadings, visuals, introductions, conclusions and

first sentences in each paragraph. Understanding the very organised structure of the text enables students to put together a basic summary or outline of each chapter.

This essay topic introduces students to the notion of academic argument and the additional readings for the essay move them beyond the textbook genre (cf. 4.3.4.) to newspaper and journal articles which introduce them to the multi-voiced nature of genres other than the textbook. The articles tend to be fairly recent and they take a critical look at both the successes and the failures of the ANC's more market oriented policies, particularly the Growth Employment and Redistribution Policy (GEAR)^{xv}. These articles are discussed and summarised.

4.6.2. GDP Essay

The concept of 'growth', and particularly GDP (Gross Domestic Product), is the next theme for discussion and writing, as it coincides with the study of GDP in economics. Students write a short essay for purposes of the duly performed certificate (DP), but not for marks, during which we develop their essay writing skills. This essay also calls for argument and debate as they look at the pros and cons of GDP as a measure of economic and social 'well being'. They continue to build reading skills by reading and discussing articles from economics journals and books that take a critical approach to the notion of economic growth. A final reading looks at GDP in the context of South Africa and shows that since 1994, despite growth in GDP, the gap between the rich and the poor has continued to widen.

The series of classes on essay writing is designed to develop coherence in academic argument. They do this firstly by learning to analyse the requirements of essay tasks (cf. worksheet). They then plan and organise the essay, by mapping the component parts and they are introduced to the concepts of coherence and cohesion in academic writing (cf. Coherence and Cohesion Worksheets in Appendices E and F). Students are provided with models of academic argument and, following the genre based approach, the functions of the genre of academic argument are pointed out and the generic structure is discussed. While reading and writing for the transition essay and

the GDP essay, discussion and debate encourage the development of critical reading and thinking skills. In this process students are introduced to writing from multiple sources and shown how to reference those sources (cf. Appendix G: Referencing) are also introduced to techniques for positioning themselves in relation to other authoritative voices (cf. 4.3.5.). Following the process approach, students are asked to write a first draft of each essay and are encouraged to discuss their early drafts with their language tutors in one-on-one consultations. These drafts are then revised before they are handed in.

4.6.3. Supply and demand essay

Many of these skills are applied once again in the writing of the second ECO100A essay on price theory. But this essay is more analytical and calls for the application of the theoretical model of supply and demand in a particular case study. Because the essay is conceptually challenging for the students, more time is spent working with economics content and concepts. In the preparation for writing this essay, they learn to write explanations for visual diagrams, such as graphs, and how to draw conclusions from them (cf. 4.3.3.). In 2001, the essay considered the case of the rapid rises in the oil price in response to OPEC's curtailment of oil supplies. Students spent time in small groups discussing the background to the oil crisis in order to understand the role of OPEC in the global oil industry as well as the implications of oil price rises. Although some readings were provided, students could also make use of the internet.

4.6.4. Monopoly essay

The second semester focuses on the further application of these skills in the writing of the monopoly essay (cf. essay topic in Chapter 7) but at this stage, much of the scaffolding used to support the writing of the first few essays is withdrawn. Students are expected to analyse the essay task themselves, decide on an appropriate structure of the essay and select some of their own readings. Once again, the economics content is challenging and requires background reading and discussion. In 2001 students were prepared for the writing of this essay by means of a library tutorial

and a series of multimedia based tutorials in the computer laboratory. They were introduced to online discussions on topics relating to monopolies, such as ‘Should we be talking about South African Breweries as a monopoly?’ and ‘Are monopolies good or bad?’. In addition they prepared formal group oral presentations on monopolies, which were presented and assessed before the essay was handed in. Language and Communications tutorials end once the final essay is handed in.

4.7. Effects of this collaborative approach

Thus the ECO100A course, with its specific focus on literacy, has been developed over a long period. Initially I spent considerable time working with economics staff, attending their lectures and team teaching in order to develop an understanding of their academic practices. In addition, it has been important to have a group of language and communications tutors who have gained experience and familiarity with the literacy demands of the economics curriculum.

At the same time, I have worked with the convenors, lecturers and tutors on the economics course to develop a much closer focus on language and writing as a tool for learning and to relate learning to the literacy requirements of the course. In effect we have changed the curriculum objectives and the pedagogy. Through the close working relationship between language specialists and economics specialists lecturers have learned to ensure that they mediate the language of economics through explanation of terms and plenty of relevant illustrations. The lecturing is fairly interactive with both teacher and students asking the questions. The lecture size and appropriate pacing allow for this. At the same time the teaching of writing has become integrated into the course as the course convenors have come to recognise that students learn and consolidate conceptual understanding through writing. The stability of having the same people in the positions of language specialist and economics specialist^{xvi} for an extended period of time has facilitated the success of this collaborative effort. The integration of writing has involved a series of joint exercises, such as collaborative discussion of the design of writing tasks, design of marking schedules which make task requirements explicit, team teaching for mediation of the writing assignment, training of tutors in marking

workshops for assessment and feedback on the essays. Assessment procedures that value both what students write and how they write have been crucial in order for students to realise that communicative skills, such as the coherence of argument, are valued in economics. This has not yet happened in other courses in economics where there is a crucial need for change in the tutorial format and for the tutors to be trained in interactive teaching methodologies.

4.8. Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated the way the researcher moves backward and forward through the explanatory and interpretative levels of the theoretical framework developed by Fairclough. It has focused mainly on the educational context which provides the setting for the student writing that is to be analysed in Chapters 6 and 7. However, the analysis shifts quite frequently between a consideration of the interpretative middle level of the model and the explanatory level. At the interpretative level the focus has been on the thinking, reading and writing processes that students go through as they produce their economics essays. These are sometimes interpretations of students' meaning making processes gleaned from interviews with the economists or my own interpretations based on my experience of teaching in this context over the past eight years.

Notes:

ⁱ In 2001 15% of undergraduate students were provided with financial aid packages.

ⁱⁱ Over the past three years, on average 65% of first-time entering students declared English as their first language on their application forms for this university. The remaining 35% have home languages which include all the official languages as well as many other languages (Towards a Language Plan 2003).

ⁱⁱⁱ Population group profile of undergraduate Commerce students in 2003: 443 Indians, 456 Coloured, 1056 African and 2216 White.

^{iv} 'Hard' vs. 'soft' differences correspond to traditional distinctions between the sciences and engineering as hard knowledge and social sciences and humanities as soft disciplines.

^v 15% of the first year intake were on financial aid in 2000, this dropped to 12.9% in 2001 and 10.6% in 2002.

^{vi} Transitivity refers to whether the verb is transitive or intransitive. Intransitive verbs do not take a direct object complement. The verb 'increased' functions intransitively in the textbook extract in 4.3.3. The use of verbs which function intransitively facilitates the presentation of the economic model because there is no place in the structure ... *supply increased* ... to state who or what caused the increase. The writer is then able to background this information in order to focus on the result of the increase.

^{vii} Mood systems of the verb - whether the verb is active or passive

^{viii} Nominalisation allows a verb or an adjective to be realised as a noun and thus to become a participant in a further process. Thus if we nominalise *supply* we can exclude the participants relating to that process (Who supplied what?) as in the textbook example where the agent of the process of supplying is not mentioned e.g. supply increased.

^{ix} 'Hedges' are words such as 'possible', 'perhaps' which indicate that the writer may not be completely committed to the information being presented (Hyland 1999).

^x Hyland (2000:109) says that he uses 'metadiscourse' to discuss text features 'which explicitly refer to the organisation of the discourse or the writer's stance towards either its content or the reader.'

^{xi} 'Emphatics' such as 'definitely' and 'of course' or adjectives and noun phrases conveying similar meanings show the writer's certainty in relation to his claims (Hyland 1999).

^{xii} The skills-based approach regards writing as a competence or a set of autonomous skills that can be taught and it is assumed that once students have acquired these skills they should be able to transfer them and communicate their understandings in any new context, which they encounter. Students are assisted in mastering the rules of language usage and text organisation, such as topic sentences and paragraph structure. These skills are often taught in a decontextualised way and the focus is on the written product.

^{xiii} The process approach shifts the focus of the teaching of writing from the finished product to the processes which writers go through in getting to that point. Advocates believe that writing is a natural process, therefore it does not need to be taught. Teachers should simply act as facilitators and provide a motivating context, a real purpose and a real audience. Writers are encouraged to follow the steps that expert writers go through in producing a piece of writing, such as drafting, conferencing, editing and publishing. The central theme of the process movement was that writers should be assisted to 'find their own voices' and gain confidence in their ability to write.

^{xiv} The genre based approach recommends that student writers are explicitly taught the ways in which genres work because this helps one understand how knowledge is constructed in different academic disciplines. Students need to understand that different genres are geared for different social purposes and audiences and that genres have different linguistic and stylistic features. Teachers using this approach are expected to be strongly directional because genre theorists believe that students from historically marginalised communities need explicit teaching more than students whose middle class backgrounds may have made them familiar with these genres from the start. Genre theorists believe it is important for students to have a metalanguage with which to talk about language and reflect on it.

^{xv} GEAR has replaced the ANC's original Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which was seen as more socialist in focus.

^{xvi} The current course convenor took up this position in 1999.

Chapter 5: ‘The winner has a vision and he never forgets his past’ⁱ: The social backgrounds of the case study students.

5.1 Introduction

As I have indicated in Chapter 4, each social act such as a piece of writing is embedded in a set of contexts. The students’ written texts are located both in the educational context, which is described in Chapter 4, and within their social histories, which are to be described in this chapter. The students’ ‘interim literacies’ are strongly influenced by their pasts and the conflicting pressures they encounter as they negotiate positions for themselves in the new context and attempt to define new roles and identities to fit their ‘visions’.

Therefore once again this chapter will concentrate mainly on the explanatory level of the Fairclough framework, but with occasional links to the interpretative level of analysis. I will first provide a brief sketch of the diverse South African primary and secondary schooling contexts, identifying each of the case study students in terms of his or her school background. Secondly, I offer some insights into the socio-economic environments from which some of the students are drawn. I will then briefly describe the university programmes for which the students are registered and their academic performance up to the end of their second year. Finally I present brief biographies of each student with a more in depth exploration of the literacy and learning practices of their homes and schools.

5.2. Background information: Schooling

Although the students in this study come from diverse educational backgrounds, five of them are from poor schools in working class communities. The majority of black working class students are still educated in print impoverished environments, as the results of the first national education surveyⁱⁱ on the state of South African schooling have shown. The survey recognised that resources at home were the

factors most likely to have a positive impact on literacy and numeracy and it found that 53% of learners' families did not have any books. Only 27% of schools in South Africa had libraries and childrens' parents had on average only completed Grade 9. In the survey of 51 308 Grade 3 pupils, pupils earned an average mark of 39% for reading and writing, 30% for numeracy and 68% in listening. Thami Mseleku, the Director General of Education, commenting on the report, said 'The majority of children come from families where there is not a literacy culture. South Africa does not have a reading culture, we have a talking culture' (Smetherham 2003:5).

The reasons for this kind of educational impoverishment are complex, but to a large extent they are the legacy of the divided and unequal education system devised by the Nationalist government and perpetuated through the apartheid years. Until 1996 there were 19 separate educational departments in South Africa organised along racial lines. Schools for African students under the national Department of Education and Training (DET) were notoriously corrupt, inefficient and poorly resourced. Schools for white students, run by provincial education departments were privileged and very well resourced. Many of these schools opted to admit black students after 1990 and became known as Model C schools. Since 1994 there have been concerted attempts to redress social injustices in education; however the majority of South African children still live in environments which are educationally under-resourced. The matric pass rate has fluctuated – in 1994 there was a 58% pass rate and the matric exemptionⁱⁱⁱ rate was 18%, in 1999 this dropped to 49% and 12% respectively. However the pass rate has recovered in the past few years and in 2002 the matric pass rate improved to its best ever at 68,9%. But the number of pupils writing matric dropped from 559 233 in 1997 to 443 821 in 2002 (<http://education.pwv.gov.za>).

Five of the case study students, Thabo^{iv}, Sibongile, Nomsa, Ayanda and Vuyani attended former DET schools through the late eighties and nineties. Research on schooling in these Department of Education and Training schools has revealed much about the ways in which apartheid bankrupted the learning environment for black children. Most teachers would have been trained in 'fundamental pedagogics', which was the dominant discourse of the teacher training colleges and education

departments of the black universities. Macdonald (1991) found that these teachers' own knowledge base and reading skills were shaky, and therefore, they resorted to pedagogies which enabled them to control pupils' access to knowledge so that they themselves were not threatened. Classrooms were overcrowded and facilities limited and children in African primary schools spent most of their time in class listening to the teacher, with pupils occasionally chanting in response (Walker 1996, Macdonald 1991). Macdonald (1991) concluded that rote learning had built up a self-sustaining momentum.

Gough (1996) has highlighted the ways in which Bantu Education policies, such as the under-training of teachers, have impoverished the language learning environment. Teachers in the former DET schools are mostly non-native speakers of English themselves and the classroom input students receive is typical of BSAfE^v. Although, in theory, English is the medium of instruction, in practice, there is extensive use of the vernacular with English (Gough 1996). Kapp (2001) found in her recent research in two township high schools in Cape Town, that classes take place mainly in Xhosa and teachers use code mixing to convey their subject matter orally. Many researchers (Kapp 2001, Taylor and Vinjevold 1999, Macdonald 1991) have noted the predominantly oral classroom culture of the former DET schools and in the English Second language classroom this is reinforced by the final matriculation examination where the oral mark counts a third of the total English mark (Kapp 2001).

Kapp (2001) observes that teachers teach for the externally set final examination (matriculation) and she uses the colloquial term 'scope' to describe the way the teachers circumscribe what students must learn in order to pass by giving them summaries, worksheets and revision of past examination papers. In content subjects, like History and Biology, these kinds of literacy practices mean that students have no need to engage with the readings themselves or to build writing skills by exploring concepts and developing arguments. She notes that some of the teachers she observed did not have the resources to promote a different practice. She concludes with the following comment:

What students are being taught is a highly limited discourse competence that may serve the instrumental purpose of passing the matriculation examination, but which has little transferable value, given that they are likely to forget the facts they learn (Kapp 2001:242).

Pile and Smythe's study of Geography classes in the Free State (Taylor and Vinjevold 1999) found that 'written work' comprised of simple exercises requiring one-word answers, notes were copied without comprehension and information was often decontextualised. This means that students have not been provided with opportunities to use and practice the academic literacies used in schools and are not comfortable and familiar with them when they come to university where they are faced with learning the even more complex literacies of the university.

In 1992 when racial laws ceased to force African parents to send their children to DET schools, many children moved to schools in historically coloured, Indian and white areas. The former Model C schools have become a popular option because English is taught by first language speakers and these schools are seen as offering better facilities, and a better education. However, the former Model C schools have become more and more expensive, as school fees have been increased to compensate for decreases in government funding; consequently education in these schools has become an option that is only available to wealthier families. These changes have led to an emerging class divide, which goes beyond race so that there is growing tension between those who travel to schools in 'the suburbs' and those who remain behind^{vi}. (Mtshali 2002:1). The children who attend school in the suburbs are labelled 'coconuts', 'Model C's' and '*amabhujwas*'^{vii} and it is felt that the exodus has impacted on township schools where student numbers are dropping. These schools are now perceived as 'the last resort for children from poor families' (Mtshali 2002:1).

Nkwenkwe, Sherry and Philip all went to former Model C schools. Nkwenkwe, an African student, did a post-Matric year at Hilton, an elite private school in Natal, having done most of his high school years at a Model C school in Durban. Sherry, who lives in Guguletu, a township outside Cape Town, travelled in to town to Sans Souci Girls High, while Philip, a white student, went to SACS (the South African College School). Both these schools are situated in Cape Town's southern suburbs.

5.3. Background Information: Social context/Life Experience

Five of the case study students, Ayanda, Nomsa, Sibongile, Thabo and Vuyani, have qualified in terms of the means test for financial aid packages. Students such as these from working class backgrounds have probably had very different life experiences to the other students from more middle class backgrounds. Very often they are the first in their families and their communities to go to university and their families may have had little or no experience of the world of commerce. Therefore, as I have indicated in section 4.3.1., the norms and values of the Commerce Faculty in a historically white English speaking university may be at odds with the norms and values that students such as these bring with them.

With unemployment in South Africa standing at approximately 42%, students have seldom come to university simply to further their education. Rather they believe that a tertiary education, and particularly a degree in Commerce, will provide them with a ticket to a job. Consequently, it is not surprising that students on the Academic Development Programme often feel strong pressure to conform to the dominant values of the department, the faculty and the university because they see this as the way to fulfil social aspirations and escape from poverty. Nevertheless in classroom discussions and written assignments, students often reveal their intuitive understandings and values exposing some of the conflicts and tensions with which they are coping.

Dialogues in the online discussion forum which we run in the second semester of Language and Communications are archived and provide illustrations of these more informal conversations. In one particular exercise, students had worked through various exercises in an Excel worksheet which were aimed at building a better understanding of the gold industry in South Africa. They were then asked to write the heading and first paragraph for a newspaper article on the Gold Industry. The discussion forum was not for marks and students were not working from textbooks or lecture notes but had been given a few newspaper articles to read. A common thread that ran through most student responses was that the rising gold price would

slow down the retrenchment of workers that was taking place at many of the South African gold mines. As the fathers, uncles and brothers of some of the students may be working on the gold mines, retrenchment was seen as a very real threat. The following excerpts from the discussion forum illustrate my point:

a) GOLD PRICE HAS INCREASE, WHAT ABOUT WAGES

We see that the gold has increased but what about the wages of these people working hard under risk places

b) HARMONY BRINGS BACK LIFE IN SOUTH AFRICA

The gold price has increased, putting Harmony in a good financial position, the already starving families today have hope that Harmony is going to bring life back to the families

c) IS PRICE RISE FOR REAL?

Most people in the gold industry are asking the same question because they think the workers who were going to be retrenched are going to continue working

d) IMPROVEMENT OF SHARE PRICE HAS CREATED JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Harmony company employed 45% of workers because their share price increased by 34.5%

These excerpts display interesting examples of intertextuality where students weave information gleaned from the excel tutorial and the newspaper articles together with a kind of broader race/class solidarity with the workers on the gold mines. Students' comments were probably also reflecting widespread concern voiced by powerful trade union organisations like COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions) which had stated that it was unacceptable to retrench workers in the name of greater 'efficiencies' and competitiveness. Here we see signs of the conflicts that these students will experience as they are inducted into the social practices, values and positions of the university economics departments. What is perhaps particularly difficult for them is the confusion and uncertainty they feel as they grapple with the shifts in their own lives in order to prepare themselves for careers as highly paid professionals i.e. accountants, economists and computer analysts.

5.4. Description of University Admissions and Programmes of Study

All the case study students other than Sherry and Philip are on the Commerce Academic Development Programme (CADP). This programme provides a unique opportunity for disadvantaged students who have unfulfilled potential to realise their strengths and complete a B Com degree over a four year period (see Appendix K for degree structure. The CADP offers a range of additional support, not offered in the three year programme, so as to address the gaps and disparities in students' educational and life experience to ensure that they are better equipped to cope with the B Com programme. Support is offered specifically in the areas of language development and mathematics plus a range of additional interventions at different stages in the course of the degree. In their first year CADP students all study Accounting, Information Systems, Statistics and Economics (ECO100A) with language development (Commerce Academic Development Programme Annual Reports 2001 and 2002).

Students are accepted on the Programme with lower matric points than those normally required for admission to the Commerce Faculty. Differential CADP entry levels have been established, designed to enable talented students with a range of prior learning experience to gain an adequate foundation. Admission to the Programme is becoming more complex and nuanced. There has been a large increase in the number of students from former Model C schools, which can be attributed to the higher percentage of previously disadvantaged students attending these schools^{viii}. The table below shows the breakdown of the Commerce ADP group in 2001 by gender, population group, matric points and schooling (CADP Annual Reports 2001 and 2002).

Table 5.1.

Male	50%	African	72%	< 40	(8,2%)	Former DET	52,7%
Female	50%	Coloured	28%	41-45	(82,2%)	Former HOR ^{ix}	13,4%
				46-50	(9,6%)	Former Model C/Private	33,7%

Sherry and Philip were on the Humanities Gateway Course, following the Politics Philosophy and Economics (PPE) Programme and hoping to be accepted into the Commerce Faculty in the future. The Gateway is a one-year course in the Humanities Faculty which provides bridging for students wishing to major in Economics and allows them to complete a degree in four years. They are placed on extended courses like ECO100A and offered support in language and mathematics where this is required. They are a very diverse group, who qualified for admission to Humanities, but not for Commerce. They were not admitted to the CADP, either because they did not meet the admission criteria for CADP in terms of matric point scores or because they were not considered to have been previously disadvantaged. In 2001 a small number (14%) of Gateway students on the course came from the former Department of Education and Training Schools and the majority (61%) from either private or former Model C schools.

Nkwenkwe and Sherry regard themselves as multilingual having English and African languages as home languages. Philip is a first language speaker of English. On the basis of the diagnostic test, all three were exempted from Language and Communications after the first four weeks, but Sherry chose to continue attending these tutorials. The five students from the former DET schools, although all multilingual, are EAL speakers and attended the Language and Communications tutorials throughout their first year.

5.5. Academic Performance

In order to be able to compare the case study students with the rest of the class, I will provide a description of the 2001 ECO100A student cohort and their academic results thus far.

Of the 73 Commerce ADP students registered for first year in 2001, 60 (83%) students are still registered at this university in 2002. Only three (4%) of these students were excluded on academic grounds. Generally Commerce ADP students are highly motivated and very hardworking but the pressures on these students are enormous. For them, success is crucial because they have financial aid loans and

their families or communities may have struggled to pay the family contribution. I have often observed the way these students apply themselves to their studies, forming peer study groups and working through weekends and short holidays. However, if they are not living on campus, conditions for studying are often poor, in overcrowded homes with poor lighting. Many of the students run into financial difficulties and have to take part-time jobs to help finance their education, which means study time is sacrificed.

The ADP Co-ordinator comments in her annual report:

It would seem that the complexities of each individual student's own particular history and background, as well as their personal adaptation, life skills and financial stability are crucial factors that impact on success rate. To illustrate something of the impact of some of these factors, five students in good academic standing from the first year cohort did not return in 2002 because they were unable to pay their family contribution (R3000) part of their fees. One student did not return due to a psychological break down (CADP Annual Report 2001).

Of the 98 Gateway students registered in 2001, only 74% of the intake is still registered in 2002. This is a very high failure and drop out rate after one year of study, but it seems to have been characteristic of the Humanities Gateway Course. Reasons for leaving university seem to be linked to inappropriate career choices and academic failure. Mabizela (1994) notes in his study of first year students at another university in the Western Cape that when students from more privileged schools realised that they were relatively better prepared than the average students they tended to relax and not put enough effort into their studies.

The students on the ECO100A course write the same examination as the second semester mainstream students, and in 2001 ECO100A students performed better than the mainstream students. The ECO100A course had a 70% pass rate as opposed to a 59% pass rate on the mainstream second semester course, ECO100C. The average mark on ECO100A was 55% and on ECO 110S it was 50%. The Commerce ADP group in ECO100A had a pass rate of 79% as opposed to the 56% pass rate of the Gateway students.

The table below shows a breakdown of data on the case study students. It includes schooling background, matric point score^x, matric English symbols, PTEEP^{xi} language entrance test scores as well as results for ECO100A and first and second year exam results.

Table 5.2. Comparison of case study students' marks

Ayanda	Former DET	40	ESL D	28	59%	56% Passed 3 1 Supp.	(leave of absence due to illness)
Philip (Gateway)	Former Model C	41	Eng. 1 st D	69.9	50%	61% Passed 5	(44) Passed 0 Failed 2
Nkwenkwe	Former Model C	42	Eng. 1 st D	Did not write	55%	52% Passed 2 Failed 2	50 Passed 4 Failed 2
Nomsa	Former DET	43	ESL D	26	64%	60 Passed 3 Failed 1	49.25 Passed 5 Failed 3
Sherry (Gateway)	Former Model C	37	Eng. 1 st D	Did not write	52%	55 Passed 5	(43) Passed 1 Failed 5
Sibongile	Former DET	39	ESL C	45	51%	50 Pass 3 / Fail 1	53 Passed 5 Failed 2
Thabo	Former DET	43	ESL E	33	68%	70 Passed 5 Failed 0	64 Passed 7 Failed 0
Vuyani	Former DET	42	ESL E	38	41%	54 Passed 2 Failed 2	(47) Passed 4 Failed 3

5.6. Student Biographies

Writing is influenced by the different discourses and literacy practices writers have encountered. For instance, socio-economic factors such as those described in 5.2. and 5.3. lead to varied access to particular discourse types and, as Ivanic (1998) points out, peoples' life histories may also affect the sense of self-esteem and status with which they approach writing. Therefore it is important to contextualise the students' writing by providing brief biographies of each individual.

These biographies have been compiled from three or four interviews which I conducted with the students over a two year period, the biographical essay they wrote on their experience of learning another language and the literacy reflection written at the end of their second year of study, as well as the regular evaluations they wrote for the ADP Co-ordinator.

I use pseudonyms for the students but, in putting together their biographies, I have tried to retain their 'voices' in order to present a rich and textured picture of each individual.

5.6.1. Ayanda

When you write poetry you just write something that comes from you

Despite Ayanda's disadvantaged schooling in a sprawling township outside Cape Town, he was coping fairly well with his studies when he became ill with a schizo-affective condition at the beginning of his second year.

As I had collected data from Ayanda throughout his first year including three interviews with him, I have retained him as one of my case study students, telling Ayanda's story gleaned from these discussions. He grew up in Khayelitsha during the turbulent eighties when townships around Cape Town were torn apart by the violence and upheavals associated with the latter years of apartheid. There is no doubt that Ayanda is very familiar with poverty. He says he has no father, and his mother has supported the family of five from her meagre earnings as a domestic worker in one of the affluent suburbs of Cape Town. She has done well to ensure that he and his two older siblings have gone on to tertiary education. His older brother went to University of the Transkei to study law and his sister to the Border Technikon.

Ayanda attended a high school in Khayelitsha which he said was one of the better high schools in the township but, although English was the medium of instruction, not much English was spoken and Xhosa is his home language:

When I was in high school you only speak English during our English class... ja because in other subjects like accounting they... they are teaching us in Xhosa you know so that you can understand it

He was identified as a promising student in Grade 11 and sponsored by ABSA bank to go to 'Saturday School' where extra classes were offered in Maths, Accounting and English as a first language. He was not sure whether the English classes helped; they had not done any writing and he wrote matric in English as a second language as that was all his school offered, which explains why he struggled with academic writing at university. In his later years of schooling there was no Accounting teacher at the school and so the students taught themselves. He was proud of the fact that he was the only student from his school to be accepted at this university in 2001. He received financial aid that enabled him to stay in a university residence, rather than travelling back and forth from the outlying township every day.

Ayanda did not attend a pre-primary school so he learned to read and write in primary school. He told me that when he and his young friends were together someone always told *intsomi*^{xii}. Judging by his smiles when he talked about this, these were happy times.

He says there is quite a lot of reading matter in his house; his mother brings the newspaper back from her workplace and he loves soccer magazines. His brother who studied law is back home and has lots of books. Ayanda likes reading and goes to the library regularly but doesn't often take books out because he gets confused and does not know what to choose. Instead he enjoys reading the newspapers and magazines available in the library. He did not do much writing at school, other than an economics project and exam essays. He feels he learned most of his writing here at university. He does sometimes write his own poetry and has a good sense of how different this is from writing economics essays: *In my essays I feel I am not trying to be myself, but when you write poetry you just write something that comes from you.*

This comment may provide clues to understanding why Ayanda sometimes uses rather archaic language in his essay writing. In 6.4.2 I indicate that this may be a consequence of his attempts to sound 'academic' when he writes assignments.

In his first assignment, Ayanda wrote of the mixed feelings he had about learning English at school:

I experienced a lot of difficulties especially when I am reading an English story book and when I have to stand in front of the class and tell the story that we were taught in class...

And yet he was very keen to learn English:

I could hardly wait to go to school the following day because at home we spoke a lot of Xhosa and at school it will be English and Xhosa

However, he felt shy about his English at university:

I often feel disadvantaged because I feel uncomfortable when I speak English in front of many people, like in lectures because I am not fluent enough.

He reads McConnell and Brue, his economics textbook, and his monopoly essay (cf. 7.3.5.) may draw on phrases and language from that. He does not always understand the words but uses an English dictionary. He says he does translate things into Xhosa sometimes to understand them and yet, as the following excerpt from the interview suggests, it would not help him to write his essays in Xhosa:

M. I sometimes wonder whether it would be easier for you to write in Xhosa. Could you write this (referring to the supply and demand essay) in Xhosa?

A. In Xhosa, no, in Xhosa like there are some words like you know that ... elasticity... things like that... you won't know in Xhosa, that's where you can experience some problems writing.

The problem Ayanda is trying to express is that many economic terms such as 'monopoly' and 'demand' do not have equivalents in Xhosa. Students new to the discipline of economics need to unlearn the situated meanings (cf. 2.4) of terms like

'price' and 'supply' and 'demand' and learn new meanings, which become much more complex if these terms are translated into Xhosa.

Ayanda de-registered from the university for a year while he received treatment for his illness and returned to his studies in 2003 when he registered for his second year. He is under the care of a counsellor at student health. I have met with him since his return, re-establishing the relationship we had. There can be no doubt that Ayanda's illness is hard to cope with, but almost as bad is the social stigma of suffering from a psychiatric disorder, which his fellow students do not understand. He has lost confidence and has found that his friends from his first year have moved on obligating him to make new friends. In addition he is faced with academic and financial difficulties as he returns to his studies after a year's absence. In a written evaluation in the first semester of 2003 he recounts his battle with despair and low self-esteem.

5.6.2. Nkwenkwe

My father encouraged me...

Nkwenkwe appears confident and easy going, which is not really surprising considering his background. He is older than most first year students, having just turned 20 when he started at university; he speaks English as if it were his first language and he has had a more privileged educational background than many of the other ADP students. He is also a good sportsman who plays for his residence rugby team and enjoys a social game of golf at the weekends. His meetings with me always have to be arranged around his heavy rugby practice timetable.

His parents moved him to what he described as a *white school* at about nine years of age and as there were only four black kids in the school, he had no option but to speak English. He laughed when he recalled how on the first day at school he had landed up in a fight at break because he had misunderstood an English word. From Berea West Primary, he went to a good former Model C school in Durban and then spent a final post-matric year at Hilton College, a very elite private school in Natal.

Nkwenkwe's father was apparently an important role model for him; although he is a first language speaker of Zulu, he brought his children up speaking English in the home because he realised that this would benefit them in the future. Nkwenkwe is multilingual, speaking Zulu and English fluently as well as Xhosa and a smattering of Sotho. Nkwenkwe writes regularly in formal and informal contexts. He has kept a diary since he was about thirteen; keeps in touch with his friends by email and has written a few sports related emails to the newspapers. His father encouraged the children to start reading English books from a young age. He bought them children's books written in English and filled their home with a wide range of literature. It was Nkwenkwe's father who advised him to read the business section of the daily newspaper which he still does on a daily basis and finds the business news interesting. The textual analysis in 6.4.2. shows that Nkwenkwe is influenced by the writing style of the newspapers he reads, as he adopts journalistic discourse as an 'interim literacy' when he writes his first economics essay. Nevertheless, Nkwenkwe's first economics essay is very articulate and he displays a breadth of understanding of the South African political and economic environment.

Despite all the advantages, Nkwenkwe has not done as well academically as one would have expected. It is difficult to know what the obstacles have been. He himself feels that family problems at home distracted him from his studies. On the other hand, rugby has certainly been a fairly high priority in his university life. Or it may be that the Accounting programme was not an appropriate choice for him and now that he has changed to the Politics, Philosophy and Economics (PPE) programme, he will have more opportunity to draw on his strong language and literacy skills. He has shown a real interest in economics and some of the Thinking about Business courses like marketing and branding, and his more advanced levels of literacy should enable him to cope with the heavy reading and writing demands of the PPE courses.

5.6.3. Nomsa

I am a winner

Nomsa is the first in her family to finish secondary schooling and come to university. Her mother is a single parent with limited reading and writing skills; her older sister, who completed Grade 9, taught Nomsa to write before she went to school. There were no books in her home but she walked to the local library to find books.

Nomsa's schooling experiences are similar to those of other students from the former DET schools such as Ayanda, Vuyani, Thabo and Sibongile. From the age of eight, she attended the local township school in Umlazi outside Durban and it was her Accounting teacher who motivated her to study further. All her subjects except English and Afrikaans were taught through the medium of Zulu, which perhaps explains why Nomsa has had a particularly difficult time studying in English at university. *My weakness is in communication. Language and Communication (tutorial) is good because it helps me to communicate with other people especially group work is very fruitful to me.* When I interviewed her in her first year she felt that she was still thinking in Zulu and translating into English, but by second year she had gained confidence in English.

She remembered writing English essays at school such as 'Money is the root of all evil' and 'The wall between parents and children', but since she came to university she has written her own poems and stories for pleasure and finds that this improves her vocabulary. She told me that her dream was to be a writer of novels and poems. One of her poems was published in the residence magazine and I have included a short extract from it below:

I am a winner

1. The winner believes that there are no doors that have no keys.

The winner can open any door.

I am a winner

2. The winner is more than willing and able to help other.

I am a winner

3. The winner knows that all people are equal.

I am a winner

*4. The winner, the winner, the winner,
Does not think for himself, he thinks for the nation*

I am a winner

5. The winner has a vision and he never forgets his past

I am a winner

6. The winner can do whatever it takes to build a nation

I am a winner

7. I am a winner, I am a winner, I am a winner.

Just like Oprah Winfrey.

I am a winner

8. Just like a former president of South Africa, Dr Nelson Mandela

I am a winner

These simple but very powerful words, I have borrowed for the title of this chapter. I am interested in the way the poem links to both past and present discourses which have been influential in Nomsa's life. The idea that the winner *is more than willing and able to help other(s)* and *Does not think for himself, he thinks for the nation* links to the Xhosa phrase 'Umuntu ngumuntu mgabantu' which means a person is a person because of his (sic) relationship with other people (personal communication with Bongki Bangeni). Once again in verses 4 and 5 Nomsa may be drawing on traditional discourses emphasising a strong paternal line when she uses the masculine pronoun 'he' to refer to herself. The use of repetition in this poem and in her first essay may be a further indication that her writing has been influenced by African secondary discourses (cf. 6.4.1.1.).

There are also signs that Nomsa's poem has also been influenced by TV discourses and, particularly, the Oprah Winfrey TV show (cf. verse 7). The strong motivational discourse that Nomsa uses is typical of Oprah Winfrey's popular television 'talk show' in which she encourages black women to be self-motivated and to play successful roles in a male dominated world.

5.6.4. Philip

I haven't really been one for studies at the top of my list

Philip was educated at a former Model C school in one of the wealthier suburbs of Cape Town. He speaks English as a first language and scored well on the English Proficiency test. His matric score was a few points too low to allow him to register in the Commerce Faculty, but the Gateway Course allowed him to do the PPE (Politics Philosophy and Economics) Programme in four years and gave him the option of transferring to the Commerce Faculty if he scored well on the Gateway.

His parents are both well educated. His father works in Office Furniture Sales and his mother is a Programme Manager for IBM. Philip has had the benefit of a preschool education and he has been brought up in a home with books and easy access to libraries. However he is mad on sport, very good at sailing and I sensed that he lacked motivation for his university studies.

He said he did quite a bit of writing at school, writing essays in English and Biology. In English, they were always given a fairly wide range of topics to choose from but the teacher was over concerned with surface problems in their writing. Philip described the kind of feedback he got from his English teacher:

after an essay he would give us like words you'd spelt wrong... that wouldn't really help me and then I suppose general vocabulary, general English language I suppose – he never really taught us how to write

This may explain the difficulties he had with coherence and cohesion in his first academic essay (6.2.2). Philip, as an English speaker, from a middle class home has many advantages in gaining access to the new discourse. However, as he himself points out (6.3.3.), access is not straightforward, because he struggles with the precision and detail required in economics. He laughed when I asked him about reading, told me that he read books in primary school but these days he only reads sports magazines. He said he would rather be playing soccer or golf *instead of sitting at home reading.*

When I interviewed Philip he seemed to be coping well with his courses but he was finding the course load heavy. His real interest was to get into Information Systems. He was struggling with economics but admitted:

I'd say my economics, its like a bad part of me but I haven't really been doing the right amount of work that I should have been doing. So you could say I've been lacking in that department a little bit!

He passed all his courses at the end of first year but in second year he failed to get a duly performed certificate for three of his courses, failed one and got a supplementary exam for another. It appears that he left the university after the June examinations.

5.6.5. Sherry

...when I am not in a good mood I write in a little book...

Sherry has had to deal with all the frustrations and complexities that students from mixed race origins often experience in South Africa. Her family was one of those who experienced forced removals from their homes and communities under the apartheid Group Areas Act. Her father's grandmother grew up in a 'coloured' area in Wynberg in the Cape, but the family was *chased out of there* in the 1960's and moved to the township of Gugulethu where they now live. Her mother's family was originally from Malawi. Sherry regards English as her first language and explains that she did not go to a local Gugulethu school because she could not speak the vernacular (Xhosa) properly and because her parents thought she would get a better education at Sans Souci, a former Model C school. She said people in the community are critical of her family because they speak English and Afrikaans: *Xhosa's our third language at home. So for us to speak Afrikaans and English it was like... 'Who are you? You're black, you're supposed to speak Xhosa'*

University has not been a happy experience for Sherry and by the time of her interview at the end of her second year, she seemed angry and resentful. There are

race issues that concern her: ... *you tend to find that people of colour at this university are quite ashamed of who they are, ashamed of the fact that they are different to white people ... and the reason why they actually make friends with these people I think is because they want to feel wanted and the fact that they adopt their culture and whatever....* When I asked her if she had experienced racist treatment she said, *Well you know, its been kind of like... racist gestures come and you know they are like liberal gestures, they are not really you know, 'oh I hate you, you blacks' , its like the way certain groups act towards you. Its like you know they act so condescendingly, its like you know... 'you are so er you are dumb, what do you know?'*

Sherry's ambition is to one day work for the United Nations. Her cousin is a well known political activist whom she admires and this has sparked her interest in politics and economics. Sherry's mother has always encouraged reading at home and although they could hardly afford it, her parents saved to send their children to Model C schools and to university. At school she was taught to read critically and she enjoys reading biographies and autobiographies; one of her favourites was Helen Suzman's biography. She enjoys watching documentaries and current affairs programmes on television and finds the *factual writing* she has to do at university easier than the *metaphorical* or creative writing they did at school. Most of the writing she does is for her university assignments but she does have a little book where she writes when she is in a bad mood. She would have liked the Language and Communications classes to focus more on grammar which concerns her. *I've always had this thing when I speak to people... Is my tone right? Am I speaking properly, are my verbs and adjectives in the right place?* This may explain why Sherry sticks so closely to the original text when she writes her economic essays and tends to over-reference.

She is resentful that she was not accepted on the Commerce Academic Development Programme, but her matric score and the fact that she had been to a Model C school probably counted against her. Sherry did not qualify for financial aid and the family could not afford residence fees which means she has to travel to and from Gugulethu every day. This trip takes 2 or 3 hours on taxis and buses and leaves little time for her studies. She says *I tell myself that I am here to get a*

degree... that's all ... a comment, which reflects her alienation and unhappiness. She has not been able to enjoy the social life of the university because she lives off campus and spends so much time travelling. She is concerned because she is not passing all her exams and seems to suffer from exam nerves.

Sherry passed only one examination in her second year but based on the 3 credits in first year she was allowed to repeat the year, however she decided not to return.

5.6.6. Sibongile

Maybe its because I've seen people suffering...whenever I write an essay there is this thing in me – I must write about that because it is affecting me

Sibongile is from a semi-rural township on the outskirts of the small industrial town of Uitenhage in the Eastern Cape. She struggled with English and told me that she was always afraid to talk and participate in group discussions because English was not her first language. In her written evaluation she said, *I feel bad and stupid if the teacher point at me and ask a question which I don't have an answer for*. University was her first encounter with such a diversity of ethnic and class backgrounds but for her it had been a positive experience. She enjoyed meeting new people and learning about other peoples' cultures – *now I understand people and I know I am not the only one from a disadvantaged area and school*.

Sibongile's father works as a manual labourer for a company which manufactures car parts. Her mother is a domestic worker and Sibongile is the youngest of three children. She speaks of her parents with respect and gives the impression of having been brought up in a fairly strict and traditional home. The family speaks Xhosa at home, but as in so many black South African homes, there is a lot of codemixing. *Sometimes it's a little bit like mixed Xhosa and Afrikaans because where we live its mixed like Coloureds and things – Coloureds speak Afrikaans so you learn Afrikaans by speaking to them*. Her parents can read and write and there are magazines and newspapers like *Drum* and *True Love* in the home; there were also some books, mostly textbooks and a few novels. Her father reads newspapers but her mother only reads the Bible. Sibongile claims to have learned English by

reading newspapers and magazines and by watching television. She loves the cartoons and the 'soapies' and is a soccer fanatic.

At her former DET school in the township Sibongile said they were never encouraged to write or to do research. They had written no essays other than the occasional English composition, with titles such as 'I have spent eleven years in school so I won't give up now...'. They were advised to limit these essays to one page in length, an instruction which was presumably intended to reduce the reading and marking for teachers with large classes and heavy teaching loads. There were no computers in her school, so the course in Information Systems at university was her introduction to computers. Despite the fact that there was no library at school and the public library was too far away to be of use, Sibongile said she loved reading, particularly *true stories and horror stories*. She was encouraged in this by her high school English teacher who always asked her to read aloud for the whole class. Her experience of reading at school was mostly of reading aloud, which appealed to the dramatist in Sibongile: *Reading is fun because you can always change your voice and make what you're reading interesting and fun*. She also enjoyed being involved with a school debating group and as I point out in 6.4.2. this may have influenced her writing, as parts of her economic systems essay read like a political debate

She was concerned about the high unemployment and poverty in the Eastern Cape and that her father's firm was being threatened with closure which would leave him unemployed. *In Uitenhage to find a job its very difficult because most of the time they don't hire black people because most of them are not educated*. When I commented on the way she focused on the poor in her transition essay she said, *Maybe its because I've seen people suffering because of it and whenever I write an essay there is this thing in me – I must write about that because it is affecting me*. She seems somewhat bewildered by the continued deprivation in post apartheid South Africa. *It's like its worse now but the only difference about it now is that blacks are getting jobs. But at the same time privatisation will lead to job losses. I don't know, I don't know....* These comments may shed some light on the cultural models which Sibongile draws on which divert her focus and lead to incoherence in her essay writing.

When we met towards the end of her second year at university, Sibongile was more self-assured. Her hair was beautifully plaited into long braids and she said she had made a lot of new friends who were not Xhosa speakers, which requires her to speak English and her English had improved. *Now I'm not afraid to participate in discussion and I always ask questions when I'm confused or don't understand what the lecturer is talking about.* However, she seemed much less confident about her writing or, perhaps, with more experience she had gained greater insights into the complexities of writing. *I noticed that my weakness is writing – I have a problem expressing myself on paper and I tend to be informal. I write as if I am writing a letter to a friend.* During her second year she visited the Writing Centre each time she had a written assignment and found this an invaluable help. She concludes her literacy reflection with a call to teachers: *Teachers should encourage students to write more often and try to make writing and reading challenging. If I had had better teachers in high school I would not have struggled like I did in high school.*

5.6.7. Thabo

I look in the mirror now and I say is this the same Thabo who was at school in Alexandria a year ago!

In the two and half years I have known these students, Thabo is the one who has made the biggest strides both academically and socially. He has an easy confidence and a friendly manner and his academic successes do not seem to have gone to his head.

His mother works as a domestic worker in Johannesburg and has struggled to pay the family contribution so that Thabo commented in one of his evaluations that *this financial problem is eating me every day.* However in his second year he was identified as a successful student and was awarded a bursary by one of the Accounting firms which has put an end to his financial worries.

His aunt is a university graduate and she taught him to write before he went to school. He attended a former DET school in the gangland of Alexandria and was no

stranger to violent shooting incidents. But he was the top student in his class and was selected for RMIP, the Role Model Intervention Programme, and sent to a Saturday School at Wits University in his final years. He was also without an Accounting teacher in matric and he taught Accounting to all his classmates.

He is notably multilingual, speaking Sotho, Zulu, Xhosa and English plus a little Afrikaans and he seems to delight in learning new languages. There were no books in his home but they occasionally bought newspapers and magazines. He said his mother forced him to switch from Zulu to Sotho as his first language in grades 11 and 12 because she is Sotho speaking and she thought she would be able to help him. Although most of the teaching was done in English, teachers often translated into Sotho or Zulu if students did not understand. Thabo told me that he never spoke English at home because there was a stigma attached to speaking English in the township and you could be labelled 'a spoiled child' or a 'Model C'.

Thabo feels his life has changed dramatically since he came to university; he is more confident and his English has improved. *In the dining hall I can now sit with whites – I couldn't do that last year – I couldn't communicate with whites.* He has found his second year easier than the first year. He studied with a multilingual peer group who used English to communicate because it was their common language. His social life is good and he has a girlfriend who is also on the ADP Programme. In our last interview I made some comment about his confidence and he said, *I always talk too much so that most people don't understand that I'm not confident – I always wonder if I am saying things correctly.*

5.6.8. Vuyani

One of 'the survivals'

Vuyani transferred from a BSc in 2000 to a Commerce degree after doing some research on the Internet and deciding that he would like to become an accountant. He is from a rural village in the heart of Kwazulu Natal. His parents are semi-literate and unemployed (mother is a pensioner), his mother speaks Sotho and his father Zulu and

he is the first member of his family to go to university. His first assignment in the language and communications tutorial provides background to Vuyani's story in 7.2.1.1.

The experience of learning another language

I grew up in place where we were always speaking African languages. We started learning English when we were doing grade one. The method of teaching student at primary level was not good. Because we were given words to know not necessary knowing their meaning. The teacher would point at the board and we pronounce the name she had, had pointed. At grade 3 it where we started learning tenses and writing compositions as well as letter. We were repeating the same thing 'My School' and 'My self'. Some of the word we had to search them by ourselve and know their meaning. This method was done again at secondary level. We were not given chance to express ourselves.

The survivals were those who expose themselves to the language by moving to the place where there was English speakers then you will start gaining skills of expressing yourselves.

In his first interview with me, Vuyani elaborated on this autobiographical piece, explaining that he speaks four languages, Zulu, Sotho, Afrikaans and English. Although English had been the medium of instruction in high school, only English and Mathematics were taught in English: *we're actually talking our vernacular language until matric*. He explained that there were few opportunities for practising outside the school classroom as people in his rural village were not able to speak English fluently. When asked how he managed to be one of 'the survivals' (survivors) of this system, he said that he had spent a holiday in a flat in Hillbrow, Johannesburg with some of his extended family and that he had learned to speak English from the Italian family in the flat next door.

Of the eight case study students, Vuyani had the greatest difficulties with writing in English. However, when he met with me at the end of his first year in Commerce, he noticed that some of his sentences from the first essay did not make sense and was able to correct them.

5.7. Discussion: links between life experience and academic success

The eight biographies sketched above provide a lens through which to view the students' essays. As I have indicated, life experiences shape writing and influence the way the writer makes sense of information. The biographies draw attention to some of the students' 'interests' as well as previous discourses that may feed into their interim literacies. For instance, Ayanda's 'interest' in poetry sheds light on the use of metaphor and rich description in his writing, Nkwenkwe's experience of reading and writing for newspapers points to an 'interest' in journalistic discourse and Vuyani's early life experiences in the rural heartland of Kwazulu Natal may explain his familiarity with oral and literary discourses. These findings will assist the analysis of intertextuality in Chapters 6 and 7.

As I noted in 2.2., ethnographers such as Gee (1996) and Heath (1983) indicate that middle class literacy practices coincide with those taught in school while other forms of literacy do not; they go on to say that this can lead to low attainment of certain groups in the educational context. The biographies in this study do highlight a striking diversity of socio-economic backgrounds and experiences. However, it is interesting to note that in this study there is very little correlation between more privileged schooling (Model C and Private) and academic performance/attainment in the first two years of study (cf. Table 5.2.). The two students on the Gateway programme, Sherry and Philip, both from Model C schools, have performed poorly and left the university. Nkwenkwe, who finished his schooling at a very elite private school, is also struggling to pass. On the other hand, Thabo, from a former DET school in a poorer part of Soweto, is doing exceptionally well, scoring a first for Accounting in first and in second year.

A study of eight students is too small to be able to draw any significant conclusions from the performance data and this quantitative information is not the central focus of the study which has adopted a qualitative approach to investigating discourse acquisition. However, these results may raise questions and point to the importance of considering a range of factors when trying to determine reasons for academic success. In a Commerce faculty these would include numerical ability, motivation and a variety of complex personal issues.

The analysis of discourse acquisition (cf. Chapters 6 and 7) will show that there is a relationship between opportunity and acquisition; students from the poorer schools who are also EAL struggle more in these initial stages with structuring the essays, expressing their meaning and acquiring the discourse. However the later successes of a student like Thabo may link to a notion put forward by Gee (1996:41), who says that when people encounter a situation which is challenging and difficult to master, it may be necessary for them to 'become consciously aware' of what they are trying to do. Gee indicates that when students are marginal to a new discourse or culture they may develop insights about the workings of these discourses or cultures (a metaknowledge) that more mainstream people do not. A more in depth study of a student like Thabo might illuminate some of Gee's ideas.

5.8. Conclusion

These biographies are relevant to the overall theoretical and methodological framework for the research because they locate each student in his/her social context (the outer layer of the model). In addition, the biographies include comments from the students which shed light on the processes that they went through in interpreting material and producing their texts. These insights will contribute to the analysis of the essays which follows in the next two chapters.

Note:

ⁱ This quotation is taken from a poem written by one of the case study students (cf. 5.6.3.).

ⁱⁱ National Report on Systemic Evaluation of the Foundation Phase (carried out in 2001 and 2002).

ⁱⁱⁱ A matric exemption pass is the minimum requirement for university admission.

^{iv} Pseudonyms have been used for the case study students.

^v Black South African English

^{vi} Apartheid changed the social geography of South African cities and left them racially divided with whites living in the elite city suburbs and blacks in outlying townships.

^{vii} Zulu for 'bourgeoisie'

^{viii} Nkwenkwe is an example of a student who moved from a former DET school to a Model C school.

^{ix} Former HOR are House of Representative Schools or Coloured Schools under apartheid.

^x Matric point score in Commerce at this university is calculated by awarding 8 points for an A symbol on the Higher Grade, 7 for a B, 6 for a C etc. Points are doubled for Mathematics and English.

^{xi} PTEEP stands for the Proficiency Test of English for Educational Purposes, (cf 4.2). The scores given are in deciles rather than percentages.

^{xii} African folktale

Chapter 6: Analysis of student writing in the first academic essay

Thus at any given moment of its historical existence, language is heteroglot from top to bottom: it represents the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present, between tendencies, schools, circles and so forth, all given a bodily form. These 'languages' of heteroglossia intersect each other in a variety of ways, forming new socially typifying 'languages' (Bakhtin 1981:291).

6.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will use the theoretical and methodological frameworks developed and described in Chapters 2 and 3 to analyse the first set of essays. This analysis will consider four of the questions outlined in Chapter 1:

- What past literacy and learning practices are students drawing on in their writing?
- What are the discourses and 'cultural/discourse models' that students draw on either explicitly (quoting and referencing) or in more subtle ways?
- What do their discursal patterns suggest about their ways of using language to conceptualise and to build knowledge? What are the difficulties students encounter in acquiring the new discourse?
- Are students succeeding in integrating past discourses into their economics essays in appropriate ways?

I will use linguistic and intertextual analysis to examine the discourse characteristics of the students' first essays and analyse the ways students begin to appropriate the new academic discourse by using different strategies to represent themselves as writers of economics. These 'interim literacies' are 'shot through' with the

'languages of heteroglossia', as Bakhtin indicates, and it is my intention to identify and examine the traces of other 'languages' in first year student writing. I will draw on my interviews and data from the essays to show the ways in which students from diverse communities and schooling backgrounds construct understanding differently and to suggest that these are based on their varied life experiences. In the new context these student writers transform the social and historical resources available to them according to their 'interests' (Kress 2000).

The preparation and teaching for the writing of the first essay is described in 4.6. The essay task was set out as follows:

Every country has an economic system that enables it to respond to the fundamental economic problem. Economists have identified the command and market systems as two important theories; these can be used to analyse the economic system of any given country or society. These theories also provide a useful framework by which to identify those economies that are in transition; i.e. the so-called transition economies.

Write an essay in which you draw on the readings provided to discuss the following question,

"To what extent has the South African economy undergone a transition since 1990 from a more command orientated economy to a more market orientated economy?"

In your essay you should explain the chief characteristics of the market economy and provide examples where relevant to illustrate and support your main argument.

Because I moderated all these essays, I have gained an overall perspective on the students' responses to this topic. Therefore I am able to place the discussion of my case study students within the broader context of the entire class.

There are multiple discourses embedded in the case study students' 'interim literacies'; these include both the discourses of the discipline the students are seeking to enter and those that they bring with them. The focus of the first part of this chapter will be on the ways in which they draw on the voices of the academy to develop roles and positions as academic writers. The analysis will explore the ways in which students have assessed the academic context for which they are writing

and are at different stages in developing skills normally associated with literacy in the social sciences, such as referencing. The section that follows will consider the ways in which students are drawing intertextually on the discourse of economics and building understanding in this new discourse. From there I will investigate the range of different discourses that filter into their writing from their social and historical experiences and their encounters with other people and other discourses.

6.2. Appropriating features of the academic discourse

In order to explore the ways in which students are in the process of acquiring academic discourse/literacy, I have chosen to focus on two central concepts i.e. intertextuality and coherence.

6.2.1. Intertextuality

The most overt form of intertextuality (cf. 2.3.3. for definition) is when students actually signal that they are borrowing words from another author by quoting and referencing their quotes. This is what Fairclough (1992) refers to as 'manifest intertextuality'. However, Ivanic prefers the term 'actual' intertextuality because, as she says, the term 'manifest' implies that the writer always signals this form of intertextuality and that the source text is clearly visible (1997:48). In the essays of my case study students this was not always true and I will show in sections of my analysis that, although students are learning to quote and to reference, quite often they appropriate the words of the source text without signalling (plagiarism).

The second form of intertextuality is interdiscursivity. To distinguish between the two types of intertextuality, Fairclough (1992:117-118) says,

Manifest intertextuality is the case where specific other texts are overtly drawn upon within a text, whereas interdiscursivity is a matter of how the discourse type is constituted through a combination of elements of orders of discourse.

Bock and Thesen (2001:36) describe interdiscursivity as ‘the mingling of the characteristics of more than one discourse type or genre in a new text, without any formal indicators of the boundaries of the constituent elements’. Interdiscursivity is revealed in the lexical and grammatical choices writers make and the discourse conventions they draw on as they develop their interim literacies. To explore the way students draw interdiscursively on academic discourse, I will analyse lexical density and lexical forms in the students’ writing.

6.2.1.1. Quoting and not quoting (‘actual intertextuality’)

Students’ experiences of writing at school differed, but for most of my case study students, this essay was their introduction to writing from multiple sources. However, before they wrote this essay, they had been introduced to referencing in a double period workshop and taught how to acknowledge quotes and ideas from other authors. This is probably one of the most difficult academic conventions that students have to learn. While the technical aspects or the ‘how’ of referencing are quite straightforward and are learned after a bit of practice, the more subtle problems of ‘when’ and ‘why’ we reference are much more complex and it may take months, if not years, before students can use these conventions with ease.

All the students, except Nkwenkwe¹, used some referencing and Sherry, Nomsa and Phillip referenced abundantly. But they all struggled with this new practice. Nomsa referred to other authorities five times in a short 430 word essay but, although she used the actual words of the economics textbook, she did not use quotation marks or provide a page reference; she simply referenced the authors of the textbook, for example, *According to Mohr and Fourie, market system is characterised by...* Phillip referenced six times in a 370 word essay and developed his own technique of simply putting a reference at the end of every paragraph. His understanding was that he should reference all ideas that were not his own, but perhaps his fear of plagiarism led him to over-reference. His confusion can be clearly seen when he claims his concluding paragraph as his own idea by using the first person, but then goes on to reference his lecturer at the end of the paragraph:

Thus, I think South Africa has changed to a better and stronger economy, but still could be improved. They need to (put in) place an institutional framework to support the market economy. (Smith, L. 2001)

Although the way the students referenced was mostly incorrect, they certainly seemed to be trying to practise the new conventions they had learned. But often what Nomsa and Sherry indicated to be paraphrases by providing the reference, but no quotation marks, are actually almost identical to sections of the original text. The Chambers dictionary definition of a paraphrase is ‘the expression of the same thing in other words’ and in a good paraphrase, one would expect to see the same discourse style but a different choice of lexis and syntactic arrangement. Below, the extracts from Nomsa’s essay are juxtaposed with the extracts from the textbook to illustrate the ways she has copied:

Extract One

According to P. Mohr and L. Fourie. 2000; market system characterised by individualism, private freedom, private property, property right and also decentralised decision making. There limited government intervention [sic]. (Nomsa)ⁱⁱ

Such an economic system is characterised by individualism, private freedom, private property, property rights, decentralised decision making and limited government intervention. (Mohr and Fourie 2000: 47)

Extract Two

Because according to the three basic questions as to what to produce? how to produce? And to whom to produce? The answer is those goods and services that consumers are willing to spend their income on and which can be supplied profitably (P. Mohr and L. Fourie; Economics for South African students 2d ed (2000) [sic] (Nomsa)

What will be produced in a market system? The answer is those goods and services that consumers are willing to spend their income on and which can be supplied profitably (Mohr and Fourie 2000: 47)ⁱⁱⁱ

In extract one, Nomsa has copied the long list of nominal phrases directly from the textbook rather than paraphrasing. The above example of ‘borrowing’ may be an indication that the student has assessed the context for which she is writing and her audience. She has a sense that nominal phrases are a typical feature of academic discourse and it serves her ‘interest’ to reproduce them.

In the following extract from my interview with Nomsa she seems to be indicating that she regards economics discourse as an 'authoritative discourse' (Bakhtin 1981):

M: *why didn't you use the information that was in your head rather than what was in the book?*

N: *I thought this information was true.*

Sherry shows she has a similar sense of the textbook discourse as 'authoritative':

I always make it a point that whenever I read something from a textbook that I try to write it ... how can I say... to emulate what they say.

Bakhtin's notion of authoritative discourses is useful for understanding the way students copy the words of the textbook. He cites religious, political and moral texts as examples of authoritative texts. He says this sort of text 'demands our unconditional allegiance'; it does not weave in with other voices and social languages, but rather,

...[it] enters our verbal consciousness as a compact and indivisible mass; one must either totally affirm it, or totally reject it. It is indissolubly fused with its authority – with political power, an institution, a person – and it stands or falls together with that authority. One cannot divide it up – agree with one part, accept but not completely another part, reject utterly a third part (1981:342-343).

What is happening in these student essays seems more complex than plagiarism and, as Ivanic (1997:195) and others (Pennycook 1993 and Scollon 1995) have pointed out, it is very difficult to draw the lines between plagiarism, imitation and acquiring the discourse. Much recent research (Bartholomae 1985, Hull and Rose 1990 and Angelil-Carter 2000a) indicates that students learn to write like academics by attempting to mimic the style of academics. Hull and Rose describe it as 'trying on' the discourse; they say that: '...human beings continually appropriate each other's language to establish group membership, to grow and to define themselves in new ways'(1990:242).

Another explanation for students' reluctance to tamper with authoritative voices may lie in the notion of the textbook as 'fact'. Economics lecturers with whom I have

consulted often indicate that students are not required to reference the textbook, the implication being that the textbook contains immutable facts which are not to be questioned or debated. As I have indicated earlier (Chapter 4.3.4.), the economics textbook is an illustration of a discourse that has become 'canonized' (Brown 1993). It provides no sense of the historical development of economic thought; instead the multiple and contesting voices of economic theorists have been smoothed out, erased, so that statements become reified and codified as fact. Students may be concerned that by changing the wording, they may change the meaning of the 'facts'. This would be true particularly for second language students who feel they don't have the language to express the ideas of the source text accurately. They see the language as rigid and foreign, something they are not able to alter and put in their own words.

In interviews the students said that at school teachers had either given them notes from the textbook or encouraged them to make their own notes by copying or paraphrasing from the textbook. Drawing from the first year economics textbook for the writing of these essays may therefore serve to perpetuate some of the practices that students have brought with them from school. Angelil-Carter (2000a) questions whether textbooks are useful for presenting the multi-voiced nature of texts because they hide an understanding of how knowledge has been constructed. She indicates that by being taught to reference, students learn to locate authors within a framework of ideas and they realise that knowledge is socially constructed and ideas belong to different traditions or schools of thought. Nonetheless, first year economics students must look to the textbook for the clearest and simplest explanations of the 'scientific' theories that form the core of their analytical essays. Therefore they will need to learn about the multi-voiced nature of texts by being exposed to a range of other readings.

Another difficulty for the students is that they are often given mixed and confusing messages. In a recent discussion with the first year accounting lecturer, I learned that in accounting students are advised to learn by rote the definitions in AC000, the accounting rule book, as it is not acceptable to 'put these definitions into their own words' (personal communication with Carla Fourie, lecturer in first year accounting). Economics lecturers on the other hand are more vague. The convenor

of the ECO100A course indicates that students can give definitions in their own words 'as long as they are accurate'. But the phrase 'use your own words' carries a rather hollow sound when one realises that, in fact, students feel that they need to appropriate the definition fairly closely or they will be told their definition is incorrect or 'inaccurate'. The discussion with the accounting lecturer brought home to me how bewildering the first year of university must be when students have to grapple with a range of different discourses and conventions. They often have to work out for themselves what constitutes appropriate behaviour in the context of each new discipline and come to grips with the conflicting messages that are conveyed.

Certainly, it seems important that students go through this transitional phase where they 'try on', copy and practise the new discourse, in order to make it their own so that they can identify themselves as academic writers. Over-referencing and sticking closely to the textbook seem to illustrate that powerful social forces, such as the need to conform and to appropriate the discourse, influence the choices students make about which discourses to draw on (cf. the dialectic referred to in 2.3.1. and 2.3.2.).

Students are still learning to integrate quotations and references into their texts and, as these excerpts show, they mostly use them to support their own statements or to define terms:

By this the government intends to increase the economic growth and also to increase the level of equitability in South Africa. According to McConnell and Brue 1999, pure capitalism is the best way to increase the level of equitability in South Africa. (Nomsa)

Which brings us to the term market, which it says in our reading (P. Mohr and L. Fourie) is 'any contact or communication between potential buyers and sellers of a good or service.' (Thabo)

At this early stage in the writing of academic essays, students do not often comment on or evaluate the work of others. This is partly because they do not know how to position themselves in relation to other authorities and partly because they do not feel confident enough to express their own opinions. However, Sibongile stands out

as an interesting exception when she attempts to critique Adam Smith's claim about the market system. Smith claimed that the market system worked like an invisible hand to co-ordinate the selfish actions of individuals to ensure that everyone was better off. Sibongile, first, struggles to quote this claim appropriately from one of the recommended texts:

According to Mohr and Fourie (2000) Smith claimed that the market mechanism work like an invisible hand. Quoted to Mohr and Fourie (2000) Smith is say 'that what will be produced is the goods and services that consumers are willing to spend their income on and goods that consumers do not want will not be produced'.

She then constructs the argument below in which she interrogates Smith's claim by questioning whether the market system does in fact produce what consumers want, if some consumers have no money to indicate what it is they want:

What about those poor consumers who don't have any money are their needs satisfied? They are poor and they need goods that will cost less and maybe those goods won't be produced [be]cause many rich people do not want them. Is this market system pure [fair]? Now the government should look at this and make a plan for those people. Its like we are still living in the Apartheid time where if you don't have money then your needs and wants won't be satisfy [satisfied].

Sibongile reveals her 'interest' by her commitment to this issue. She demonstrates this commitment by the use of unmodalised present tense assertions, as in *They are poor and they need goods* and the strong modal auxiliaries underlined in the text above. She claims authority by the use of the first person plural *we*, which places her as the central participant in what she is writing about. In economics, as in other disciplines, students must learn to negotiate the fine line between sounding authoritative and overstepping the limits of authority. This is the interpersonal function of the discourse (cf. 2.2.). The tutor might guide Sibongile by showing her that in academic discourse one is expected to provide evidence for value judgements such as the one she makes in the last sentence of the passage above.

Sibongile's concern about this issue tends to take her away from the central question of the transition economy, which means her essay loses coherence (cf. 6.2.2.). However it is interesting that she feels confident enough to take a stand in

relation to Adam Smith's idea and by so doing, she positions herself strongly as the author of her text and as someone who is concerned about the poor. This aspect of her social context, the explanatory level of my theoretical model is described in more detail in her biography in 5.6.6.

6.2.1.2. Interdiscursivity (academic discourse)

In the analysis that follows I will look at some of the discoursal characteristics in the students' writing that reflect practices and conventions of academic writing. The discourse community of economics and the wider discourse of the institution of the university have shaped these conventions. Therefore, by drawing on some of these practices, students begin to identify with the values and practices of the department and the institution. Traces of academic discourse absorbed and reflected in this way are often more subtle and more difficult to identify. To demonstrate the presence of these traces, I will examine two features of academic writing in these texts, lexical density and lexical forms. I have chosen these two features because they are typical of economics textbook language (cf. 4.3.3).

Lexical density

Halliday (1996) says written academic language typically shows a much denser pattern of lexicalised content: clauses are longer and more tightly packed with information than clauses in spoken language. Clause structure can be measured using the technique of calculating lexical density which was refined by Halliday (1989). Ivanic (1997:261) has used this technique to analyse the writing of her case studies and I have done the same calculations in order to be able to compare both her case studies with mine, and my case studies' first and last assignments.

Halliday's definition of lexical density is 'the average number of lexical words per clause'. Measuring lexical density involves counting a) the number of lexical words and b) the number of clauses in an extract and then dividing a) by b). An average of 5 or above counts as high lexical density, as one might expect to find in academic texts (Ivanic 1997). Halliday counts all paratactic (coordinate) and hypotactic (subordinate) clauses as separate clauses. However, he does not count 'embedded'

clauses, which are an integral part of the meaning of another clause or part of a constituent of another clause. As I have followed the rules outlined by Halliday and interpreted by Ivanic, I did not count these embedded clauses. Ivanic gives an example of what Halliday regards as an embedded clause, eg. *He saw in Manchester the possibility that the bourgeoisie would mend their ways*. In this construction, *that the bourgeoisie would mend their ways* is regarded as an integral part of the meaning of *possibility*, and is therefore regarded as an embedded clause. However, Halliday does count the 'that' clauses of reported speech (projected clauses) as full clauses in calculating lexical density. Because Ivanic, following Halliday, has counted non-restrictive non-finite clauses, such as *by depicting their experiences in creative forms* as separate clauses, in extract 4 I have counted *by selling Telkom and other businesses* as a separate clause.

By 'lexical word', Halliday means a meaning-carrying word such as 'economy' or 'work'. Gee (1999) defines lexical words as 'content words' belonging to the major categories of noun, verb, adjective and adverb. They are 'open' categories while function words or grammatical words, (determiners, pronouns, prepositions and quantifiers) are 'closed' categories. Halliday does not give firm guidelines for counting lexical words but, like Ivanic, I have counted acronyms such as 'GDP', compound nouns such as 'South Africa' and normally hyphenated items such as 'state-owned' as single lexical items; I have not counted 'market economy' or 'market system' as compound nouns.

I have taken 50 word extracts from the middle of the student essays as Ivanic has done. As she points out, these samples are too short to be of statistical value, but they do illustrate the infusion of academic discourse into the writing. None of these extracts included quotations. The extracts are presented below with lexical elements underlined and clauses in square brackets:

Extract 1 Vuyani

[First of all people are free to move where ever they feel like]. [The privatisation of many enterprise owned by a state.] [The individuals are now free to own a state property.] [The people are semi-employed equally.] [But if you looked up me,] [it will take a long time to accept me.]

Extract 2: Nomsa

[To continue; pure capitalism is also the best way of increasing standard of living] [because there is no restrictions;] [if anyone wants to start his or her own business] [has the right to do so;] [thus there would be more production of goods and services.] [In this system consumers are the people ...]

Extract 3: Thabo

[In a market system we can see that consumers are the king ie consumer sovereignty.] [because [if producer can produce goods that consumers don't want] the consumer will not buy or purchase those goods.] [All these things are what happened in South Africa.] [before consumers were just buy what can help them to survive.]

Extract 4: Sibongile

[Now an individual will have a chance to own Telkom] [and try to give other people a chance.] [I know [by selling Telkom and other big businesses] [the (there) will be a loss] [and the rate of unemployment will be higher] [but still the government is doing his best]

Extract 5: Ayanda

[And also during the 90's the South African economy was shifting from the command to the market economy] [whereby everyone in the country was free to run his/her business] [and fixed prices were released] [(B)usiness owners can charge their prices] [and they are free to make decisions in the business.]

Extract 6: Nkwenkwe

[The economy has benefited in direct foreign investment from global players] [who have pumped billions in the economy.] [There's obviously less restrictions, freedom of choice, trade liberalisation] [and new relationships have been forged with international investors.] [Foreign investment also leads to job creation] [which is truly needed in South Africa.]

Extract 7: Sherry

[Many state owned assets like Telkom have been sold off to the private sector] [as we see today.] [This is being done in the light of creating employment and in the hope of increasing the country's GDP.] [In 1996 many targets were set to reach the goal of economic growth.]

Extract 8: Philip

[A market system is one by which individual decisions and likes are put together through the market mechanism.] [The most essential element of this market mechanism is the market price.] [An important feature of the market system is privatisation.] [Certain goods [which are owned by the state] are bought by an individual ...]

The table below shows the number of clauses, the number of lexical words and the resulting calculation of lexical density for each extract:

Table 6.1: Paxton's case studies

Vuyani	22	6	3.66
Nomsa	25	6	4.16
Thabo	24	5	4.8
Sibongile	23	6	3.83
Ayanda	22	5	4.4
Nkwenkwe	28	5	5.6
Sherry	22	4	5.5
Philip	27	5	5.4

Table 6.2: Ivanic's case studies

John	36	3	12
Rachel	21	3	7
Angela	23	3	7.7
Frances	24	6	4
Justin	19	4	4.8
Sarah	28	4	7
Donna	29	4	7.3
Valerie	26	7	3.7

It is interesting to contrast the scores of lexical density for the writers in my study with the scores from Ivanic's study. Her adult students are all first language speakers of English but they are also adjusting to a new discourse^{iv} having been away from studies for a long time. However, they do on the whole achieve much higher lexical density, which would indicate that their writing is more typical of academic writing of first language speakers.

The table for my case study students shows that the excerpts of Nkwenkwe, Sherry, Thabo and Philip contain evidence of higher lexical density typical of academic writing, while the other students tend to use shorter clauses and have fewer lexical items. Again the difference between the students from former DET schools and those from non-DET schools is fairly marked. The fact that these students are speakers of English as an additional language may impact on the level of lexical density in their writing. EAL speakers for instance often tend to leave out articles, which would mean there were fewer function words in a 50 word extract than there ought to be. However, this would not influence the calculation of lexical density

significantly. I was able to identify clauses quite easily. For instance I identified Vuyani's second 'sentence' *The privatisation of many enterprise owned by a state* as a clause although he has left out the finite verb. Although I do not believe these features in the language of ESL speakers affected the comparison significantly, I also looked at other ways of detecting the infiltration of academic discourse into their writing (cf. Lexical Forms and 6.2.1.2.).

Lexical forms

Another way in which students show that they are beginning to appropriate characteristics of academic writing is in their use of nominalization, which leads to increase in the frequency of abstract nouns. Economics discourse makes extensive use of nominalization (Mason 1990) and even the short extracts above illustrate the ways in which all eight students are using this form, as in the following examples:

Vuyani:	<i>Privatisation</i>
Nomsa:	<i>Capitalism, restrictions, production, consumers</i>
Thabo:	<i>Consumers, producer</i>
Sibongile:	<i>Loss, unemployment</i>
Ayanda:	<i>Owners, decisions</i>
Nkwenkwe:	<i>Investment, players, restrictions, choice, liberalisation, creation</i>
Sherry:	<i>Employment, hope, growth</i>
Philip:	<i>Decision, likes, mechanism, privatisation</i>

Students are also beginning to use longer nominal groups^v, which are another feature of academic discourse (Halliday 1996). Long nominal groups lead to long and lexically dense clauses and by using these, the students increase the lexical density of their writing. The 50 word extracts serve to typify the use of nominal groups in the essays as a whole. Some examples are:

Nkwenkwe:	<i>Freedom of choice, trade liberalisation and new relationships...</i>
Nomsa:	<i>...the best way of increasing standard of living.</i> <i>...more production of goods and services</i>

- Sherry: *Many state owned assets ...*
- Philip: *The most essential element of this market mechanism...*
An important feature of the market system...

The use of the passive voice is a further way in which academic discourse achieves lexical density. I have indicated in Chapter 4 that the use of the passive is a typical feature of economics discourse, although some of the more recent first year economics textbooks seem to be moving away from extensive use of this form. Only four of the 50 word extracts show attempts to use the passive and these are illustrated in the list below:

- Ayanda: *Fixed prices were released*
- Nkwenkwe: *New relationships have been forged*
- Sherry: *Assets like Telkom have been sold off*
Many targets were set
- Philip: *Decisions and likes are put together*

Additional features of academic, and particularly economics, discourse are the use of economics constructs such as verbs used metaphorically and abstract nouns (which are frequently nominalisations) (Mason 1990). Ayanda and Nkwenkwe have used some verbs metaphorically, eg. *fixed prices were released, new relationships have been forged, investment leads to job creation*. There are a number of abstract nouns and nominalisations that are economic constructs in the extracts above eg. *privatisation, capitalism, standard of living, restriction, right, production, consumer sovereignty, loss, rate of unemployment, economy, investment, freedom of choice, trade liberalisation, job creation, employment, economic growth*. On the whole, the way these words have been used indicates that their meanings have been understood and suggests that these new terms are becoming part of the students' repertoires. This discursive intertextuality is an indication that the students are in the process of acquiring the new discourse.

6.2.2. Coherence (and cohesion)

Coherence is not strictly a feature of discursive intertextuality, but it is a key discursual feature of written academic discourse generally and it is of particular interest in this study because of the way it enhances the expression of meaning in a text. Therefore I have chosen to deal with it at this point, before I move on to look at the more specific features of economics discourse. Snow points to the importance of coherence in academic writing when she says that the skills that are required for producing decontextualised academic texts are ‘the linguistic skills prerequisite to giving, deleting and establishing relationships among the right bits of information;’ (Snow 1987:6) and ‘...controlling the complex syntax necessary to integrate and explicate relations among bits of information, and maintaining cohesion and coherence’ (1987:7).

Coherence is a difficult concept to pin down, therefore I will examine the way various theorists have defined coherence and cohesion and consider the complexities of teaching the concepts. I will then consider the extent to which the students’ essays have or have not achieved the signs of coherence I was looking for. Johns’ (1986) work on coherence is useful because she relates it to the teaching of coherence (and cohesion). Her exploration of coherence has been influenced by Halliday and Hasan (1976:23) who describe coherent text in the following way:

A text is a passage of discourse which is coherent in these two regards: it is coherent with respect to the situation, and therefore consistent in register: and it is coherent with respect to itself, and therefore cohesive.

Johns (1986:248) describes the Western concept of coherence as involving both ‘reader and text-based’ features. Achieving reader-based coherence requires successful interaction between the reader and the discourse being processed, which means the text should be linked to context and audience expectations. In terms of a written university assignment this means students need to stick to the requirements of the task and use the appropriate genre and register. In many sections of this chapter, where I explore students’ acquisition of the genre and register of economics discourse, I will in effect be looking at reader-based coherence and the ways in

which students' writing is appropriate for the context. Johns says text-based coherence consists 'of the ordering and interlinking of propositions within a text by use of appropriate information structure (including cohesion)' (251).

Celce-Murcia and Olshtain's (2000:8) more recent definition draws attention to linguistic and specific textual features that create coherence.

Coherence contributes to the unity of a piece of discourse such that the individual sentences or utterances hang together and relate to each other. This unity and relatedness is partially a result of a recognizable pattern for the propositions and ideas in the passage, but it also depends on the presence of linguistic devices that strengthen global unity and create local connectedness. Recognisable patterns may include those based on temporal or spatial relations or those based on semantically associated relations such as problem-solution or cause-effect. Coherence may also depend in part on patterns and strategies of text development that are very culture specific.

While the overall coherence of a longer passage depends on the presence of a conventional scheme or organization that is recognizable as generic or specific to a particular communicative purpose and discourse community, the overall coherence of such a passage also depends on the degree of coherence within each paragraph or section of the text. Each sentence or utterance is related both to the previous and following sentences in ways that lead the reader toward an easier and more effective interpretation of the text.

All the definitions above emphasise that coherence and cohesion are interdependent. Celce-Murcia and Olshtain's definition points to coherence on a number of different levels, explained further in Fairclough (1992). Drawing on Halliday and Hasan (1985), Fairclough points to the need to distinguish two levels in the analysis of cohesion i.e. the analysis of semantic functional relations and the analysis of explicit cohesive markers. The three main types of relation between clauses are identified as 'elaboration', 'extension' and 'enhancement'. In elaboration, one clause (sentence) elaborates on the meaning of another by further specifying or describing it i.e., by rewording, clarifying or exemplifying. In extension, one clause (sentence) extends the meaning of another by adding something new to it, usually with the use of 'and' or 'but'. In enhancement, one clause enhances the meaning of another by qualifying it in a number of possible ways such as referring to time, place, manner, cause or condition (Fairclough 1992). Some cohesive markers such as subordinating conjunctions also serve to indicate the semantic functional relations between

clauses. Cohesive ties can be classified into four main types: reference, ellipsis and substitution, conjunction and lexical cohesion^{vi} (Halliday 1989). All four normally work together in a text.

The different definitions of coherence that are given above show that even in Western academic writing, there are varied understandings of what it means to write coherently. Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000:8) point out that the strategies for achieving coherence are culture specific. Therefore, in the South African context it is important to remember that African secondary discourses display planned and coherent structuring of a very different nature (Gough 2000), which may help to explain the difficulty that speakers of African languages have with the notion of coherence in Western academic writing.

6.2.2.1. Teaching Coherence

My earlier research and that of Johns' (1986) show that one reason why students have difficulty with coherence is often because the concept is not clearly explained to them. Student writers are frequently told in comments in the margins that their writing lacks coherence but they seldom understand what this feedback means (Paxton 1998). This is something we have worked hard at rectifying in the Language and Communications course. Following Johns (1986) we teach students that a piece of writing can be considered coherent when it elicits the response, 'I follow you'. We offer two workshops on coherence and cohesion (cf. Worksheets on Coherence and Cohesion in Appendices E and F). However, this first essay was written before students had been introduced to coherence and cohesion and these aspects of writing presented one of the biggest challenges. It is also true that coherence and cohesion are not 'skills' that are acquired instantly, but with consistent and appropriate feedback they develop gradually over an extended period of time. Before this essay was written we had introduced students to the notion of argument as generic to academic writing. Following the structure of an argument also contributes to coherence. We showed them how to identify the main theme or argument in academic texts, and provided them with the following definition of academic argument:

A good and rigorous argument involves building a case around something very much like in a trial. It involves developing an argument for or against something by using evidence to back up or support your claims (Craig, Griessel and Witz 1994:13).

We also gave them the following guidelines for writing their own arguments:

When you write an essay it is important:

- a) to state your main argument early on
- b) to link all the points you make to this main argument
- c) to have a main idea around which the paragraph is built
- d) to sum up the main argument in your final paragraph

6.2.2.2. Coherence (and cohesion) in students' essays

Given that coherence is culture specific, it is important to acknowledge that, as the researcher, I bring particular cultural understandings to this analysis. I have been enculturated to academic discourse; therefore it is inevitable that I will interpret and analyse the students' writing in terms of its conformity to academic discourse.

In this analysis I will consider coherence and cohesion on three levels:

- Development of an argument by building a case around a main idea so that all subsequent propositions are relevant and logically sequential (interparagraph structure)
- Within the paragraph at the level of semantic relations between clauses
- The use of cohesive markers to signpost and link ideas in a logical way (interparagraph and intersentence)

It is important to note that it is difficult to separate these levels because the relations between clauses, both between and within paragraphs, are often signalled by lexicogrammatical items.

There was wide variation in the extent to which the essays could be considered coherent. To illustrate the wide diversity I will analyse one complete essay and draw examples from others, all of which provide good examples of interim literacies.

Thabo's essay shows the greatest lack of organisation, consisting of a rather randomly structured collection of definitions. When he was questioned about this in his interview, he explained that in economic essays at school they had been taught to define all economic terms and simply regurgitate the facts in any order. This is the 'thirty marks for thirty facts' phenomenon to which Kapp (2001:243) refers.

In most of the other essays, students have made some attempt at an introduction and a conclusion moving chronologically from the economic system employed during the apartheid years to the current shift to a more market based system under the ANC. This structure has provided some coherence. Philip was the only student among the case studies who applied some notion of academic argument. But coherence and the notion of argument are fuzzy concepts for students. Philip illustrated this in an interview when I drew his attention to his use of the word 'argument' in the introduction to his essay and asked what he meant by it. His response illustrates his confusion:

When you have an argument with someone, there's obviously a disagreement and one person's trying to oppose the person who's proposing it, so - and therefore I think argument's maybe a bit strong, but you are trying to argue or maybe point out to what extent... in relation to this question.

Interestingly, when Philip tries to articulate what argument means, his explanation indicates that he understands it as a 'battle' or 'fight'. This supports the findings of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), who indicate that everyday metaphors by which we build understanding of a word like 'argument' transfer to the academic context and influence the way we understand 'academic argument'. Philip modifies his first response, but is not able to articulate the notion of argument as support for a theory.

Philip is better at ordering his propositions than some of the other students, perhaps because he has been taught this at school and because English is his first language. However, his essay loses coherence both at the structural level and the level of lexico-grammatical links. These overlap, impacting on the overall coherence of the essay. His essay is reproduced in full below, followed by a discussion of some of the points at which coherence breaks down:

1 Before starting with the main argument, I think we need to understand
2 what a market actually is. 'A market is any contact or communication
3 between potential buyers and potential sellers of a good or service'
(Mohr and Fourie.2000. p. 45)(1)

4 Any firm or mechanism which connects potential buyers and prospective
5 sellers of certain goods and services is thought to be a market. (Mohr and
Fourie. 2000)(2)

6 For a market to exist, there are certain conditions which have to be
7 followed such as:

- 8 1. there must be not less than one potential buyer and seller of a
9 good or service.
- 10 2. the seller should have a good or service to sell
- 11 3. the buyer must have a suitable method to purchase a good or
12 service
- 13 4. a means of exchange or market price must be determined
- 14 5. the agreement must be guaranteed by law or by a particular
15 tradition (3)

16 A market system is one by which individual decisions and likes are put
17 together through the market mechanism. The most essential element of
18 this market mechanism is the market price. An important feature of the
19 market system is privatisation. Certain goods which are owned by the
20 state that are bought by an individual for his/her preference, known as
21 privatisation. (Mohr and Fourie. 2000)(4)

22 South Africa has definitely undergone a transition since 1990. Apartheid
23 together with the old government made it difficult for the SA economy to
24 thrive and become part of the world economy as a whole. According to
25 the article from the internet, the new government has clearly made and
26 had a positive effect on the SA economy, the article also concludes that
27 the transition isn't going to be easy but with the help of other economies
28 it will surely make a difference. (Hanekom, D. 1997. [Http://web.lexis-
nexis.com/univer...March 18,2000](http://web.lexis-nexis.com/univer...March 18,2000)) (5)

29 Hanekom also notes a few strategies for SA (in) which he hopes will
30 improve SA's chances of competing in the world market. He adds about
31 these strategies, with the help of GEAR, that will try to promote the
32 private sector investment combined with the restructuring of state assets.
33 They also want to remove trade barriers to shift their economy from
34 inward looking to broadening to a more open economic system as well as
35 to improve infrastructure. (Hanekom, D. 1997. [Http://web.lexis-
nexis.com/univer...March 18,2000](http://web.lexis-nexis.com/univer...March 18,2000)) (6)

36 Thus, I think SA has changed, to a better and stronger economy, but still
37 could be improved. The need to place an institutional framework to
38 support the market economy.(Smith, L. 2001)(7)

At the macro level, the level at which Philip structures his argument, he introduces his essay with the promise of *starting with the main argument* but then keeps the reader waiting expectantly, while he provides a long list of definitions of the market. He only arrives at his main argument, *South Africa has definitely undergone a transition since 1990*, in paragraph (5) on the second page of his essay and this breaks the coherence. Secondly, the essay loses coherence because he fails to establish links between his definitions of the market. In academic discourse, cohesive markers are usually used to signpost the development of an argument, yet his definitions, each structured as a paragraph, are strung together as a list with few connections. Thirdly, paragraph (2) and the first point in paragraph (3) are really redundant. They add nothing to the reader's understanding of a market because they simply repeat the definition offered in paragraph (1).

There are also cohesive links missing within paragraphs, and yet semantic relationships between clauses allow for a fairly coherent reading of such paragraphs. This is demonstrated by the analysis of paragraph (4) in the table below and the discussion that follows:

Table 6.3.

<i>A market system is one by which individual decisions and likes are put together through the market mechanism. (a)</i>	Elaboration	
<i>The most essential element of this market mechanism is the market price. (b)</i>	Extension	<i>this refers to market mechanism in (a) lexical cohesion in repetition of market mechanism</i>
<i>An important feature of the market system is privatisation. (c)</i>	Extension	Repetition of <i>market system</i> in (a)
<i>Certain goods which are owned by the state that are bought by an individual for his/her preference, known as privatisation. (d)</i>	Elaboration	Repetition of <i>privatisation</i> in (c)

The first sentence of the paragraph, sentence (a), has only a tenuous link to the previous paragraph through the lexical cohesion of *a market* and *market system*. The

underlying semantic relations provide some coherence within the paragraph because sentence (b) extends the meaning of *the market mechanism* by adding something new, as does sentence (c). However, because the lexical cohesion in the repetition of *market system* in sentences (a) and (c) is interrupted by sentence (b), coherence would be improved if a conjunction, such as 'Another...' were introduced at the beginning of sentence (c). 'Sentence' (d) seems to elaborate on sentence (c) by providing a definition of *privatisation* but the 'sentence' is not clearly expressed and the only link is the lexical cohesion in *privatisation*. Cohesion is also related to the word order of the sentence. For instance, if he had made *privatisation* the subject of 'sentence' (d), the link would have been much clearer.

Once Philip has presented his argument, he does not build precise and persuasive evidence to support it, possibly because of his inexperience at doing this, yet one can detect relevant threads to support his central theme i.e. *South Africa has definitely undergone a transition (line 22)*. These are: *promote the private sector investment..., the restructuring of state assets (lines 31 and 32)* and *...remove trade barriers (line 33)*. However, coherence breaks down because his sequencing of time is not consistent. He claims *South Africa has undergone a transition* using the present perfect tense, but all the evidence he provides seems yet to happen i.e. *the transition isn't going to be easy but with the help of other economies it will surely make a difference (lines 27 and 28)* and *will try to promote the private sector investment combined with the restructuring of state assets. (lines 31 and 32)*. These clauses therefore fail to enhance the main claim, despite the fact that they are mostly linked by appropriate cohesive devices. This analysis shows how each of the three levels I have identified depend on one another in order for a piece of writing to hang together coherently.

Some shorter examples illustrate a range of difficulties and proficiencies in this aspect of writing. Some of the students had difficulty staying relevant to the central theme; this is what Johns (1986:248) describes as 'sticking to the point'. Familiarity with the narrative form means that many of them start their essays with a 'story' of the command system under apartheid (cf. 6.4.2). Essays that go into too much detail on this begin to lose relevance to the central theme.

Sibongile's essay loses coherence when, halfway through, she digresses to discuss and critique Adam Smith's claim that the market will act like an 'invisible hand' to produce what consumers want. This is not relevant to the question asked and it bears little connection to the previous paragraph, discussing the privatisation of Telkom. Below I have reproduced the digression (2) and part of the preceding paragraph (1):

Since South Africa is still a developing country it must make sure that it get people from other countries to invest to us....I know by selling Telkom and other big businesses the(re) will be a loss and the rate of unemployment will be higher, but still the government is doing his best to support the country now its up to individuals to increase the local economy.(1)

According to Mohr, P. and Fourie, L (2000) Smith claimed that the market mechanism work like an invisible hand. Quoted to Mohr, P. and Fourie, L (2000) Smith is say 'that what will be produced is the goods and services that consumers are willing to spend their income on and goods that consumers do not want will not be produced.' What about those poor consumers who don't have any money are their needs satisfied? They are poor and they need goods that will cost less and maybe those goods wont be produced cause many rich people do not want them. Is this market system healthy pure. Now the government should look at this and make a plan for those people. (2)

In her discussion of reader-based coherence, Johns (1986:250) says that it is important that students consider both the audience and the requirements of the assignment. The problem is that Sibongile has moved away from the focus of the task. Instead of evaluating the extent to which the South African economy has undergone a transition to a more market based economy, she is evaluating the market system.

In Chapter 2 I indicated my interest in understanding the processes and practices involved in creating the essays, that is the stage of analysis represented in the middle layer of Fairclough's three-dimensional diagram. In this context it is important to foreground the fact that Sibongile, Vuyani, Nomsa, Ayanda and Thabo consider English an additional language which will influence the development of coherence and cohesion in their texts. Most students writing in the university for the first time struggle with reading and writing the more decontextualised and abstract language of economics: I have identified cohesion as a problem in all the students'

texts. However, the EAL students have the added difficulty of acquiring and knowing how to use a repertoire of typical English connectors before they can begin to write more cohesive and coherent essays. In addition, as I mentioned earlier, cohesion and coherence work differently in African languages, which may add to the difficulty of creating coherent English language texts. Examining extracts from two of the EAL students' essays make these issues clearer.

Vuyani has the greatest difficulty moving to decontextualised academic writing because, as I note in 6.4.1., his writing bears a close resemblance to spoken discourse. He has used few connectives between clauses and produced a very 'fragmented'^{vii} piece of writing. In a discussion of the more state-controlled economy under apartheid, Vuyani constructs the following paragraph:

Many of the businesses were owned by the state. (1)
The people or labour were owned by state, how? (2)
There was this document which they called it 'pass'. (3)
People were arrested if they didn't pay for their lives or any thing else. (4)
Labors [labourers], white people were the first priority where it comes to an employment. (5)
The prices were taken (fixed) by a state too. (6)
I suppose the economy of S. A. between 1980 to 1990 was dissappointing because they didn't allow other countries to trade with us as SA. (7)
This resulted in an expelition in sports and the investors were none. (8)
This was pure communism. (9) (cf. Appendix H^{viii} for Vuyani's full essay)

Even in this fragmented piece there are semantic links between sentences, but many of these require some understanding of Vuyani's background in order to make the assumptions one needs to make. For instance, I have assumed that *the people or labour* referred to in sentence (2) are black labourers because they *were owned by state*. One can assume that the reference to being owned by the state links with the word *pass* in sentence (3). If one understands the way the pass system worked in South Africa, one could say that sentence (4) shows lexical cohesion with sentence (3) because being arrested was a consequence of failing to carry the pass, but all these links are dependent on the reader's background knowledge. His use of the question *how?* in sentence (2) seems to be an attempt to link sentences (2) and (3). In sentence (3) the use of the pronoun *they* is ambiguous because it is not clear whether it refers to *the people* or to *state* in sentence (2). Although one might expect

that the reference to *state* would have to be a singular pronoun, students do quite often use the plural when referring to 'the government' and 'the state'. Although there seems to be little connection between the first four sentences and sentences (5) (6) or (7), there is vague lexical cohesion between sentence (2) and sentence (6) in the form of the repetition of *state* and between sentence (2) and sentence (5) because of the repetition of *labor*. However, sentence (2) appears to refer to black labourers, while sentence (5) refers to white labourers who were favoured in terms of employment during the apartheid era.

Although Vuyani begins a new topic in sentence (7), with the discussion of sanctions, there is no new paragraph or connective to signal this. It is not clear who *they* refers to in sentence (7) but it seems to presuppose a nominal phrase such as '*the major Western powers*', which is, however, missing from Vuyani's text. The referent *This* in sentence (8) seems to refer to sanctions implied in *didn't allow other countries to trade with us* but *This* in sentence (9) is ambiguous because it seems to cohere with the previous topic of state control, and yet the demonstrative pronoun *This* would indicate that it was referring to the most recent topic i.e. sanctions. There is some lexical cohesion between sentences (7) and (8) through the use of phrases such *countries to trade with us as SA and investors*.

Experienced readers and markers who are familiar with the students' background learn to 'read between the lines' in order to make sense of student writing. However, it is important that the breaks in coherence are pointed out and that students learn how to resolve some of these cohesive ties if the passage is to be clearly understood by a wider readership.

Sibongile seems to have similar problems in that her pronoun references are often ambiguous which leads to a breakdown in cohesion. Secondly she is struggling with register; she has difficulty selecting appropriate connectives for academic writing. However, Sibongile, unlike Vuyani, achieves some coherence through the semantic relationships she sets up between propositions. The first two extracts illustrate pronoun ambiguity and difficulties with connectives. The final extract will show the way semantic relations and cohesive ties work together to enhance coherence:

Extract 1: Sibongile

Since South Africa is still a developing country it must make sure that it get people from other countries to invest to [in] us.

This sentence starts a new paragraph and yet there is no connection to the previous paragraph. Both the first *it* and the second are anaphoric references to *South Africa* but the first person plural *us* presupposes a referent such as ‘the South African people’ which she has failed to provide so the reader may find the referent ambiguous.

The example below illustrates the way Sibongile is struggling to find the appropriate connectives for an academic text, drawing on links she might have used in spoken conversation or in an informal letter. However in the extract below, she shows clear signs of developing an argument.

Extract 2: Sibongile

Is the market system pure [fair]? (1)

Now the government should look at this and make a plan for those people [poor consumers referred to earlier in her essay]. (2)

Its like we are still living in the Apartheid time when if you don't have money then your needs and wants won't be satisfy. (3)

South Africa is a country in transition things are getting better but slowly. (4)

The link between sentence (1) and (2) is *Now*, which would have been appropriate for a conversation, but is not the appropriate register for an academic essay. In sentence (2) *this* refers to whether or not the market system is fair. *Its like* is a colloquial expression, used to connect sentence (2) and sentence (3) and *it* refers to the whole situation she is describing. There is also some cohesion established through the semantically related cluster *those people (poor consumers)* in sentence (2) and *don't have money* and *needs and wants* in sentence (3). There is no link at all between sentence (3) and sentence (4), yet she has moved from a discussion of the effect of the market system on the poor to an entirely new idea, that of the prospects for economic improvement in the transition from a command to a market economy.

It seems useful to analyse semantic relationships alongside the cohesive ties in Sibongile's third paragraph because this paragraph again illustrates how they

overlap. For this analysis, I have broken the text up into clauses and set them out in table format:

Extract 3: Sibongile

After the 1994's elections things became better. (1)
The state sold some of the properties to individuals (2)
and now people were given a chance to own their own businesses and create jobs for others.(3)
Yes, the rate of crime became high (4)
and the rate of unemployment became high (5)
because South Africa is in transition (6)
it is still paying the depts (debts) of the last government. (7)

Table 6.4.

<i>After the 1994's elections things became better. (1)</i>		
<i>The state sold some of the properties to individuals (2)</i>	Elaboration	-
<i>And now people were given a chance to own their own businesses and create jobs for others.(3)</i>	Extension	Conjunction 'and'
<i>Yes, the rate of crime became high (4)</i>	Extension	Conjunction Yes [certainly]
<i>And the rate of unemployment became high (5)</i>	Extension	Conjunction 'and' Lexical cohesion in repetition of <i>became high</i>
<i>Because South Africa is in transition (6)</i>	Enhancement (causal)	Conjunction 'because' Lexical cohesion between <i>election</i> in clause (1) and <i>transition</i>
<i>it is still paying the depts (debts) of the last government. (7)</i>	Extension	

The table above shows that Sibongile's text achieves coherence because the cohesive links work in combination with the semantic relationships between clauses. For instance, *and* in clause (3) is a link typically used with clauses of extension, to add something new to the previous statement, while *Because* in clause (6) is used with clauses of causal enhancement. In clause (4) Sibongile is using *Yes* both for emphasis and to provide a link to the previous discussion, but again this

shows that she is having difficulty finding the appropriate register. *Yes* is a word that might be used in informal spoken conversation, while *Certainly* might have been a more appropriate conjunction to use in an academic essay and yet Sibongile gets her meaning across quite effectively. She achieves this because clause (4) extends the meaning of clause (3); therefore even when Sibongile may have chosen an inappropriate cohesive device, there is some coherence to her text.

The detailed analysis of coherence in student writing, discussed in this section, is important because, firstly, it demonstrates that even in apparently unconnected pieces of student writing, the assembly of ideas is not entirely random. Secondly, it draws attention to aspects of student writing which could be concentrated on in order to develop a more comprehensive approach to teaching coherence and cohesion in the future. Thirdly, it is particularly important for this study because coherence is crucial to learning and making meaning in a new discourse. As Macken-Horarik (1996:233) indicates, learning can be seen as a 'semiotic phenomenon' if we understand it as 'an ability to access and utilize a new meaning potential'. The next section explores some of the other ways in which students use their linguistic resources to construct understanding in economics.

6.3. Appropriating economics discourse and building understanding

This section will return to a focus on intertextuality as it is used as a tool for analysing conceptualisation and acquisition of economic discourse. The following conceptual and linguistic issues will be considered:

- Situated meanings and cultural models
- Difficulties and dilemmas in the application of the model to the case study of the transition economy
- The lexis of abstract modelling

6.3.1. Situated meanings and cultural models

As I indicated in Chapter 2.4.1. I have found that Gee's (1999) notions of 'situated meaning' and 'cultural models' provide a useful structure for investigating the ways in which students construct meaning in the new economics discourse. Gee (1999) says that the meanings of words are not fixed, but have multiple and shifting interpretations, which are shaped for specific contexts of use. Appropriation of meanings for words is linked to the practices and worldviews of social and cultural groups and thus situated meanings and cultural models can be recognised as aspects of the writer's 'interest'. Understanding something of the situated meanings of the words and phrases students use, will help us to understand the ways in which they are constructing meaning in their essays. I am particularly interested in whether these situated meanings and models are a help or a hindrance in the learning process and have found that my interviews with the students have been valuable in giving me access to the students' developing models or schema. It would be impossible to explore this comprehensively but the discussion that follows will illustrate a few of the ways in which students' cultural models affect their writing and how the interviews have helped to illuminate their own understanding of certain concepts.

6.3.1.1. Situated meanings and cultural models: understanding the apartheid economy

During the first semester of the course, students were introduced to economic systems and to the theoretical constructs of the command and market economies. They were taught that these are theoretical constructs, that there are no pure market or pure command economies but rather that most countries have mixed economies. It was pointed out that the South African economy under apartheid had a number of features of a theoretical command economy. For instance, the apartheid government, through the Group Areas Act, ensured that most of the land in the country remained in the hands of people classified as white. People classified as non-white could own land, but only in areas of the country reserved specifically for them. This meant effectively that non-white people were prevented from owning businesses outside the areas reserved for them. The movement of labour was

controlled by the application of the pass laws and the government controlled who had access to certain jobs. Although individuals owned most of the factors of production, the state owned some big parastatals such as Iscor, Sasol, Eskom and Armscor, etc.

The essays reveal the way students from different backgrounds brought different mental models to the understanding of the apartheid economy. Most of the black students failed to understand the nuances and complexities of the ways in which the apartheid government controlled the economy for the benefit of the minority. Therefore they claimed categorically that during the apartheid years the government had owned 'all the factors of production' and that 'South Africa was a command economy', when in fact most property, land and labour was in private hands under the Nationalist government. These statements are understandable, because this was largely the way black people would have experienced the apartheid economy. Despite what was taught in lectures and what they read, students would have developed their own theories (cultural models) about the apartheid economy from their own lived experiences and from the stories passed down to them by their parents and grandparents. They would be aware that, when they were growing up in the townships and the rural areas in the 1980's, people in their communities did not own their own property or businesses or have freedom of movement, because the apartheid government had legislated against this. Extracts from the students' essays illustrate this belief:

SA had been practising a command system where all property rights were taken by the government. (Nomsa)

South Africa was under apartheid for long time where white[s] were only favourites...

Many of the businesses were owned by state, how? There was this document which they called it pass. People were arrested if they didn't pay for their lives... This was pure communism. (Vuyani)

The government then owned all factors of production and own[ed] more firms like Iscor...and many blacks were not given chance to own a firm or a farm, if a black person has a business the government will close it...(Sibongile)

...in fact South Africa was a command economy (Thabo)

almost everything in South Africa was owned by the government (Ayanda)

The underlined sections indicate the way students reshape what they have been taught in the light of their own experiences and reveal the strong sentiments they have about the injustices of the apartheid era. They show their commitment to their statements by the categorical use of the past tense and intensifiers such as 'all'.

Nkwenkwe, the student from a private school, is much clearer about the way the apartheid government controlled the economy and he shows this by saying:

During this era the SA economy was not totally a command system, however it was run by the minority.

He wrote a very articulate essay showing a breadth of understanding about current issues in the South African economy, unequalled by any other student in the class. In his interview he accounted for his extensive economic knowledge by explaining that his father is a businessman and has encouraged him to read the business sections of the newspapers every day.

It is interesting that in the essay by Philip, the only white student, the issue of property rights and factors of production during the apartheid years is not even mentioned. In fact, Philip has avoided the discussion of economic systems in the apartheid era and simply made the following sweeping statement:

South Africa has definitely undergone a transition since 1990. Apartheid together with the old government made it difficult for the SA economy to thrive and become part of the world economy.

When asked to explain what he meant by this, he said he thought South Africa had been isolated because of the racist government during apartheid. However, he was hesitant to discuss the ways in which the racist government had used aspects of the command economy to control ownership of property by black people. When I moderated the essays I found that many of the white students avoided a discussion of the apartheid economy perhaps because these controls had not affected them and

were not part of their experience. Some white students also appeared uneasy or embarrassed about discussing the apartheid economy.

6.3.1.2. Situated meanings and discourse models: understanding the 'market' economy and economic policy under the ANC

Given their perceptions of the apartheid economy, it is not surprising that many of the students presented particularly positive and optimistic views of the 'new' government and the shift under the ANC to a more market-based economy. This may stem from values their families and communities have developed about the new democratic government. Extracts which illustrate this are:

After the 1994 elections things became better. The state sold some of the properties to individuals and now people were given a chance to own their own businesses and create jobs for others (Sibongile)

Once South Africa has been moved to market system, many companies are privatised... By this the government tends to increase the economic growth; and also to increase the equitability in South Africa. According to McConnell and Brue (1999) pure capitalism is the best way of improving equitability to a country. The economic growth also increases because many business enterprises are started and the citizens of the country also get a share to the economy (Nomsa).

These positive views, combined with a reluctance to critique the new government, led them to overstate the case and make statements that were incorrect. For instance, the following extract from Nomsa's writing shows she has made an incorrect assumption about unemployment in the market economy:

...the market system decreases the rate of unemployment...Since South Africa has engaged this system, there is great changes in employment and in other fields.

This is not correct, either theoretically or in practice, because the command economy in the Soviet Union had a policy of full employment and, in fact, unemployment in South Africa has increased under the ANC's more market-orientated policy. Companies have retrenched workers in order to become more streamlined and more competitive. However, the students may have been misled by

one of the readings, where Derek Hanekom, Minister of Agriculture in 1996, was outlining the goals for 2000 and setting reduction of unemployment as one of the goals of the new economy. Nomsa has not checked whether these goals were achieved and she has simply assumed that the goals were met and unemployment was reduced as the economy became more market oriented. Using the unmodalised present tense, she makes the strongly authoritative statement, *the market system decreases the rate of unemployment*, but she has provided no evidence to support this.

Thabo's writing shows conceptual problems when he claims that *exchanging a rand for a dollar was never done before, (during apartheid) but now it happens*. Thabo would have been taught that the ANC government has moved to a more open and competitive economy and has lifted many of the foreign exchange controls instituted under the Nationalist government. He has assumed that prior to 1994, there was no currency exchange, which indicates his understanding of the concept of currency exchange is shaky. Thabo comes from a working class background and his family and the community in which he was raised would not have had opportunities to travel, so exchanging currencies was not part of his experience. As a teacher catering to students from such a diversity of cultures, it is often difficult to know how much one can assume about their background knowledge.

6.3.2. Difficulties and dilemmas in the application of the model to the case study: The Problem of the 'Real'^{ix} vs. the Hypothetical

As indicated, I have used the interviews to probe the different situated meanings and discourse models that students bring to this essay and the students have confirmed that they were mostly drawing on their own experiences. Vuyani's interview was particularly enlightening because he said that he had simply matched the theoretical characteristics of a command economy (the model) to what he knew of South Africa during apartheid (lifeworld). This confirms that Vuyani and possibly some of the other students found their lifeworld experience of apartheid very similar to the theoretical model for a command economy (cf. 6.3.1.1.), therefore they simply collapsed the 'real' and the hypothetical. The teaching and the textbook, which had

emphasised that there were no pure command economies in the 'real' world, were ignored or forgotten in the face of well-established experiences, which matched the hypothetical model. Economics educators (Papps and Henderson 1977, Meyer and Land 2002 and Thomas 1989) have indicated that students have difficulties using theoretical models. Economists design models to abstract from reality in order to make theorising and predicting simpler but this means that application of the model in the 'real' world is never as simple and clear cut as the original model. Thomas (1989) observes that students will always organise their experiences in order to make sense of them and Vuyani has organised his experiences of apartheid to fit the model for a command economy. Thomas (1989:54) warns that students' experiences may not contribute to economics understanding and that this may prove to be 'the greatest challenge for economics educators' because it will involve facilitating a 'reformulation of concepts in operational terms' (cf. 2.4.1.).

Vuyani's difficulty stems from the fact that he has very little understanding of what an economic model is and what it is used for. Papps and Henderson (1977) say that although there has been a move for first year economics texts to include a cursory treatment of what economists are doing when they construct their theoretical models, this short, insufficient treatment fails to communicate. It tends to hide the difficulties and ambiguities of the scientific methodology and ultimately confuses rather than clarifies.

6.3.3. The lexis of abstract modelling: Accessing the 'few' words in economics

It is important to remember that while students might have understood a concept, they may not be proficient enough in the new language to express their understanding in the appropriate economic register. This would be particularly true for EAL students.

There were many instances of inappropriate usage of economics terminology in the essays; this is understandable as students try out the new terms and phrases, appropriate their meanings, and learn when and how to use them. Nomsa provides

an interesting example of inappropriate usage when she claims that '*consumers are the boss of the market*', a phrase which economists would certainly frown upon. However, Nomsa's phrase probably originated from a tutor's attempt to explain a new concept. The term 'consumer sovereignty' in the market economy means that consumers have sovereignty because they have the power to determine the types and quantities of goods and services which will be produced. This concept would be somewhat unfamiliar to the students, but in a tutorial that I attended, the tutor simplified it for them by referring to consumers as 'sovereign' or 'king'. Thabo used this simplification of the terminology in his essay and referred to the consumer as king, when he wrote, *In the market system, we can see that consumers are the king* In her sentence, Nomsa has revealed her 'on the spot' image of the consumer as 'boss', an image which she has assembled to help her understand this concept. Thus, in a sense the tutor has created a situated meaning to assist the students. As Wells (1992:48) indicates real learning takes place when a student's transformed understanding is a personal reconstruction accommodated within the student's emerging identity.

Vuyani had difficulty acquiring the new terms. He is one of the few case study students who had not done economics at school and, in this first essay, he mixed up some central concepts such as 'economic system' and 'market system' and had trouble expressing economic concepts in the precise language that is required, as in the following instances:

*The prices were taken [fixed] by the state
Lots of money is placed [allocated] to create more jobs.*

Henderson and Hewings (1990) comment that the compressed nature of economics textbook language is problematic for second language students because it does not give students the contextual clues they need for decoding the discourse. This is true of abstract language in most academic disciplines, but they point out that what is unusual about economics discourse is that it uses abstractions extensively even in elementary textbooks.

Philip explained his tendency to make broad generalisations by saying that this was his first essay and he had not realised that, in economics, one had to be very specific:

P: I just find that in economics you have to be very specific in the way you answer questions

M: That's what I think

P: Like with some of the other courses, like Philosophy and history for example you can thumbsuck a little bit

Sibongile told me that she found the language of economics difficult because 'in economics you have to use few words'. Philip's and Simbongile's observations are confirmed by applied linguistics research which indicates that one major difference between hard and soft knowledge areas is the extent to which they value 'succinctness and precision' (Hyland, 1999:109). Students writing in economics are expected to employ the 'compressed code' of the textbook and provide more finely detailed explanations of issues than they would be required to do in some of the other social sciences.

However, as Gee points out, situated meanings are never static and when I interviewed Vuyani eight months later, in October, and gave him his essay to look at again, it was clear that he had a much better understanding of the terms. In fact, the essay seemed to embarrass him.

6.4. The range of other discourses students draw on

The analysis in sections 6.2. and 6.3. gives us a picture of ways in which students are acquiring the new discourses. But, given the cultural and linguistic diversity of the student population at South African universities, we can fruitfully dig deeper into the cultural and discursive hybridity and intertextuality which characterizes students' texts. Bakhtin (1981:291-2) says:

...all languages of heteroglossia, whatever the principle underlying them and making each unique, are specific points of view on the world, forms for conceptualising the world in words, specific world views, each characterized by its own objects, meanings and values.

Through the snatches of different social languages we find in these early student texts, connections are being made to previous encounters, to other people, ideas, texts, institutions and discourses outside of the immediate academic situation. When a student uses a word or a phrase that appears 'inappropriate' to an academic or an economist, it may be that she has drawn on an association that gives her access to a new concept. Therefore these traces of home and school discourses embedded in students' writing play an important role in assisting them to bridge the gaps, to conceptualise and construct new discourses. This is the process Kress (2000 and 2002) describes as 'transformation' or 'remaking'. He says that changes in discourse 'arise as a result of the interested actions of individuals' (2000:153) and because our 'interests' are not really matched by the existing semiotic resources, we choose the most apt forms to represent our meanings and transform them. Sometimes these forms may assist learning, as in Nomsa's remaking of the phrase *boss of the market* to represent consumer sovereignty. While sometimes the forms and associations students draw on may not be helpful and may block learning, nevertheless in each case, Kress's notion of 'interest' allows me to capture the students as agents as they work with historically shaped resources.

The extracts discussed in this final section should not be seen as representative of the essays as a whole, but rather, as suggestions that sometimes a few words or a phrase signal the writer's 'interest' (cf. 2.3.2) in a specific way. In this section, I will look at the words and phrases as well as lexico-grammatical features typical of other discourses, which permeate the economics essay.

6.4.1. Spoken discourses and the oral tradition

I am particularly interested in the variety of spoken discourses and genres from a more oral tradition that filter into the texts of the students and reveal something of their social and historical roots. My analysis in 6.2.1.2. showed that the writing of the students from former DET schools did not have the lexical density typical of written academic language. Halliday (1996:352) says that written language, centred around nominal groups as it is, tends to create 'a world of things and structures,

discontinuous, rigid, and determinate.’ Spoken language, on the other hand, is organised around clauses and processes and it ‘creates a world of movement and flux, or rather a world that is moving and flowing, continuous, elastic, and indeterminate.’

6.4.1.1. Movement and Flow

Syntactic features of this ‘flow’ which I have identified in these essays are:

- Use of connectives
- Repetition
- Question and answer forms

In his essay, Vuyani continually strings together clauses without connectives. A 250 word extract produced 7 instances of this. The example below illustrates the way Vuyani strings clauses together without connectives and it provides further evidence that he is ‘writing as he speaks’:

The individuals are now free to own a state property. The people are semi employed equally. But if you looked up me, it will take a long time to accept me. The individual are free to take dicsision e.g. farmers are free to decide on their properties. The foreign countries they are now free to trade with SA. SA is now participating on world sporting event... (Vuyani)

I have earlier pointed to some of the difficulties that students had with cohesion and the use of connectives in their writing (cf. 6.2.2.). It is clear from the examples cited that the speakers of African languages are not using many subordinate clauses but prefer co-ordinate clauses joined by conjunctions like *and*, *but*, *because* and *so*. Clauses connected in this way often contribute to lengthy sentences of 40 or 50 words and, as Chafe (1982) indicates, this dependence on co-ordination is a feature of everyday spoken language. Ayanda’s and Sibongile’s texts provide some of the best examples of this:

Lets give the country a chance and hope that the rate of crime will go down and people will get jobs and the state will continue selling properties to individuals, so that people will be given a chance to buy firms and invest their money. (Sibongile)

The market economy is very much characterised by private freedom whereby everyone in the country is free to make his or her decisions toward the owners of his assets and also in market economy there is very much limited government intervention, but in market economy the government does own property whereas the most is privately owned. (Ayanda)

Influences of secondary discourses

There are indications that some of the features in the student writing may be drawn from oral literary language (secondary discourse) rather than everyday spoken discourses (primary discourse). For instance, Tannen (1985) and Brown and Yule (1983) identify the repetition of the same syntactic form, or parallelism, as a typical feature of the more literary spoken genres. Tannen recognises parallel constructions such as these as an aid to speech construction and it may be that students transfer them to their essays because they find they also serve as an aid in writing.

As illustrated below, several of the students use this type of repetition,

When we talk about a market system, we talk about the pure perfect market (Nomsa)

The individuals are now free to won [sic] a state property. The people are semi-employed equally. But if you looked up me, it will take a long time to accept me. The individual are free to take dicision [sic] eg. farmers are free to decide on their properties. The foreign countries they are now free to trade with SA. (Vuyani)

*In South Africa before there was a lot of restriction in foreign currency but now there is no such restriction...
In the market economy, it doesn't mean that government is not included, it is included, but with less influence. (Thabo)*

Gough (2000:48-49) has noted that the practice of using co-ordinating conjunctions is a feature of the *intsomi*, the genre of the African oral folk tale and has described it as 'clause-chaining'. Gough provides the following extract from an *intsomi*, the Xhosa version of Cinderella. As the extract shows, the *intsomi* has a clear stanzaic structure. Discourse markers (*hayi ke*, *hayi okunene*), given in italics, mark the beginning of the stanza. Clause chaining, given in bold, and marked in this extract

by the verb beginning with *wa-*, is used to link clauses within a stanza. The beginning of a new stanza is marked by a break in the clause-chaining pattern:

a) *hayi ke uhambile ke umntana nenqwelo yakhe*
wayifihla ke lo mntana inqwelo etyholweni
wafika apha emdanisweni
wangena ngamandla

b) *hayi okunene uyithathile le ntombi isangena emnyango*
wayixhwila ngoko
wathi nanku umfazi ungenile
wandanisa naye ngobusuku bonke

a) No then the child left in her carriage,
<and> she hid the carriage in the bush
<and> she arrived at the dance
<and> she entered openly

b) No truly, he (the prince) took the girl as she came in
<and> he swirled her
<and> he said 'Here is my wife, she has entered'
<and> he danced with her the whole night.

Gough (2000) notes that he has found this stanzaic structure to be variably present and most marked in more experienced narrators and that less experienced narrators tend to produce less well-structured stories, chaining together the whole story without the well-planned breaks illustrated in the example above.

In a research project at the University of the Western Cape, Gough and Bock (2001:103) compared first year essays written in both Xhosa and English and found that this feature of a 'spoken flow of ideas' was displayed in the home language and the second language essays. From this they concluded that this characteristic was unlikely to be a consequence of writing in an unfamiliar language, but rather that it reflected a discursive practice that recurred regardless of the language used.

Gough and Bock (2001) question whether patterns such as clause chaining reflect a dominance of the primary discourses or a transfer from African secondary discourses. From their preliminary research they conclude that such structures cannot be transparently explained as a transfer of practices from African secondary discourses. As noted above, the type of 'clause chaining' displayed in the essays

tends to be a feature of the less experienced or immature storytellers. Their preliminary research seemed to indicate that the practices of Xhosa first language teaching in schools did not promote the development of secondary discourses. They were concerned that these features are more likely to be the result of the students' schooling experience, which has failed to equip them with a dominant secondary discourse.

Assessing these explanations is difficult. My interview with Ayanda gave some support to Gough and Bock's (2001) argument as regards 'clause chaining'. He told me that other tutors had commented on the way he used very long sentences and that he had developed this practice because of his concern that he would not have enough to say in an essay:

I fear cutting my sentences will mean I cannot have enough words...I try to make sentence long to reach the number of required words

This explanation, *I cannot have enough words*, highlights his concern that as an EAL speaker he has a limited English vocabulary. It also implies that he lacks confidence in the subject matter and is concerned that he may not have enough to say on the topic to ensure adequate coverage.

However, some findings from my data and my interviews with students contradict Gough and Bock's research (2001) and show that some of the practices of Xhosa first language teaching are in fact encouraging the development of secondary discourses in school. One of my Xhosa speaking colleagues, Bongzi Bangeni, has explained (in personal communication) that Xhosa praise poems, which students study in Xhosa first language classes, construct an argument by using the question and answer form as a rhetorical device. Repetitive questioning and answering takes place orally in class when students are studying poetry - the Xhosa teacher initiates a choral response by asking the question.

Two students, Vuyani and Sibongile (both former DET students), repeatedly used non-embedded question-and-answer sequences in this first essay and when asked about this, they told me that the way they were using questions and answers in their

writing was a discourse style borrowed from the literary genres of their home languages.

Sibongile uses the question and answer style to develop a discussion in her text:

What about those poor consumers who don't have any money, are their needs satisfied? They are poor and they need goods that will cost less and maybe those goods won't be produced 'cause many rich people do not want them. Is this market system pure [fair]? Now the government should look at this and make a plan for those people.

In her interview, Sibongile indicated that she had learned to write 'umbizo', rhetorical questions, when she was studying Xhosa poetry at school and that the teacher had encouraged them to transfer this discourse style to their own writing. This is quite evident from the extract below, although Sibongile could probably have expressed it more clearly if she had been speaking in Xhosa:

M. *And the technique I noticed that you use, which is question and answer which is also a writing technique?*

S. *Yes my teacher used to say this: when you are writing you must have some question and then this question - in Xhosa they call it umbizo buciko - you know the answer, but you will ask the question anyway.*

M. *Oh a rhetorical question.*

S. *Ja, you ask the question anyway and in that way you are showing that its like when we used to read poems (izibongo or Xhosa praise poetry)*

This question and answer style in Zulu poetry would typically look like the three parallel couplets below, which have been taken from Zwide's praise poem (Cope 1928):

*Ezindleleni ufana nayiphi na?
Ufana nevudlayo;
Emithini lapha ufana nayiphi na?
Ufana nomnyamathi;
Ezinyokeni lapha ufana nayiphi na?
Unfana nenyandezulu.*

Amongst the roads which one does he resemble?
He is like the one which cuts straight across;
Amongst the trees which one does he resemble?
He is like the hardy essenwood tree;
Amongst the snakes which one does he resemble?

He is like the large green one which represents the ancestors.

Similarly, Vuyani said he had learned the technique from reading Zulu stories and transferred it to his own writing,

When we're writing an essay in Zulu, to make it more interesting you ask a question and then you answer it...it is the way to emphasise

Below are some examples of the way in which Vuyani has used question forms in his economics essay:

The people or labor were owned by state. How? There was this document which they called it pass.

Why does SA prefer the mixed economy? Because more money is being produced...

The question which is remaining now is that 'is SA economy undergone a transition since 1990 to a market oriented economy?' I would say yes. Why. First of all ...

These examples illustrate the way the students' 'interests' are reflected in their writing and how, in the process of transferring the traditional rhetorical form, they attempt to transform it so that it is appropriate for the new situation. However, as some of the extracts show, this rearticulation of the older form is as yet not a seamless blending of discourses.

6.4.1.2. Use of first person and other features of 'involvement' typical of spoken discourse

The first person has various functions in discourse; for instance, it can be used autobiographically or to introduce personal opinions or simply to structure the discourse. In my analysis I have found that the student writers use the first person frequently in all these ways. My brief survey of economics research articles and my interviews with economics staff (cf. Chapter 4) indicate that the use of the first person singular to establish authorial presence is fairly unusual in economics writing. In fact some economics educators say that they actively discourage students from using the first person. Therefore, it seems that in these interim literacies

students establish authorial presence, rather differently from the way it is done by experienced academics.

Ivanic (1997) distinguishes authorial presence or what she calls 'authorial identity' from 'discoursal identity'. She indicates that the 'discoursal' self is 'the impression which they [writers] consciously or unconsciously convey of themselves...through their practices and the discourse types they draw on' (Clark and Ivanic 1998:143) and the 'authorial identity' is the way in which people own their ideas (1998:153). I have chosen not to use this distinction as I find that Ivanic's two categories overlap. My research indicates that students are often drawing on other discourses when they use the first person to establish authorial presence. For instance, in their use of the first person, four of the second language students draw on the more socially involved narrative and spoken discourses with which they are familiar. Chafe's (1982) notion of 'involvement' is relevant here. Chafe distinguishes 'involvement' as a feature of spoken language because, as he says, speakers interact with their audiences (1982:45). From the analysis of his spoken data, Chafe identifies a number of devices, particularly first person references and 'verbs which refer to the speakers' mental processes' (such as *I think*) which allow the speaker to involve his or her audience. These first person references together with verbs referring to mental processes are used by the students in the following ways:

There are a lot of enterprises which we believe black people should own them (Vuyani)

I know by selling Telkom and other big businesses there will be a loss (Sibongile)

I suppose the economy of SA ...was disappointing. (Vuyani)

I think the economy of SA has grown more rapidly... (Vuyani)

Other ways in which the ESL students seek to involve their readers and encourage reader participation are by using the first person to structure their writing or to refer to personal experience (autobiographical usage). Extracts from Nomsa and Thabo's essays show the ways they involve the audience as they structure their writing:

When we talk about the market system we talk about the pure perfect market (Nomsa)

This brings us to the term... (Thabo)

while the examples below illustrate the way ESL students appeal to their audience as they share personal experiences:

Its like we are still living in the Apartheid time where if you don't have money then your needs and wants won't be satisfy. South Africa is a country in transition things are getting better. Let us give the country a chance and hope the rate of crime will go down...(Sibongile)

In a market system we can see that consumers are the king... (Thabo)

These examples illustrate the way students are reshaping the potentials of their existing resources so as to best represent their 'interests' as authors in the new context (cf. 2.3.2).

Further devices used to indicate social involvement

Chafe (1982:47) also identifies 'emphatic particles...particles expressing enthusiastic involvement in what is being said' as further signs of 'involvement'. I have noted that Sibongile, Vuyani and Thabo use the word 'yes' as a way of emphasising a point in their essays. The illustrations below indicate that this may be a device they draw from more conversational oral discourse:

After the 1994's elections things became better. The state sold some of the properties to individuals and now people w [h]ere given a chance to own their own businesses and create jobs for others. Yes the rate of crime became high and the rate of unemployment became high because South Africa is in transition it is still paying the debts of the last government. (Sibongile)

I conclude by saying, yes! South Africa is the economy in transition, which it moves from a command economy to the market orientated economy. My reason is been stated above. (Thabo)

The question which is remaining now is that 'is SA economy undergone a transition since 1990... to a market oriented economy'? I would say yes; Why First of all people are free to move where ever they feel like. (Vuyani)

In his analysis of authorial stance in academic research articles, Hyland identifies a category which he calls 'relational markers' which are concerned 'with the writer's attempt to invoke reader participation' (Hyland 1999:104). Some of these correspond to the markers of involvement listed above. Academic researchers use these devices in order to encourage fellow academics in the discipline to consider their claims by using, for example, first person plural pronouns (*we find here, let us now turn to*) and question forms (*why accept this?*). As I pointed out earlier (cf. 6.4.1.1.), the students say they are using question forms to emulate rhetorical devices typical of African praise poetry, so as to engage the reader and hold his/her attention in the same way they would in a spoken context. Illustrations of the way they do this are reproduced below:

The question which is remaining now is that 'Is SA economy undergone a transition since 1990... to a market oriented economy?' I would say yes; why (Vuyani)

What about those poor consumers who don't have nay money are their needs satisfied?they are poor and they need goods that will cost less...(Sibongile)

The people or labor were owned by the state, how? There was this document which they called it pass. (Vuyani)

Once again these illustrations provide evidence that the students are drawing intertextually on other discourses. As Kress (2002) suggests, these writers select the forms that seem most suited for the representation of their meaning and adapt them. In these 'interim' texts the forms are used somewhat differently from the way academic researchers use them but the examples show an interesting adaptation to the new context.

6.4.2. Narrative or Recount genres

The discussion above illustrates the way students borrow rhetorical practices from Xhosa and Zulu oral and literary practices. When I moderated the essays I also identified many instances of students relying on other familiar genres such as the recount or narrative genre. Martin and Plum (1997:301) define recounts as 'a sequence of events that are presented as unfolding unproblematically - irrespective of how unusual, dangerous, tragic, and so forth they might have been - in a Record of Events' and they describe the typical structure as: (Orientation) - Record of Events - (Reorientation). They see Reorientation as both 'returning the story to the here and now' and 'finishing off what might be a potentially interminable sequence of events with a flourish'. (1997:301)

Narratives and recounts are the genres to which students had considerable exposure. Research has pointed to the fact that these are genres that still tend to dominate 'composition' writing in schools in South Africa and internationally (Macdonald 1991, Cope and Kalantzis 1993, Maybin 1996, Martin and Plum 1997). Students from former DET schools spoke in my interviews of learning English in school by reading stories aloud in class:

M: Describe the way in which you learned English

Ayanda: Our teacher used to give us storybooks to read them in class and at home. The following day we should come and read the story in class one by one, or sometimes we have to explain to the class what the story is all about

A further influence in the South African context may be the traditional oral storytelling custom referred to above. Storytelling (*intsomi* in Xhosa) is a practice that has survived urbanisation and the dislocation of family life in African communities. All the African students told me that they were familiar with '*intsomi*'; these stories about snakes, lions, jackals, etc. always ended 'with a lesson', and were told them by grandmothers, mothers or teachers, retold and shared amongst them as children. When we discussed traditions like these in our interviews students displayed a strong sense of loyalty to their home languages and cultures, making it clear that retelling these stories evoked happy memories.

Seven of the eight case study students (all except Philip) resorted to the recount genre and related the 'story' of South Africa under apartheid:

South Africa was under apartheid for long time where white were only favourites. This affected many economic systems. For instead. Many of the businesses were owned by state, how? There was this document which they called it pass. People were arrested if they didn't pay for their lives or anything else. Labors, white people were the first priority where it comes to an employment. The prices were taken by a state too. I suppose the economy of S.A between 1980 to 1990 was dissappointing because they didn't allow other countries to trade with use as SA. This resulted in an expelition in sports and the investors were none. This was pure communism (Vuyani)

Before 1990 South Africa was ruled by the government which used the socialism system. The government then owned all factors of production and own more firms like Iscor. Also prices were fixed by the state eg. agricultural prices and many blacks where not given chance to own a firm or a farm, if a black person has a business the government will close it and say that that business was part of informal sector. After the 1994's elections things became better. (Sibongile)

During the last decade South Africa had been practising a command system. Where all property rights were taken by the government. When time goes on South Africa changed to capitalism system. (Nomsa)

All these students use the past tense throughout as they recount some of the iniquitous events of the apartheid era, but they relate them in a very matter of fact style. Vuyani begins his recount with the 'Orientation', *South Africa was under apartheid for long time where white were only favourites*. It is difficult to know which sentence marks Vuyani's 'Reorientation' but it seems more likely that it is the last sentence in his paragraph i.e. *This is pure communism* because this seems 'to finish off' the 'story'. 'Reorientation' is well illustrated in Sibongile's extract with the sentence *After the 1994's elections things became better*.

Students were not, however, being asked to write a historical recount of the South African economy over the last ten years. The 'transition essay' might be described as an evaluative essay, where students have been asked to evaluate the extent to which South Africa has undergone an economic transition. This is a genre quite commonly used by economists who are frequently required to evaluate economic situations in order to make predictions for future policy. However, students have had little exposure to this genre therefore they select from their available resources and adapt them as they see fit.

6.4.3. Finding the register

There are further examples of intertextuality, echoes of other discourses, that indicate students are searching for the appropriate register. For instance there were signs that student writing might have been influenced by church-based preaching or biblical rhetoric in the moral tone adopted by Nomsa and Vuyani in the excerpts below:

Some people look [on the] market system as an unfair system. But market system is fair system because everybody reaps what he /she has been sowed.
(Nomsa)

*If the country decide to change we ripe [reap] the good reward. Look in South Africa each individual is free.
There are a lot of enterprises which we believe black people should own.*
(Vuyani)

Gough (2000:55) notes that:

The moral tone that lecturers often note as a feature of student writing may have as its basis a perception (a feature of at least some secondary discourses) that knowledge should relate to and direct behaviour, that it is an intrinsic part of 'ubuntu' rather than something for and in itself.

Ayanda also uses phrases which sound rather archaic:

The market economy is very much characterised by private freedom whereby everyone in the country is free to make his or her decisions toward the ownership of his assets and also in market economy there is very much limited government intervention but in market economy the government does own property whereas the most is privately owned.

When I questioned him about this practice he said: *Sometimes I feel I am not trying to be myself when I write academic essays.* This is interesting because it indicates that Ayanda's use of old-fashioned language might be a consequence of his attempt to sound academic.

Sibongile's writing shows different influences and parts of her essay read like a political discussion or debate. She indicated that she might have learned this at school where she was a member of the oral debating group:

Now the government should look at this and make a plan for those people. Its like we are still living in apartheid time where if you don't have money your needs wont be satisfy...

Let's give the country a chance and hope the rate of crime will go down and people will get jobs and the state will continue selling properties...

Yes, the rate of crime became high and the rate of unemployment became high...

I know by selling Telkom and other big businesses there will be a loss and the rate of unemployment will be higher, but still the government is doing his best to support this country, now its up to individuals to increase the local economy.

South Africa ... must make sure that....

She achieves this persuasive tone through the use of strong modal verbs underlined in the examples above.

Nkwenkwe, on the other hand, coming from a literate educated family and having been encouraged to read business news, uses a more informal language, typical of newspaper discourse. The underlined sections in the extract below illustrate this:

Our young market orientated economy has come a long way since sanctions were dropped against us. Much work for the government lies ahead for our economy to become a true market system.

In the extract below, Nkwenkwe makes use of the premodified noun phrase *Minister of Finance Trevor Manuel* which is also typical of journalistic discourse. He makes no attempt at academic referencing in his essay and yet he does 'embed'^x words from other speakers in his text:

Minister of Finance Trevor Manuel during his budget speech a month ago stressed the importance of speeding up the process of privatisation.

Bell (1996) identifies 'embedding' as a typical feature of media communication. Nkwenkwe seems to have adopted media conventions such as embedding in preference to academic referencing.

6.4.4. Traces of other ethnic languages: 'mother tongue interference'

It is difficult to know whether a particular issue of intertextuality is related to the student's greater familiarity with spoken discourses or to difficulties with writing in his/her second or additional language. Is the student writing a particular phrase the way it sounds in spoken language or borrowing the form from his/her mother tongue?

Gough (1996) lists typical grammatical features of Black South African English (BSAfE). His examples are derived from student writing at matric and university level. Using this list, I have identified the following grammatical features typical of BSAfE in my analysis of the EAL essays:

a) omission of articles:

*Moreover ^ market system is the best way (Nomsa),
for ^ long time (Vuyani),
that business was part of ^ informal sector (Sibongile),
But in ^ capitalist system (Thabo)*

b) 'unidiomatic' usage of prepositions:

*there is a great change to the economy (Nomsa)
SA is now participating on world sports events (Vuyani)
...invest to us (Sibongile)
by charging more taxes to the rich people government has less influence of
the production of goods and services (Thabo)
government was very supportive to the white people (Ayanda)*

c) simplification of verbal concord:

...transition economy is an economy that change over time (Thabo)
the market mechanism work like an invisible hand (Sibongile)
If the country decide to change we ripe (reap) the good reward. (Vuyani)

d) extension of the progressive:

But still the government is doing his best to support the country (Sibongile)

e) patterns of complementation:

...which will make people to immigrate (Thabo)

f) use of 'too' and 'very much' as intensifiers:

market system is very much characterised by...

in market economy there is very much limited government intervention
(Ayanda)

g) noun phrases not marked for number:

many enterprise (Vuyani)

h) use of resumptive pronouns:

there was this document which they called it pass (Vuyani)

I have identified these features of BSAfE to illustrate ways in which the use of English in South Africa is influenced by African languages. Studies in the area of World Englishes recognise that English is used in a variety of ways across five continents, each with its own particularities and distinctive vocabularies. Many of the illustrations above would still be regarded as deviating from Standard South African English, but there is a strong sense that a 'Local Variety of English' (Norrish 1997) is in the process of evolving and acceptability is still an issue. In the classroom a very fine line must be trodden between acknowledging that South African English is changing with some of these forms becoming more acceptable, while at the same time, equipping students to communicate acceptably once they graduate.

In addition, many of the students have difficulties with sentence structure and one of the reasons they do not use full sentences is not so much because they are writing in an additional language but because they write the way they speak, stringing ideas together without connectives. Students quite often punctuate incomplete ideas, starting with relative pronouns or co-ordinating conjunctions, as sentences. This is illustrated in the following examples:

Privatisation is the selling of government's enterprises to private sector. Which will create more job opportunities for the society. (Thabo)

Why does South Africa prefer mixed economy? Because more money is being produced. (Vuyani)

Although, in some cases, it has been helpful to speak to the students in order to gain insights into the processes of text production, they have not always been able to assist me in distinguishing between mother tongue interference and transfer from other discourses.

6.5. Conclusion

In order to capture the essence of this lengthy analysis chapter, the conclusion will return to the research questions posed in the introduction and consider the extent to which these questions have been answered.

In this analysis there have been a number of insights, gleaned from interviews, which have addressed the first research question relating to students' past literacy and learning practices. Particularly notable in this regard, is the students' use of rhetorical questions, typical of African literary discourses, which they indicate is a practice encouraged in school writing classes. The second question called for a consideration of the discourses and cultural models that students draw on. Here the analysis shows that even in the writing of a very circumscribed academic genre such as the economics essay, there is a wide range of discourse types and forms of literacy. For instance, section 6.4.1. traces the generic and rhetorical forms from African praise poetry and storytelling traditions that students draw on and rearticulate in the new context. I have described these essays as 'interim' texts and

noted that the students convey messages about their 'interests' through the wide variety of practices and discourses that they draw on.

Answers to the third question on conceptualisation in economics thread their way through every aspect of the analysis in this chapter. For instance, the analysis of intertextuality in 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4 provides insights into the way students transform the cultural and historical resources available to them as they attempt to find a form that best represents their meanings, while the analysis of coherence in 6.2.2. provides a different way of looking at meaning making in a new academic discourse. Section 6.3.1. (situated meanings and cultural models) is a good illustration of how students from diverse communities and cultures construct understandings differently based on their life experiences. The fourth question is concerned with whether students succeed in integrating past discourses into economics discourse. The essays could not be regarded as flawless examples of economic discourse. There are incoherences, ambiguities and incongruities in the way that past and present discourses have been combined. However, I regard this as a crucial stage in the interim literacy because these traces of past discourses often provide evidence that important associations are being made which may give access to a new concept and assist in acquisition.

The categories I have used in the analysis overlap. For instance, cohesion is examined in 6.2.2. because it relates to coherence and it is analysed again in 6.4. because connectives are features of the 'movement and flow' typical of spoken discourse. Intertextuality is a central feature of each section, but in each case the exploration has a different purpose: in 6.2 the intertextual analysis investigates students' acquisition of the academic convention of referencing, while in 6.3. it explores the way students build understanding in the new discourse. The overlaps have meant that I have sometimes used quotations from the students' texts more than once in order to illustrate different features and they also emphasise the complexity of the language patterns and of the analysis itself.

Notes:

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- ⁱ The absence of referencing in Nkwenkwe's writing may be linked to his journalistic style which is referred to under 6.4.3.
- ⁱⁱ Sherry has a sentence very similar to this.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Note that Nomsa has copied the answer to the question, 'What will be produced in the market system?' as the answer to all three questions which she has posed. This is incorrect and it may indicate that she is copying without a full understanding.
- ^{iv} Ivanic (1997:113) does not indicate the year of study for her case studies, but she does say that 'they had already been exposed to a certain amount of acculturation into the academic community...'
- ^v Nominal groups are groups of words, which function as subject or object of the clause, consisting of a 'head' noun (the main subject noun) and everything modifying it, including embedded clauses.
- ^{vi} Bloor and Bloor (1995) define lexical cohesion as cohesion which can occur between words which are members of the same semantic set, words that are associated in terms of meaning. This association may be one of equivalent meaning or one of contrast.
- ^{vii} Chafe (1982) distinguishes between the 'fragmented' nature of spoken language and the 'integration' typical of written language.
- ^{viii} Appendix H shows Vuyani's full 'transition essay with different aspects of the analysis highlighted.
- ^{ix} I have used the term 'real' world in inverted commas because this is the term economists use, however, I prefer the term 'life world' used by Gee (2000) because I see reality as constructed through processes that are essentially social.
- ^x the way in which journalists quote other speakers or writers either directly or indirectly

Chapter 7: Analysis of final essay

The importance of struggling with another's discourse, its influence in the history of an individual's coming to ideological consciousness is enormous. One's own discourse and one's own voice, although born of another or dynamically stimulated by another, will sooner or later begin to liberate themselves from the authority of the other's discourse. This process is made more complex by the fact that a variety of alien voices enter into the struggle for influence within an individual's consciousness (just as they struggle with one another in surrounding reality) (Bakhtin, 1981:348).

7.1. Introduction

In the analysis of the final essay, I will use the same theoretical and methodological frameworks developed for the analysis of the first essay and I will continue to explore the same four questions considered in the previous chapter:

- What past literacy and learning practices are students drawing on in their writing?
- What are the discourses and 'cultural/discourse models' that students draw on either explicitly (quoting and referencing) or in more subtle ways?
- What do their discursal patterns suggest about their ways of using language to conceptualise and to build knowledge? What are the difficulties students encounter in acquiring the new discourse?
- Are student succeeding in integrating past discourses into their economics essays in appropriate ways?

The analysis will again take the form of a cultural excavation of students' 'interim literacies' to identify the discourses that students draw on in writing the essay; therefore each section of the analysis will illustrate intertextuality in some form or another. In addition to these questions the analysis will also address the fifth question outlined in Chapter 1:

- In what ways does the students' writing shift and change over the first academic year?

It is important to preface this chapter by stating that this analysis is not (except in the instance of lexical density) measuring changes quantitatively, but exploring a variety of aspects of writing, many of which do not lend themselves to quantitative measurement. The exploration will again illustrate all three levels of Fairclough's three-dimensional model, shifting in each section of the chapter between textual analysis, interpretation and explanation. It will look, in a qualitative way, at where change happens and where it does not and search for explanations. In this search it will look more closely at the immediate academic context and consider ways in which the teaching or the essay topic has impacted on the production of text. Through this investigation of the interpretative and explanatory levels the seventh chapter should extend the dimensions of my analysis.

There are signs in this chapter that the students' 'interests' may be changing. They are still struggling with the new discourse of economics, but it is becoming more familiar; students are appropriating it and making it their own. At the same time their past discourses are being rearticulated and recontextualised so that they blend more seamlessly into the new discourse. As Bakhtin says, 'One's own discourse and one's own voice, although born of another or dynamically stimulated by another, will sooner or later begin to liberate themselves from the authority of the other's discourse (1981:348)'.

The biographies of the case study students showed how, for some students, access to language and literacy resources had been constrained by students' social histories and schooling; it is therefore particularly interesting to note that, in this essay, the differences between the writing of the students from the former DET schools and those from more privileged schools, which were apparent in the first essay, no longer seem so marked. So in some senses the differences are being ironed out as students take on the more concise technical style of the monopolies essay genre. But each student has an individual story to tell. As Kress (2000:156) says:

Semiotic change is...shaped and guided by the characteristics of broad social factors, which are individually inflected and shaped by the action of the individual in interaction with social others.

Students like Vuyani and Thabo had not studied economics at school and in some ways they have taken the biggest strides forward in terms of acquiring the new discourse and becoming more coherent. Nomsa, on the other hand, has the best grasp of the conceptual material. Ayanda and Sibongile also appear more comfortable in the new discourse. But this essay was handed in on 16 September 2001 and early the following year Ayanda was being treated for a schizo-affective disease and had left the university. One cannot help but wonder whether his studies might not have been affected long before he was diagnosed. Sibongile continues to be more at ease using a storytelling style and she has a tendency to digress and lose focus as she writes. My interview with Sherry indicated that she had perhaps been too casual about writing this essay and could have done better if she had taken more time over it. Nkwenkwe and Philip did not continue with Language and Communications after the first four weeks because the diagnostic test had indicated that they did not need it. And yet their marks for these essays are a little disappointing, which indicates that there are ways in which they too might have benefited from the tutorials.

In the table below, I have recorded the students' marks for each essay. This is not to direct attention to the marks because I have reservations about marks: they fail to tell the whole story. This study has shown that ways of saying and meaning of different writers are context bound and non-equivalent and this makes the assessor's role a particularly difficult one. However, every attempt was made to ensure that the marks for these essays were fairly reliable. Marking criteria were made explicit both to the students and the markers and both sets of essays were subjected to extensive marking workshops and moderation processes. The advantage of a set of marks is that they present a different and rather more concise picture of students' progress than a qualitative comparison of student writing. These marks are particularly interesting because they show that the students from the former DET schools are improving by this stage of the academic year, while the marks of the students from more privileged schooling backgrounds have dropped.

Table 7.1: Essay Marks

Student	Former Model	Mark	Mark
Ayanda	Former DET	51	55
Nkwenkwe	Former Model C/Priv	72	64
Nomsa	Former DET	52	60
Philip	Former Model C	59	55
Sherry	Former Model C	67	60
Sibongile	Former DET	48	53
Thabo	Former DET	41	59
Vuyani	Former DET	41	53

Background to the essay

The final assignment was written in September towards the end of the university year. I was on study leave during this period so I had not taught the students in the Language and Communications (L & C) tutorial. However, I had attended the lectures on monopolies and the Language and Communications tutorials where students gave group oral presentations on South African Breweries as a monopoly firm.

The essays were marked by Language and Communications tutors and economics tutors and, because the economic concepts required for this task are fairly complex, lecturer J had run a workshop to explain them to the L & C tutors. After the essays were handed in she ran a marking workshop, where three scripts were marked and discussed, and she provided the tutors with model answers (cf. Appendix D). I attended both of these workshops and discussed the essays of my case study students with the tutors who had marked them. In addition I asked this lecturer to read them and give me some additional feedback, as well as answering any specific questions I had.

At this stage of the course, the content has become more technical and more complex and the essay task, which is reproduced below, reflects this. This essay is a different genre. Whereas the first one was descriptive and evaluative, this one, like the supply and demand essay written in May, could be described as more analytic¹, a genre students are more likely to encounter in microeconomics.

Essay topic

Refer to your research and explain why South African Breweries can be described as a monopolist. Describe the company showing how it has established itself as a monopolist and kept competitors out of the market. Use a diagram to explain how SAB chooses its profit maximising output and price. In concluding your essay consider the advantages and disadvantages of monopoly power exercised by SAB for South African beer drinkers.

As can be seen from the topic, the essay required students to apply the theory they had learnt about monopoly firms to the real world context of a near monopoly. They were given one reading from *The Economist* that discusses the ways in which South African Breweries (SAB) has established itself in the South African market. In addition they were required to use their textbooks and they could do independent research. The essay could be divided into four sections or stages. The first part called for students to generalise about the characteristics of monopolies from the theoretical model and then to provide evidence to support the argument for SAB as a monopoly. This section could quite well be combined with the second section, which was a description of SAB, showing how it had established itself as a monopoly. Then they were required to draw the profit maximising graph for monopolies and explain it. The final section of the essay again called for analysis, generalising about the advantages and disadvantages of theoretical monopolies for consumers and using evidence to support application of these to the SAB example.

This chapter follows the macro structure of Chapter 6 and looks first at the ways in which students draw on the discourse conventions of the academy in their attempts to find the appropriate register. In the second part I explore their growing acquisition of the target discourse of economics and then finally the range of other discourses they draw on as they build these interim literacies.

7.2. Appropriating features of the academic discourse

As in Chapter 6, I have selected intertextuality (both actual intertextuality and interdiscursivity) and coherence as the two areas of focus for my analysis of the way students are appropriating practices and features of academic discourse. However,

as the analysis in the other sections will show, intertextuality permeates every aspect of the discourse.

7.2.1. Intertextuality

In this section I will first trace the journey of one student, Vuyani, and his encounters with referencing and plagiarism across all three economics essays in the first academic year. I believe this will be useful in providing insights into some of the stages in the development of academic literacies. From there I will look more generally at issues of manifest intertextuality in some of the other final essays, before moving on to an exploration of interdiscursivity.

7.2.1.1. Vuyani's Story: Manifest or Actual Intertextuality

Vuyani's first essay (cf. Chapter 6 and Appendix H) was particularly striking for the way in which both spoken and literary discourse types and forms of literacy encountered at earlier stages in his biography had been imported into his academic writing. The first essay showed signs of 'fragmentation' typical of spoken discourse and he used the first person and other forms of 'involvement', which speakers use to engage their audiences, quite frequently. There was also evidence of literary forms such as the question and answer rhetoric and repetition typical of Zulu praise poetry. The second essay contrasts quite dramatically with the first one because it has been largely 'borrowed' from the website; he did not use the first person at all, neither was there any of the question and answer rhetoric or the lyrical use of repetition.

Space in this research project has not allowed for a detailed analysis of the second set of economics essays. But it was similar in its requirements to the final monopoly essay in that students were asked to use the economic model of supply and demand in the market to explain how a decrease in the supply of oil led to dramatic rises in the oil price in 2000. Vuyani's essay started with an introduction that was taken verbatim from another source, which Vuyani identified as the IMF (International Monetary Fund) website. On the second page of the essay, he copied large chunks from other websites, changing the order of some of the ideas, but with sections that were copied

word for word, some of which were not particularly relevant to the essay. My analysis of the writing of the case study students in Chapter 6 revealed that there are different degrees of 'borrowing', but in this essay, Vuyani seemed to import 'academic discourse' wholesale with no attempt to indicate that the words were not his own, other than to list his references at the end of the essay. Students were given four readings for this essay but the Internet also provided a ready source of data, as there are many websites that have interesting information on oil price increases. The extract below is taken from the latter part of the essay and illustrates the way he has lifted large sections from the web, in order to describe the lead up to the oil price rises going right back to 1999 which was beyond the scope of the essay (these plagiarised sections are easily distinguished because the style is so much more sophisticated than other sections written by Vuyani):

In March 1999, OPEC members pulled together in an unusual display of unity and agreed to yet another cutback in production for all members excluding Iraq. Their new target was 23 million barrels per day. These OPEC members had averaged 25.2 million barrels during the first quarter 1999. This last cutback along with the prior cutbacks, was intended to remove 4.3 million barrels or about 6% of world supply from the market. (1)

This passage illustrates what university authorities would call plagiarism. However, I believe that Vuyani's selection of these particular pieces from the Internet arises out of his assessment of the context for which he is writing and a pretty astute sense of the ways in which power works in that context. He has failed his first essay and has recognised the values placed on the powerful economic discourses that he finds on the web. So he has been guided by his 'interest' and he has 'borrowed' these new discourses. In his interview he told me that he had not understood the reasons for the oil price increases in 2000 and that this essay had stimulated his interest. Because he had felt rather ill informed, he had gone to the web to find further information and he seemed very proud of the selections he had made. When I asked whether he had plagiarised from the web, he said he had tried 'to make it shorter' or to summarise sections from the web but that he had forgotten about acknowledging his sources in the way they had been taught.

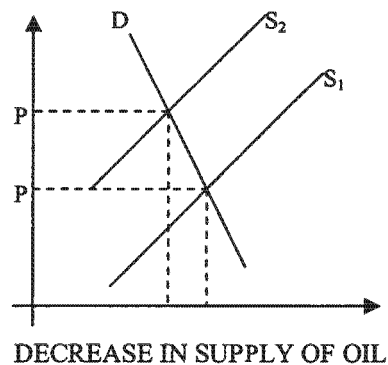
The difficulty appears to be that he sees these discourses as too alien, too imbued with the authority of others, for him to try to 'transform' them at this point and so he

simply reproduces them. It seems important to recognise the plagiarism in this essay as a developmental stage, imitation of 'the more capable other' (Vygotsky 1962) so as to enable growth in understanding and acquisition of the new discourse. Over the last decade, research has indicated that the way apprentice members of a discourse community learn to become full members is by copying, adapting and synthesising from other members (Ivanic 1997, Hull and Rose 1989 etc.).

More light is shed on the issues behind plagiarism in a particularly African context if we consider that in the oral tradition accuracy of memorisation is valued. In the recent research done by Williams *et al.* (2001) into repetition in Malawian classroom culture, their research shows that teachers repeat language from the coursebook text because they lack confidence in their English and that the discourse of the textbook becomes a resource for choral response from students. They describe communicative practice in the Malawian classroom as a practice where teachers and students collaboratively create discourse from text. These findings are similar to those of Macdonald (1991) who found that children in Bophuthatswana spent much of their time in class listening to their teachers and that the dominant pattern of classroom interaction was oral input by teachers with pupils occasionally chanting in response. Copying and repeating is so much a part of the culture of African schooling that it should not surprise us that students see it as the accepted way to take on new discourses.

When it comes to explaining the two graphs he has drawn, Vuyani has to rely on his own words – the words from the Internet will not help in this part of the essay. Here we see his own explanations contrasting quite conspicuously with the language borrowed from the Internet in extract (1) above. Extract (2) below illustrates the difficulties he is having with explaining the graph (shown on the next page) in his own words:

The dramatical increase in oil price 2000 was because the OPEC countries cut their supply of oil. The price of oil went up to over US\$30 a barrel. The [oil] is a nessecity to most the world. For instead petrol is most needed goods. Looking at a demand curve of oil which is inelastic it shows clearly why the[re] is an increase in price of oil. The OPEC countries knew if they decrease the supply of oil the will be no great change in quantity supply. (2)



Vuyani's essay was discussed in a marking workshop, where staff felt that it was important for him to realise that it was not acceptable to copy chunks of texts without following the academic conventions. Particularly because students had been taught how to reference and introduced to the notion of plagiarism, it was felt that it was no longer excusable and that Vuyani should therefore fail the essay.

Vuyani's third essay, the monopolies essay, shows that plagiarism of this kind is a transitional phase in the development of the novice writer. In this essay Vuyani is becoming more comfortable with the new discourse. Although he is still struggling with the complexities of the language, particularly the language of modelling, his graph is correctly drawn and labelled and he has explained how South African Breweries maximises profit more or less correctly and in his own words.

What is particularly interesting though is that there seems to be no evidence of direct lifting from other texts. This is a major step forward in terms of the writer's development. He may have used the textbook to assist him in explaining the model, but he has attempted to paraphrase it. He does not reference the textbook but this is not strictly necessary in economics as textbooks are reified as fact and do not need to be documented with the same thoroughness that is required for an academic article. This seems to confirm that the very blatant borrowing seen in the previous essay may just have been a temporary phase linked to his earliest encounters with economics language, where he resorted to borrowing in order to try to appear more like an economist in his writing.

Vuyani has moved on to the next stage where he is still imitating, for as I have indicated, imitation is part of the acquisition process, but he is now moulding and reshaping the language. This is illustrated in the way he rearticulates the question and answer form as an effective introduction to this essay (cf. 7.4.1.1).

Vuyani quotes once or twice from the article in *The Economist* and references more or less correctly, but it is clear that he is still having difficulty with integrating these quotations into his writing. If this is done successfully it can add to and enrich the writer's argument, but the ability to do this will only come with time and practice. In the extract below the quotation appears to be tacked on at the end of the paragraph:

Looking at the history SAB since it was established, there was an increase in shares and it extended (expanded) itself...The profit keep on increasing as well as SAB keep on increasing. 'In 1960 after the government repealed a hated ban on the sales of alcohol to black people, the market grew rapidly and several competitor vied with SAB for a share in market. SAB fought them off and ended buying several of them' The Economist newspaper Ltd., London 2000 (3)

The quotation has not been introduced or integrated into his account of how SAB established itself as a monopoly. He does not have the facility with language to show that he is using the quote as evidence for his claim that the company is growing and expanding. One might well ask why it was necessary to quote this, rather than to paraphrase, but it may have seemed a particularly pertinent quote to Vuyani, because it refers to the lifting of the ban on the sale of alcohol to black people. It is interesting that three of the four black male case study students either quoted or referred to this extract. It is clearly a significant piece of information for them, which suggests that at this interim stage, students may select extracts from their readings, more because the extracts reflect their 'interests' and the students can identify with them, than for purposes of supporting a particular argument.

Vuyani is clearly still struggling to use the new discourse to express his understandings but what is important is that he is exercising agency as he struggles and works with the language to transform it. Bakhtin expresses this struggle well when he says:

Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated – overpopulated – with the intentions of others. Expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one's own intentions and accents, is a difficult and complicated process (1981:294).

7.2.1.2. Other issues of manifest intertextuality in the final essay

In the final essay the students are more at ease with the discourse of economics, no longer clinging so closely to the source texts. They paraphrase and use in-text referencing and I have found no cases of obvious plagiarism. Some students, for instance Vuyani and Sibongile, only reference once or twice, while the other students reference between 6 and 13 times. By the time the students wrote this final essay they would have had a number of opportunities to practise drawing on sources and synthesising from them, and their texts show that they have more or less learned the technicalities of referencing. However referencing is not just a technical skill and, as I will illustrate, there are other complex practices related to it which have still to be learned.

One aspect of referencing which students are still grappling with is learning to integrate quotations into their arguments, showing why a particular quote is relevant and positioning themselves in relation to the other authorities. Vuyani's extract (3) above provides one illustration of this. Philip, on the other hand, has been to a school which has equipped him fairly well for writing at university. The extract below shows that Philip does introduce his quotes, but he does not take a stance or explain why he finds the quote 'interesting'; thus this paragraph with its lengthy quote, seems unconnected to the rest of the essay:

Even though SAB is a monopoly firm, here is an interesting quote from the official SAB website: 'SAB believes in free market competition and group employees may not comment unfavourably on the products, management or operations of competitors. Group companies will not seek to prevent others from competing freely with them, within the framework of applicable competition laws.' (www.sab.co.za)

Philip has been quite perceptive in identifying the contradiction apparent in the monopoly firm, SAB's claim to believe in free market competition and the lack of logic in the first sentence of the quote. However, because Philip fails to adopt a

critical stance in relation to the quote, he appears to have been taken in by the persuasive language of the SAB website. This is perhaps because Philip feels that, as a first year student writer, he lacks authority and does not have the licence to critique the official SAB website. Angelil-Carter suggests that in their first year of university, students

...encounter apparently immutable authoritative discourse with the authority of lecturers or key theorists attached to them, and because of this authority are able only to transmit these discourses, not to interpret them... (2000b:162)

Again in this essay, some students tend to become over conscientious about referencing. Sherry's essay gives the appearance of a patchwork of references, a series of short, mostly one-sentence paragraphs, each of which ends with a reference in brackets as the following section from her essay shows:

SAB is a near monopoly with 98% of the market share in South Africa. It has played a very big role in the beverages industry. Being over a 100 years old, it has been very successful in the local and international market.
([http://www. SAB.co.za](http://www.SAB.co.za))

SAB has experienced a lot of profit growth since post 1994. Their profit growth success has benefited many consumers and shareholders alike.
([http://www. SAB.co.za](http://www.SAB.co.za))

As I had stated earlier, SAB has been successful internationally. In recent times it has acquired breweries from Africa, Asia, Europe. A very significant move has been the attempt to acquire Bass breweries a brewery in Belgium.
([http://www. SAB.co.za](http://www.SAB.co.za)) (<http://www.yahoo.com>)

Understanding the context in which these essays were written (the outer explanatory level of the Fairclough model) may help to explain Sherry's referencing practices. Plagiarism has become a hotly debated issue in our university. At a recent meeting to discuss the problem of plagiarism in the Humanities Faculty, academics pointed to the implications of plagiarism for the quality of a university education and a degree from this particular university (Academics' Association Newsletter December 2002:3). All students now have to attach a signed declaration to every written assignment certifying that the assignment has not been plagiarised. These new rules affect the process of production of texts (the middle layer of the model).

For instance, Mabizela (1994) suggests that because of all the warnings many students have developed such a fear of plagiarism that they tend to over-reference. As Angelil-Carter (2000a) points out, a student who references as Sherry does has become so concerned about plagiarism that she is blocking out her other sources of knowledge and this means that she is not building on prior knowledge and experience to make sense of the new. Over-referencing may also be associated with writers who lack confidence and authority in what they have to say.

The extract from Sherry's essay also illustrates the way she has failed to link the extracts and information she has collected into a coherent argument. Nomsa's essay shows a similar failure and, in each case, the marker comments on the lack of integration and repeatedly questions the relevance of the referenced information the writer draws on. I mentioned earlier that there is an art to integrating material from other sources into one's own text and part of that art is in structuring information so that it links together to form a coherent argument. Breaks in coherence sometimes occur because students don't know what the textual moves are for linking other sources. Sometimes these breaks occur because students simply do not fully understand the extracts they are referring to and therefore they don't know how to make them dovetail with the rest of the argument. But English is Sherry's first language and she expresses herself quite clearly both in the interview and in her written work, therefore it is unlikely that she has not understood the readings. In her interview, she admitted that she could have done better in this essay, she had rushed it and done it in two hours, explaining that she was able to do it so quickly because she had understood the work.

This suggests that a more likely explanation for the lack of coherence is that, because she has done it in a rush, she is still adhering to practices she developed at school for writing economics essays. The students indicated in their interviews that economics essays in school were not concerned with expression or coherent argument, but were more about regurgitating a set of facts.

This necessarily brief analysis of manifest intertextuality has highlighted the aspects of quoting and referencing that students are still in the process of learning. The conceptual content is more complex as is the linguistic repertoire required to explain

the content, therefore students will continue to mimic the discourse because this is the way in which they acquire it. Vuyani stands out as the student who has made the biggest strides in this essay because he is now attempting to paraphrase rather than lifting large sections of text from other sources, as he did in the supply and demand essay. The illustrations above indicate that integrating other voices into one's own academic argument is not an art that is learned over a six month period; it is developed gradually and perhaps haltingly, at each new stage in one's development as a writer.

7.2.1.3. Interdiscursivity

Interdiscursivity refers to the way writers draw on the features of different discourse types or genres as they create a new text (cf. Chapter 6.2.1). It is a more subtle form of intertextuality and is seldom explicitly signalled. In this section I will again examine certain characteristics of academic discourse that filter into the students' texts and focus on lexical density and choice of lexical forms. Only aspects of interdiscursivity that relate to academic discourse will be analysed in this section, while other aspects will be dealt with in the final section (7.4.) of the chapter.

In this analysis I have again used Halliday's technique for calculating lexical density for comparative purposes and included the 50 word extracts and the tables comparing the lexical density in the first essay with that of the last essay. In calculating lexical density, I have again taken the extracts from the middle of the essays but I have tried to avoid the very technical sections where the graph is explained.

Extract 1: Vuyani

[SAB has extensively ended itself by buying those competitors.] [SAB on it portfolio has 14 brand.] [This give a consumer a chance to make a choice.] [SAB has kept its monopoly by advertising] [and is registered on Johannesburg Stock Exchange and London Stock Exchange.] [Recently SAB has extended itself through world wide.]

Extract 2: Nomsa

[...the monopoly is faced with downslopingⁱⁱ demand curve.] [Firm can influence total supply through product decisions.] [Thus monopolist is not a price-taker], [but

it is a price maker.] [it can make price through control of output.] [SAB as a near monopolist has to choose its profit maximising output and price of SAB...]

Extract 3: Thabo

[The other thing that SAB do is to block the entries of other firms or competitors indirectly.] [By indirectly I mean by lowering its prices.] [(it)ⁱⁱⁱ is becoming difficult for other big breweries] [who wish to operate in South Africa,] [because they will (be) forced to lower their prices in order to...]

Extract 4: Sibongile

[SAB is axising output by lowering the price of beer] [and then wait until the consumers are addicted to beer] [and then increase the price of beer.] [SAB has the power to set the market price and output] [but it cannot set them both at the same time]

Extract 5: Ayanda

[It will be very difficult for new brewers to evolve the methods of producing a good quality of beer][that can take SAB by storm.] [Patent laws also (act) as block to entry of potential brewers in the beer market.] [SAB is the first producer of beer in South Africa.]

Extract 6: Nkwenkwe

[SAB distributes beer in rural areas with rough roads and bad or no electricity supply.] [For big brewers, the difficulties of operating are too great] [and the beer market is not growing.] [Heineken for example a leading first world brewer lets SAB distribute their products] [because they realise the costs].

Extract 7: Sherry

[In this essay I will now consider the advantages and disadvantages SA drinkers face because of SAB's monopolistic position.] [I will start off with the advantages.] [The first advantage is the fact that employees of SAB benefit greatly from working for SAB eg. Better health benefits, generous retirement funds]

Extract 8: Philip

[During the past five years, the volumes in SAB's international business have been increasing at 28% a year.] [In the past three years SAB has closed down a total of 10 of their diversified businesses] [to rather focus increasingly on its core business of brewing and beverages.]

Table 7.2: Lexical Density for final essay

Vuyani	26	6	4.33
Nomsa	30	6	5
Thabo	26	5	5.2
Sibongile	25	6	4.13
Ayanda	26	4	6.5
Nkwenkwe	30	5	6
Sherry	28	3	9.33
Philip	21	3	7

Table 6.1: Lexical Density for first essay

Vuyani	22	7	3.14
Nomsa	25	6	4.16
Thabo	24	5	4.8
Sibongile	23	6	3.83
Ayanda	22	5	4.4
Nkwenkwe	28	5	5.6
Sherry	22	4	5.5
Philip	27	5	5.4

My analysis shows that in this final assignment, lexical density increased in all except Philip's extract. It is interesting that three of the EAL students, Nomsa, Ayanda and Thabo, increased their scores to above 5, which Ivanic (1997) indicates is the lexical density one might expect to find in academic writing.

Choice of lexical forms

In the analysis of the first essay I looked at the extent to which students had adopted the abstract language of economics in their use of nominalisation, complex nominal groups and passive constructions. It is helpful to look again at the lexical forms used to increase lexical density. The more important question is whether or not students are managing to use these stylistic features and at the same time express their meanings clearly.

Nomsa's 50 word excerpt from the final assignment explains aspects of the complex model for monopoly markets very clearly and well. At the same time Nomsa's writing illustrates the use of nominalisation and long nominal groups which, as I have indicated in Chapter 6, assist in the presentation of the economic model. Halliday says written academic language is organised around the nominal group 'to hold the world still...in order to observe and study it' (Halliday 1996:352).

Although these are very small amounts of texts to generalise from, a comparison of the 50 word extracts from Nomsa's first assignment and this final one shows the way

lexical density has increased in her writing. Nominalisations have been underlined and nominal groups are in square brackets:

Extract 2: Nomsa (first assignment)

To continue; [pure capitalism^{iv}] is also the best way of increasing [standard of living] because there is no restrictions; if anyone wants to start his or her own business (he/she) has the right to do so; thus there would be more [production of goods and services]. In this system consumers are the people

Extract 2: Nomsa (final assignment)

McConnell and Brue write that the monopoly is faced with [down sloping demand curve]. Firm can influence total supply through [product decisions]. Thus monopolist is not a price-taker, but it is a price maker, it can make price through [control of output]. [SAB as a near monopolist] has to choose its [profit maximising output] and [price of SAB as a [near-monopoly firm]]^v

In the first assignment Nomsa used four nominalizations: *capitalism*, *restrictions production*, *consumers* and she experimented with some nominal groups: *pure capitalism*, *standard of living* and *more production of goods and services* but she avoided the use of the passive. In the extract from the final essay the use of both nominalizations and nominal groups has increased. She used the nominalizations, *demand*, *supply*, *decisions*, *monopolist*, *price taker*, *price maker*, *control*, *output*, *demand*, as well as a number of fairly long nominal groups, which also contain nominalisations, *down-sloping demand curve*, *product decisions*, *control of output*, *SAB as a near monopolist*, *profit maximising output*, *price of SAB as a near monopoly firm*. She has only once used the passive voice in the phrase *the monopoly is faced with*, but current textbooks demonstrate a tendency to describe the model without using the passive, and this aspect of style makes the presentation clearer and simpler (cf. Chapter 6).

It is interesting to compare the textbook extract on ‘price making’, which I have reproduced below, with Nomsa’s extract:

The monopolist faces a downsloping demand curve in which each output is associated with some unique price. Thus, in deciding on what volume of output to produce, the monopolist is also indirectly determining the price it will charge. Through control of output it can “make the price” (McConnell and Brue 1999:499).

In her struggle to sound like an economist Nomsa has perhaps overused nominal groups and some of her phrases, such as *price of SAB as a near monopoly firm*, tend to be a little unwieldy. At times she comes close to borrowing outright phrases from the textbook. Nevertheless her extract is evidence that despite the difficulties she experiences with English as an additional language, she has understood the concepts and rearticulated the textbook language so that it is meaningful to her. This could perhaps be described as a stage in the interim literacy where the student is halfway between copying chunks of the source text and paraphrasing.

7.2.2. Coherence

I indicated in the analysis of the first assignment that I see coherence in academic writing as building a case around a main idea so that all subsequent propositions are relevant and logically sequential. Cohesion, at the level of semantic relations between clauses as well as cohesive markers, is central to the creation of a coherent text. Through reference to extracts from students' final essays, I will discuss the ways in which students are beginning to achieve more coherence and cohesion. I will go on to consider the issue of 'task-based coherence' (Johns 1986) which is important in the academic essay, illuminating the processes of production and interpretation, the middle layer of Fairclough's three-tiered model.

Unlike the first assignment, students were not asked to build a case around a main argument, but rather, to present the picture of what a monopoly firm is and of how it operates, in four stages. In such an assignment, there is always the risk that students might not make links between the different stages and might produce the essay in four separate parts. However, by the time these essays were written, a number of strategies for enhancing coherence had been taught. Students had had two double period sessions on coherence and cohesion (cf. appendix for worksheets) as well as ongoing feedback about it in relation to their own writing.

In this assignment the linking and ordering of information does seem to have improved from that in the first essay. Five students (Thabo, Philip, Nomsa, Ayanda and Nkwenkwe) have used introductory paragraphs that set out a plan or 'route

map' for the readers. Students have been taught to use this route map as a way of introducing their essays. The route map provides a structure and encourages students to present the four stages logically and in appropriate order.

Thabo is one student who has benefited remarkably from learning to organise his ideas coherently (cf. 6.2.2.). He has introduced his monopoly essay with a route map and the essay is presented in a logical and structured manner. I will reproduce his first paragraph as an illustration of a route map but, for easy reference, I will set the paragraph out sentence by sentence:

Many people are not sure whether to regard SAB as a monopoly or not. (1)
The reason being that there are some other firms or breweries which sells beers also, e.g., Heineken. (2)
So in this essay I will explain in more details why SAB can be regarded as a monopolist by explain the characteristics of a monopoly that SAB possesses and by giving a brief description and history of a company (SAB). (3)
But first I will start with the description of a monopoly industry. (4)
And I will conclude this essay by giving the advantages and disadvantages that the monopoly exercised by SAB for South African beer drinkers or society. (5)

Thabo has structured his first paragraph quite well by introducing a central problem i.e. uncertainty around whether or not SAB is a pure monopolist. This allows him to lead into his route map. The essay then follows the map, for instance, paragraph two lists the characteristics of pure monopoly firms and paragraph three shows how SAB matches up to these criteria. Although the map fails to mention the third stage of the essay viz. using a graph to show how SAB realises its profit maximising output and price, this stage is well covered in his essay.

It is useful to analyse semantic relationships alongside the cohesive links in Thabo's paragraphs because this paragraph illustrates how semantic relations overlap with cohesive ties (cf. 6.2.2.).

Table 7.3

Sentence	Type of semantic relationship	Cohesive ties
<i>Many people are not sure whether to regard SAB as a monopoly or not. (1)</i>		
<i>The reason being that there are some other firms or breweries which sells beers also, e.g., Heineken. (2)</i>	Enhancement (Cause: reason)	Conjunctive adjunct <i>The reason being that</i>
<i>So in this essay I will explain in more details why SAB can be regarded as a monopolist by explain the characteristics of a monopoly that SAB possesses and by giving a brief description and history of a company (SAB). (3)</i>	Enhancement (Cause: effect)	Conjunction <i>So</i> Lexical cohesion in repetition of <i>regard SAB as a monopolist</i> in (1)
<i>But first I will start with the description of a monopoly industry. (4)</i>	Extension and Enhancement	Conjunction <i>But</i> Cohesive tie <i>first</i> to signal a temporal-sequential relationship Lexical cohesion in repetition of <i>monopoly</i> in (1)
<i>And I will conclude this essay by giving the advantages and disadvantages that the monopoly exercised by SAB for South African beer drinkers or society. (5)</i>	Extension and Enhancement	Conjunction <i>And</i> Cohesive tie <i>I will conclude</i> to signal a temporal-sequential relationship Lexical cohesion in repetition of <i>monopoly</i> in (4) and <i>SAB</i> in (3)

The table above shows that semantic relations between sentences work together with cohesive markers to achieve coherence. 'Sentence' (2), although it is punctuated as a sentence, is really a clause of enhancement. Sentence (3) introduces the route map and the conjunction *So* in this sentence is one that is typically used with clauses of enhancement indicating cause and effect. Thabo then has to backtrack because in his essay the description of the characteristics of a monopoly firm precedes his explanation of why SAB can be regarded as a monopoly. He manages this move quite well using both the conjunction *But* and the cohesive

marker *first*. It could be argued that sentence (4) and sentence (5) are extending the meaning of sentence (3) with the use of conjunctions *but* and *and*, while, at the same time, enhancing meaning with the temporal-sequential relationships signalled by *first* and *I will conclude*.

Most students successfully link the first two stages of the essay, namely, the characteristics of monopolies and the ways in which SAB established itself as a monopolist. To achieve this integration, students need to apply the theory of monopolies to the case of SAB. The following extract from Sherry's essay illustrates how she has made this transition rather neatly:

SAB as a monopoly is able to set prices for its products in the market. Because of advanced technology, SAB has been able to lower its costs in the long run. This enables them to create their own barriers to entry. With this they can employ a strategy called predatory pricing which means that they can lower their prices. They do this in order to prevent any other competitors from entering the market.

She has identified two important characteristics of monopolies, namely that monopolies set prices and that they create barriers to prevent other firms entering the market, applying them to the specific context of South African breweries.

But links between the first two stages and the third stage of the essay were a problem. Very few students linked the ways in which SAB qualified as a near monopoly to the graph and the explanation of how SAB chooses its profit maximising output and price.

Thabo is one of the few students who linked the diagram and its explanation to his earlier discussion of SAB and its characteristics. He made this link by means of the phrase which I have underlined:

The [question] will arise that how can SAB maximise its total profit at the same time lowering its total price? The answer for this question is that SAB keep its cost of production low and produce large quantity of beers at the lower cost, which allows SAB to attract consumers by selling its beer at the low price and sell large quantity.

Coming to the price making, the price is determined by the demand, so for its chosen output, SAB can read off a market demand curve, which will lie above the marginal revenue, and this is shown on the diagram in the next page....

He used lexical cohesion, and created an ‘identity chain’ (Bloor and Bloor 1995:100) linking *price* and *price making* to his *diagram* where he will visually demonstrate how price is ‘made’. This link is perfectly clear to me as the reader, but strictly speaking, ‘*Coming to the price making*’ implies that price making has not yet been dealt with. Therefore, it might have been clearer if he had used the phrase ‘price making, which I referred to earlier’ or ‘with regard to price making’.

In his reflection on his literacy ‘story’ a year later, Thabo shows insight and awareness of his writing processes. He writes:

I would say I've grown as a reader and writer since I arrived here in UCT...Looking at my writing at school, was like someone who doesn't understand what I'm writing. The order of my writings was not nice for the next person to understand. All this has changed since I was admitted here in UCT. I can now organise my writings and feel confident to give them to the next person to read.

Some students like Nkwenkwe avoided using cohesive links by using sub-headings for each stage. Nkwenkwe’s list of sub-headings is shown below and this certainly provides a clear structure for his essay, but as the lecturer’s comment from the margin of his essay shows, some lecturers do not find headings appropriate in academic essays. Lecturer J feels that if students use headings they do not develop the skill of using appropriate cohesive links to develop a coherent argument.

Lecturer J’s comment in margin

Headings like this...not appropriate for an academic essay

Headings used in Nkwenkwe’s essay

*Characteristics of a monopoly,
SAB as a monopoly
Output and Price Determination.
Advantages and Disadvantages of
Monopoly to a Society.*

Those students who start with a route map, do 'stick to the point' more successfully than those who don't, but when I analysed breaks in coherence in the essays I found that, even when students have a route map in their heads for structuring their information, there are other ways in which their writing can lose coherence. In a longer essay such as this one, students may lose the thread or get distracted more easily. Sibongile's final essay, like her first, loses coherence because she digresses and shifts register. In a paragraph discussing ways in which SAB keeps competitors out of the market, she gets sidetracked into lengthy descriptions of all her favourite SAB advertisements on television. The extract below illustrates how, for Sibongile (and most of the students), the name South African Breweries evokes situated meanings (cf. 7.3.1.), which are linked to popular sports and related television advertisements sponsored by SAB. In her case these personal associations cause a distraction and her essay loses coherence:

SAB is also keeping the competitors out of the market by doing effective adverting, they make sure that they target everyone from soccer lover to rugby lovers. Like if there are no beers then the soccer match will not start and that beer can bring people closer, even strangers, and that if you want to welcome a stranger in your house you should give it a beer.

The[re] is one advert that seems to be working very well to beer drinkers which says 'one nation, one soul, one beer one goo' soccer lovers love that one and kids too. I must say SAB know how to advertise and good in targeting consumers. They really know how to advertise and keep competitors out of the market.

Task-based coherence

Coherence can break down if students misinterpret the essay task. Research has pointed to the ways in which coherence in student writing is often affected by the wording of the academic writing task (Flower 1990, Nelson 1990, Shay, Bond and Hughes 1994). Johns (1986) uses the term 'task-based coherence' for this phenomenon and points out that in order to ensure text-based coherence, it is important that students stick to the requirements of the task. Flower (1990) points out that academic writing tasks can be seen as the bridge between the students' private thinking processes and the public forum of academic writing, but Shay, Bond and Hughes (1994), working in the Academic Development context at UCT,

find that tasks can also form a gate, blocking access to the public forum. They indicate that the problem may lie not so much with the students but with the teachers as the task designers. At the same time, they acknowledge that the most carefully designed tasks can still throw out barriers for students who are negotiating the new context of the university. Lecturers face a tension between facilitating access to task interpretation and excessively shaping student responses.

The course convenor had designed the task for the monopoly essay with care, and the other lecturers and I had had opportunities to make adjustments. Students had been given tools for analysing tasks (cf. Appendix J) and had practised doing this in all the writing tasks they had done through the year. However our experience shows that, as tasks and conceptual understanding become more complex, students continue to grapple with the problems of task analysis and frequently lose marks for incorrect analysis of task.

In the case of the monopolies essay task, many of the students' responses to the last 'stage' of the task had not met with audience expectations. It was worded as follows:

In concluding your essay, consider the advantages and disadvantages of the monopoly power exercised by SAB for South African beer drinkers.

The lecturer who consulted with me said this part of the question had been answered very poorly. She had been looking for an economic analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of monopolies^{vi}, but students seemed to have taken a very personal approach, relying on own knowledge, interpretations and opinions. She felt that they showed immaturity in not understanding the academic approach and commented that, what was important to students was often not the focus of economic analysis. However she did reflect on her own undergraduate days in the economics department and recalled struggling with the practice of not using personal opinions or own experience.

Amongst my case study students, only Nomsa realised that this question needed to be tackled from a theoretical point of view, and in the following excerpt from her

essay she explains how the advantage monopolies offer in terms of low prices can easily change:

...SAB is producing at larger scale, and since it is a near-monopoly its products are offered at a lower price and beer drinkers have the advantage in this because they buy larger quantity at lower prices. The problem that beer drinkers are faced with can be consumer exploitation. SAB at this moment is producing larger quantity at lower prices because it wants to beat its competitors in the market, however when time goes on SAB will be back to its nature as a monopoly, to charge higher prices at lower quantity.

She then goes on to explain how the monopolist reduces economic and social welfare and efficiency:

Since SAB is a monopoly, it is faced with demand curve, which is same as average revenue, same as price. The marginal cost of a monopolist firm is less than average revenue (Mankiw N. G., 1998) this implies there is no allocative efficiency. The opportunity cost of producing the last has to be the same as the opportunity cost of consuming the last unit (Mohr and Fourie, 2nd edition, 1999). In this way social welfare of consumers is not maximised.

Finally, she has included an additional graph to illustrate consumer surplus for the monopoly firm compared to consumer surplus for the perfectly competitive firm.

The other students did not answer the question in the way that was required. My analysis shows that some have misinterpreted the question because they ignored five key words, 'the monopoly power exercised by', and so read the question as asking for the advantages and disadvantages of *South African Breweries*, rather than the advantages and disadvantages of *SAB's 'monopoly power'*. In response they drew intertextually on their own experience and their own 'situated meanings' (cf. 6.3.1.) relating to *SAB*. They listed advantages such as the sponsorship of sport, bursaries for disadvantaged students, black empowerment and community initiatives, none of which are contingent on *SAB* being a monopoly and, mostly, they failed to link these issues to *SAB's* monopoly power. For instance Ayanda says:

SAB is also giving back to society by granting awards to community builders by providing sponsorship to sport events so that society will realise that sport is important more than crime and crime doesn't pay

In discussing the disadvantages they strayed from the question again by discussing problems of alcoholism, the health risk or the fact that drinking and driving is dangerous which again has nothing to do with SAB's monopoly power.

The only disadvantages that SAB do to SA beer drinkers is that SAB doesn't have warnings on their product to show that drinking too much may end up doing something bad to a person, like a person can lose his/her minds if drinking too much (Thabo)

The lecturer's comment to me about this section of Thabo's essay was:

Fuzzy, anecdotal info – has completely missed the point here. Hasn't realised that it needs to be tackled from a theoretical point of view

I have followed Kumaravadivelu's (1999: 472) advice when he says it is important that we try to 'understand possible mismatches between intentions and interpretations of classroom aims and events'. In this task there were a number of mismatches. The fact that one of the eight students interpreted the question correctly and answered it as was required, indicates that the problems students were having may relate to the way the section was taught. I have since discovered that some economics tutors had prepared students and others had not. Nomsa told me that her tutor had helped her with answering this kind of question.

Secondly, the task may have been misinterpreted because of the way in which it was worded. In designing tasks for EAL students, lecturers have to grapple with the tension between presenting the task in language that is simple enough to facilitate task interpretation and simplifying to such an extent that it may send students off on the wrong track. In this case in an attempt to simplify the wording of the question, we may have steered too far from typical economic discourse and given the students the impression that we were drawing on their personal experiences rather than economic theory. The inclusion of the phrase 'beer drinkers' and the situated meanings students have developed around beer and South African Breweries seem to have distracted them from paying closer attention to the wording of the question. As Nelson (1990) suggests, when students are not sure of how to deal with a particular question they tend to draw on their own resources in order to define tasks

for themselves and fall back on practices and assumptions they may have developed in school classrooms or at home.

My interview with Sibongile confirmed this. She spoke of how much easier this part of the essay had been for her:

...when you talk about the 'advantages and disadvantages' then it becomes easy because when I talk about advantages I use my knowledge I don't use my notes, I use my general knowledge... how people are.

The reference in the task to 'beer drinkers' was apparently read as an invitation to write about general knowledge or '*how people are*'; it was seen as an opportunity to draw on their own cultural models (eg SAB causes drunkenness and all related social ills) which were different from the required models in the economics department.

In contrast to the language used in the essay topic, the textbook uses such complex economic terms as 'efficiency', 'welfare' and 'economies of scale' and it refers to the 'costs' and 'benefits' of monopolies. In 2002 when a similar essay, a case study of Microsoft as a monopoly firm, was set and the wording was changed to 'costs and benefits of monopoly power for consumers', these problems seem to have been largely avoided.

However, there were one or two cases, which may indicate that the simple wording and use of everyday terms provided students with the opportunity to bridge from the familiar to the unfamiliar in order to build their understanding of the theoretical concept (cf. 6.3.). Vuyani, for instance, read the question correctly, made the important point that it was monopoly power that allowed SAB to keep prices low and then drew on his own experience to discuss further advantages of monopoly power. His answer is limited in terms of the economics lecturer's call for economic analysis, but nevertheless it was an important step in the right direction and one wonders whether he would have been able to take this step if the more difficult language had been used:

There are advantages to the South African beer drinkers as well as society because of the monopoly power exercise[d] by SAB. People can buy low priced products. Jobs are being created eg. people are entrepreneurs, they own shebeens.

This discussion has illustrated the three tiered analytical model by showing that the social context of task design impacts on the processes of production of text so that breaks in coherence may be linked to the wording of the writing task, particularly when the wording evokes situated meanings for students. The section that follows will take this discussion of situated meanings further.

7.3. Appropriating economics discourse and building understanding

In spite of instances such as that described in the previous section, students are drawing on the discourse of economics and the complex language of model building more frequently and more appropriately than in the first essay. In this way they show that they are starting to acquire the discourse and identifying more and more with the values and practices of economics. They have learned many of the 'moves' in economics, such as drawing a graph to illustrate a theory, explaining the graph and linking the explanation to the case under discussion.

Kress would probably say they had not yet, any of them, been 'colonised' by the discourse as the writing could by no means be described as 'a seamless fabric of tightly interwoven strands' (1985:10). Kress argues that discourses 'strive towards total and encompassing accounts in which contradictions are resolved or at least suppressed' (1985:11) but the students' writing is at an interim stage where they are beginning to transform the new discourse by experimenting with it and tentatively 'trying it on' in rather unique ways. Gee (1996:136) sees 'non-mainstream' students such as these as 'a source of challenge and change' because, while they are able to use the dominant discourse in ways that are regarded as recognisable and acceptable, the new discourse is permeated with aspects of their other discourses, a situation which creates possibilities for transformation. As I showed in 4.3.3., economics textbook discourse has changed and is changing and these students have the potential to impact on these changes.

In the discussion that follows I will be focusing mainly on my fourth research question to consider what the students' discursive patterns suggest about the ways that they are using language to conceptualise and to build knowledge as they develop understanding of the economic model. Once again intertextuality is central to this discussion. I will begin the discussion by referring to some of the situated meanings and cultural models that students draw on in this essay. I will then look at the visual and grammatical aspects of abstract modelling as well as the lexis. From there I will explore the difficulties they have in applying the model to the case study of SAB and finally point to an illustration of how text book language can cause confusion. Once again the three-tiered model is useful in allowing me to shift between textual analysis, interpretation of processes of production and explanation of context.

7.3.1. Situated meanings and cultural models

In the first assignment I focused particularly on the ways in which their previously acquired 'situated' meanings and cultural models (Gee 1999) influenced the way students from different backgrounds constructed understanding of the apartheid economy. Once again, in this essay, there are signs that students bring particular situated meanings and cultural models to the case study of South African Breweries. In the discussion of coherence above, there are numerous illustrations of where students' situated meanings associated with South African Breweries lead them to digress from the essay question so that their essays lose focus. As the lecturer pointed out to me, the 'personal approach', where students identified with their own life experiences, is regarded as simply not appropriate in economics. However, as I have pointed out earlier, drawing on situated meanings serves the students' 'interests'; it allows them to situate their learning of SAB as a monopoly in a world that is meaningful for them.

However, it may be that the choice of South African Breweries as the case study of a monopoly firm was not a good one, because students have too many emotive associations with SAB in the South African context. The company has a particular aura in South Africa because of its sponsorship of soccer and rugby and its abundant

advertising campaigns. SAB has become an icon in South African culture. Students know the advertising ditties by heart as Sibongile showed when she found an opportunity to recite them in her economic essay (7.4.2). The choice of SAB as the case study led to extensive intertextual borrowing in the essays and this will be discussed further under Advertising Discourse (7.4.2.)

7.3.2. Using the visual diagram and the grammar of abstract modelling

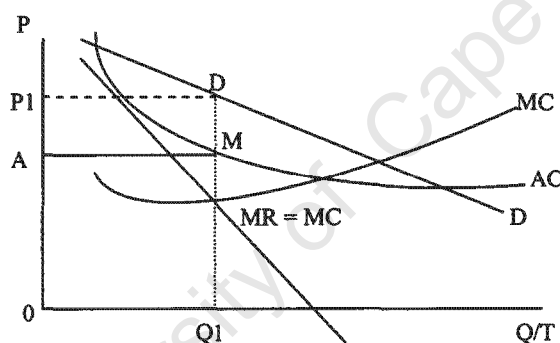
As I mentioned in my analysis of the first assignment, I am interested in how language use reflects conceptual understanding in the student essays. Crucial to this essay is the abstract model for monopoly firms and it is interesting that students have learned to draw the profit-maximisation graph for monopolies and to write an explanation for it. Although explanations vary in terms of clarity, all the students except Vuyani realise the importance of linking the explanation to the graph. The opportunities students have had in economics tutorials to plot and represent the economic relationships for monopolies have equipped them for this part of the assignment which points to the importance of scaffolding these kinds of tasks. It is also likely that in this essay the visual diagram acts as a support to the writing of the explanation. However, explanation of the diagrammatic representation of the model is something that students have had to be taught in Language and Communications tutorials because when they first start working with graphs, there is a tendency to draw the graph and provide no explanation. The students say that the visual representation says it all, 'speaks for itself'; they see it as substituting for writing and do not at first realise that the written explanation is crucial because it is an interpretation. I commented in 4.3.3. that there has been a shift in the role of the visual in recent economics text books so that the visual now carries more meaning (more of the ideational function) than it did ten or twenty years ago. An interesting question which there has not been the space to address in this research is how this shift impacts on the way students use and explain the graph.

As Wells (1999:48) says, the goal of learning is to develop the 'resources of action, speech and thinking' in order to enable more effective participation in the target

discourse. In the context of the monopoly essay, students have to wrestle with *utilising* the new discourse of abstract modelling and making their explanations of the model clear. Explaining the model is challenging both conceptually and linguistically and a concentrated effort to come to terms with the complex new concepts can often lead to surface errors in the students' writing. These surface errors are demonstrated in the example where Ayanda is explaining the abstract model: (My interpretation of the text is provided as an endnote.^{vii})

Ayanda's extract

Furthermore the question that remain is that, at what price-quantity combination will SAB choose to operate what SAB will consider before answering this question is that beyond some point for each and every unit of output it produces add more to the total revenue than total cost. SAB will continue producing up until that output in which marginal cost curve equal SAB's marginal revenue curve.



Ayanda has understood the model conceptually. He provides the correct conclusion to his earlier question in the last sentence of his paragraph and his graph is correctly drawn. However, his text has punctuation errors and problems with sentence construction and these obscure the meaning for the reader. In the attempt to carry forward the picture of the graph and the movement of the curves and explain this not only in English, an additional language, but also in the compressed discourse of economics, surface aspects of expression suffer. One of the biggest challenges in learning this new discourse is acquiring the terminology and using it appropriately; aspects of this will be demonstrated in the section that follows.

7.3.3. The lexis: Accessing the ‘few words’ in economic discourse

In explaining the abstract model, some students avoid the use of key terminology. Perhaps the most important characteristic of a monopoly firm is the concept of 'barriers to entry'^{viii}. A monopoly firm creates barriers to entry primarily because it is able to use 'economies of scale'^{ix} to keep competitors out of the market. In linguistic terms, such nominal groups are typical of the abstract language, including metaphor and personification, used to present the model. According to Halliday (1996:351) there are good reasons for the use of nominal groups such as these: they facilitate the exposition of the model. But, as Mason (1990) points out, the abstract language leaves gaps in the message which the reader has to infer from outside the phrase. This makes the reading and writing of this type of discourse difficult for all students, but particularly difficult for EAL students.

Sibongile says that she finds the language of economics difficult because in economics you have to use 'few words' (cf. 6.3.3.). The use of 'few words' such as 'barriers to entry' and 'economies of scale', would allow the students to discuss this characteristic of monopoly firms quite neatly and concisely. But instead they avoid using the terms altogether and use circuitous and long winded explanations which make their writing confusing. Sibongile's passage below illustrates the way she has avoided the use of the terms 'barriers to entry' and 'economies of scale'.

This beer has made people addicted and alcoholics so they won't buy another brand of beer. SAB is doing something different it has sold its beer for lower prices for the past decades and is still lowering its prices. In doing so it is making sure that it does not loose its customers and makes it difficult for other firms to enter the industry. Since after the end of apartheid a few foreign breweries have tried to break South African Breweries's near monopoly but have failed because of South African Breweries low prices.

The excerpt below from Thabo's essay illustrates similar avoidance of these terms:

The other things that SAB do is to block the entries of other firms or competitors indirectly. By indirectly I mean by its lowering its prices it is becoming difficult for other big breweries who wishes to operate in South Africa, because they will be forced to lower their prices in order to compete in the industry. By lowering their prices they won't realise maximum profit as SAB does because they won't use the same cost of production as SAB uses.

The passage indicates that Thabo does understand the concept of economies of scale but he tries to express it without using the appropriate terms with the result that his exposition is limited and confused. The lecturer comments that the underlined section needs to be explained further and he needs to use the terms 'barriers to entry' and 'economies of scale'. If Thabo had established early on that SAB forms barriers to entry by using economies of scale to keep its prices low, this information could have been backgrounded and used as a taking off point for the discussion of the next stage. He could have achieved this by using the nominal group i.e. 'Barriers to entry such as economies of scale' as the subject of the sentence and 'make it difficult for new firms to enter the market because they will be forced to lower their prices in order to compete' would become the predicate. In this way Thabo's paragraph could be reduced to one sentence and his final sentence would become redundant. He would have avoided confusion.

It seems likely that at this interim stage, the EAL students deliberately avoid the use of these terms because, despite strong social pressures to use appropriate economic terms, these terms do not serve their 'interests'. This may be a necessary stage in the interim literacy between borrowing misunderstood terms and learning to use those terms appropriately. At this stage the students don't fully understand the terms and don't feel comfortable using them; they have not yet assimilated the discourse. As Bakhtin (1981:294) says:

...not all words for just anyone submit equally easily to this appropriation, to this seizure and transformation into private property: many words stubbornly resist, others remain alien, sound foreign in the mouth of the one who has appropriated them.

I think here of a self-reflection written by Martha Dementieff, a Native Alaskan graduate student, who was experiencing similar problems with new and alien words she was encountering in her postgraduate studies:

As I began work on this assignment, I thought of the name of the course and thought I had to use the word 'discourse'. The word felt like an intruder in my mind displacing my word 'talk'. I could not organize my thoughts around it. It was like a pebble thrown into a still pond disturbing the smooth water. It makes all the other words in my mind out of sync. When I realized that I was using too much time agonizing over how to write the paper, I sat

down and tried to analyze my problem. I realized that in time I will own the word and feel comfortable using it, but until that time my own words were legitimate. Contrary to some views that exposure to the dominant culture gives one an advantage in learning, in my opinion it is the ownership of words that gives one confidence. I must want the word, enjoy the word and use the word to own it. When the new word becomes synonymous in my head as well as externally then I can think with it. I laugh now at my discovery but realize that without it, I would still be inhibited about my writing (In Cazden 1992:191).

When I taught this group of students a year later, in a web-based course investigating the gold and clothing industries in South Africa, we found that many of the economic concepts they had learned in ECO100A had been forgotten. 'Economies of scale' was one of those concepts that drew blank looks from students when they were asked to use it in the context of a clothing industry tutorial. Perkins (1999:8) makes interesting observations about what he calls 'inert' knowledge, which he classifies as one kind of 'troublesome knowledge'^x. He says

Inert knowledge sits in the mind's attic, unpacked only when specifically called for by a quiz or a direct prompt but otherwise gathering dust. A familiar relatively benign example is passive vocabulary - words that we understand but do not use actively. Unfortunately, considerable knowledge that we would like to see used actively proves to be inert. Students learn ideas about society and self in history and social studies but make little connection to today's events or family life (Perkins 1999:8).

Perkins suggests that when teaching knowledge that is likely to become inert, we should provide students with opportunities to use new concepts in problem solving activities which allow them to make connections to their everyday worlds. One must conclude then that the ESL students had not had enough opportunities to talk about and write about new concepts and to develop and extend their situated meanings. However, as the discussion that follows shows, making connections between the real and the hypothetical world can also be confusing and 'troublesome'.

7.3.4. Difficulties in applying the theory to the case study: The problem of real vs. hypothetical

In a sense this essay invites the real vs. hypothetical dilemma referred to earlier (cf. 6.3.2.) because the essay is about the 'real' world and in the 'real' world there are no pure monopoly firms. As I have indicated (cf. 6.3.2.), application to the 'real' world is never as simple and clear-cut as the theoretical model and matching the theory to the case study is confusing.

The ways in which students were struggling with 'real' world application were demonstrated repeatedly in these essays. For instance, four students failed to mention that South African Breweries is a 'near monopoly' rather than a pure monopoly. Philip's statement is fairly typical and it is reproduced with the tutor's comment on the left:

But SAB is a near monopoly	<i>There are barriers to entry in the market because SAB has no direct competitors. Under the conditions of pure monopoly, entry is totally blocked into the industry.</i>
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But the extract from Thabo's essay is the best illustration of someone who is trying to steer his way through contradictions and ambiguities:

From the description of a monopoly one can deduce that SAB is not a monopoly, is incorrect to conclude about things like this ones. Effectively SAB is a monopoly, as it possesses most of the characteristics of a monopoly

Again the comment 'near monopoly' has been scribbled in the margin by the lecturer and emphasised with double underlining. And yet the problems Thabo is experiencing are understandable. He knows that in explaining how SAB maximises profit he is required to draw the graph for a pure monopoly. This is the graph that has been developed through theoretical modelling and yet at the same time he is aware that there are many ways in which SAB does not quite meet the criteria for a pure monopoly so he sees a contradiction.

The difficulties economic modelling presents for students may constitute what Perkins (1999) has referred to as yet another kind of 'troublesome knowledge' – conceptually difficult knowledge. In Meyer and Land's research (2002) referred to in Chapter 4, economics educators recognised modelling as a 'threshold concept',

one that opens up a new and previously inaccessible way of thinking about something. It seems then that Thabo, by recognising that there is a contradiction in the application of the model to the real world, may have crossed a 'threshold'. Once again, as Papps and Henderson (1977) point out, the problem might not have arisen if students had understood more about the ways in which economists develop theories and models and had been reminded that models do not conform to reality in every respect. In addition text book writers need to be aware that the reader may not possess the particular background knowledge that has been assumed and that shifts between the real and hypothetical worlds need to be made clear. Hewing's (1990) research highlights the tendency of writers of economics textbooks to shift between the real and the hypothetical world without using signalling devices such as 'assume' 'suppose' and 'consider' together with conditionals and modals. These devices would be a more explicit way of inviting readers to move from the real world into a hypothetical world.

7.3.5. The language of the textbook

The students' confusion around legal patents provides a good illustration of how misleading the language of the textbook can be. Three students, Ayanda, Thabo and Nomsa, mentioned that a legal patent for producing beer had been awarded to SAB by the government and the markers have commented that this was incorrect and queried the source of the information. The extract from Ayanda's essay is quoted below and the marker has commented 'But NOT the case here' because there are no patents in the beer industry in South Africa:

Patent laws also [act] as block to entry of potential brewers in the beer market. SAB is the first producer of beer in SA, so other potential brewers that are willing to enter this industry by being attracted by the profits that SAB make or they want to be competitive, they have to be patient, because patent laws take sometime before allowing entry for new brewers to the beer industry, a monopolist is given the [patent] by government to dominate and enjoy its invention fruitfully up until a specified period of time (McConnell and Brue 1999).

Ayanda has referenced the textbook, McConnell and Brue (1999), and Nomsa told me in her interview that she had found the information in the textbook. I realised

when I looked up the section on legal patents that it was the ‘canonised’ discourse of the textbook that had misled students into assuming that patents applied to all monopolies. McConnell and Brue (1999) included patents or legal barriers in their discussion of barriers to entry, but the authors never explicitly indicated that legal patents were not awarded to all monopoly firms. I have reproduced this extract below to illustrate how the use of the present tense and the absence of hedging in the first sentence might give students the impression that patents were universal and applied to all monopoly firms. This is an American textbook, and examples of American modern day giants, such as General Electric, that have been awarded patents might also lead students to assume that South Africa’s modern day giant, SAB, would have a patent:

Legal Barriers to Entry: Patents and Licenses

Government also creates legal barriers to entry by awarding patents and licenses.

Patents A *patent* is the exclusive right of an inventor to use, or to allow another to use, her or his invention. Patents and patent laws protect the inventor from rivals who would use the invention without having shared in the effort and expense of developing it. At the same time, patents provide the inventor with a monopoly position for the life of the patent. The world’s nations have agreed on a uniform patent length of 20 years from the time of application. Patents have figured prominently in the growth of modern day giants such as IBM, Merck, Kodak, Xerox, Polaroid, General Electric and DuPont (McConnell and Brue 2000:465).

Ayanda feels that he has justified his argument for SAB’s patent by indicating that SAB was the first producer of beer in South Africa and therefore he sees it as ‘the inventor’ of beer and deserving of a patent. In the text quoted above there seems to be an assumption on the part of the text book writers that their readers would know that *not all* monopoly firms invent new products and that they are *not all* awarded patents. However, as I have indicated before, when books are written for such a diverse audience, the authors cannot afford to make too many assumptions about students’ background knowledge. In fact, many of the illustrations I have provided in this discussion of abstract modelling indicate that a better sense of students’ varied situated meanings and cultural models could provide a guide for more effective teaching and development of the new economic model.

7.4. The range of other discourses that students draw on

In my analysis of the first assignment, I devoted a section to the hybridity in the students' texts, including words, phrases and lexico-grammatical features, which revealed echoes of other discourses with which students may have been familiar. The first assignment was the students' initiation into academic writing and the task itself may have provided more opportunities for the blending of discourses than this last, more technical assignment. Nevertheless, in these essays, there are still snatches of other discourses and discourse patterns, adapted in increasingly appropriate ways to suit the context of the monopoly assignments. Ivanic (1997) indicates that no matter what type of writing they engage in, writers will draw on familiar discourses and write in ways that they have acquired through their life experiences. Therefore it seems important again to devote a section to the consideration of these in order to address my first two research questions more fully.

In this set of essays there is evidence of tension between the practices and discourses students bring with them and the requirements of academic discourse. As I have pointed out, writers' own experiences are not valued in the discipline of economics. However, I have argued that while students need to acquire the appropriate discourse, this takes time and it is important that they start by building on familiar ground and drawing on familiar discourses. This interim stage is an important one because not only are students building on prior learning to acquire new economic concepts but, as this section will show, they are building on prior discourses and practices to learn new ways of writing. Once again these essays show features of spoken and oral narrative discourses, but they also show a significant shift to the discourses found in their new social environment, namely, the discourses of the Internet and of television. In the sections that follow I will move from analysis to discussion and explanation.

7.4.1. Spoken and Narrative Discourses

In the analysis of the first assignment I identified some of the syntactic features typical of spoken discourse such as ‘clause chaining’ (Gough 2000 cf. 6.4.1.), the question and answer form and repetition. I argued that the use of these features creates the ‘movement and flow’ which characterises spoken discourse. In this essay there are still traces of this oral discourse, particularly in the writing of Thabo, Ayanda, Sibongile and Vuyani. Further features of spoken language are the use of the first person and other markers of ‘involvement’ and, once again, my analysis will provide some evidence of these features.

7.4.1.1. Movement and flow

In the first essay, it was Vuyani’s writing that seemed to display the characteristics of spoken discourse most markedly. Vuyani has taken an important step forward in this final essay because he is linking his sentences more effectively, using co-ordinating conjunctions and some embedding. To demonstrate this progress I will contrast an extract from the first essay with an extract from the final one:

Extract from first essay

Many of the businesses were owned by the state. The people or labour were owned by state, how? There was this document which they called it ‘pass’. People were arrested if they didn’t pay for their lives or any thing else. Labors [labourers], white people were the first priority where it comes to an employment. The prices were taken [fixed] by a state too.

Extract from final assignment

Because SAB is a monopoly, it cannot charge higher prices on its products, but it charges low price to keep it as a monopolist. Monopolist cannot charge the price where elastic demand is less than 1 because marginal revenue is negative. Because SAB is monopoly it produces the output where, there is a profit maximising output.

The extract from the first essay has been discussed in the section on cohesive markers in Chapter 6; it contrasts quite noticeably with the extract from his final assignment, where he has used longer sentences with clauses linked by subordinating conjunctions *because* and *where* and the co-ordinating conjunction *but*. In Chafe’s (1982) terms the use of *because* and *but* would still be regarded as characteristics of spoken discourse; nevertheless by using these conjunctions

appropriately and quite frequently, Vuyani has moved from a 'fragmented' style with few or no connectives towards a more 'integrated' style (cf. 6.2.).

Sibongile and Ayanda continue to use co-ordinating rather than embedded clauses in very long sentences, which often make up whole paragraphs and run to more than 50 words, although the extract from Ayanda's essay does show a greater range of clause structure. The extracts below provide illustrations of this:

These new firms will see that SAB is making economic profit and then they want to join this industry and that will make SAB to earn normal profits not economic profits or overpower SAB so that SAB will make losses and leave the industry (who knows what tomorrow brings maybe this will be possible). (Sibongile)

Finally, the advantages of the monopoly power exercised by SAB for South African beer drinkers [are] that SAB is driven by the invisible hand because SAB produces at the lowest possible cost and charge lower prices so as to increase profit and SAB is driven by self interest whereas on the other hand SAB is promoting public or social interest by benefiting from lower prices. (Ayanda)

Gough and Bock (2001) describe this repeated use of co-ordinating conjunctions as clause-chaining, a discourse feature which is typical of African story telling. On the whole, in this essay the students use a more analytical style (cf. definition of analytic writing in endnote i), particularly when they explain the graph. However Sibongile explains the graph quite informally, telling a story using co-ordinating conjunctions as well as phrases, such as *as time goes by*, and *and then*, discourse features which are more typical of a narrative style.

A monopolist will look at the demand curve and charge the price demanded by the consumers and then charge higher price and reduce output and the consumers will end up paying higher prices and getting less satisfaction from consuming the good.

In the long run SAB will make economic profits but as time goes by new firms are going to be established.

In my discussion of the first essay I suggested that repetition of the same syntactic form might be another feature that students were borrowing from spoken narrative discourse. I also indicated that parallel constructions might serve as an aid in

writing. In this batch of essays there are again many examples of the use of parallelism and repetition. In the examples below repetition of lexical items, phrases and clauses have been underlined:

But what SAB did is to fight them out of the industry and ended up buying several of them [out] of the beer industry. This is actually one of the thing that SAB do normally to fight off the competitors out of the beer industry. (Thabo)

...when a single seller or firm is the sole producer of a particular product for which there are no close substitutes for that product. The monopolist product is unique in that there are no close, or good, substitute. (Thabo)

So far the entries is blocked because SAB chase its competitors away. Economies of scale is one of the barriers that SAB uses to chase away its competitors. SAB can lower the price so that to chase the competitor. (Vuyani)

Gough (1996:69) describes this kind of repetition as the 'waffle phenomenon'. He says it results from writers feeling that their control of English as a second language is limiting them so that they are not able to express their ideas clearly, therefore they repeat themselves in order to get their message across more effectively. Based on the way repetition is used in the examples above, I would agree with Gough. By repeating the phrases *fight them out of the industry* and *chase competitor away* these writers are searching for, or avoiding the use of the appropriate economic register (cf. 7.3.3.), which would be represented by a phrase such as 'barriers to entry prohibit firms from entering the industry'.

It is always difficult to say whether, in drawing on features of spoken discourse, students are echoing their primary or their secondary, more literary discourses. My interviews with the students do provide evidence that in the use of the question and answer form some students are drawing on practices they have learned while studying African literary discourses at school (cf. 6.4.). Whether or not the discourse pattern originates in a primary or a secondary discourse, this kind of discursive hybridity and intertextuality appears to have the potential to be a source of discourse change. For instance, the question and answer style (*umbizo buciko*) is picked up again by some students in the monopoly essay, but this time it seems to have been

successfully adapted as it is carried to the new genre. This is illustrated in the following extract from Vuyani's essay where he uses the rhetorical question to introduce his essay:

How does SAB choose profit maximising output? What we know that most of the monopolist firm produce where marginal revenue is equal to marginal cost, this is profit maximising rule. (Vuyani)

The marker compliments him on his effective use of the question and answer form with a comment in the margin saying, *Nice opening question/topic sentence. The reader knows what the paragraph is about.* Vuyani continues to use rhetorical questions quite appropriately throughout the essay, showing that he is importing the older literary form and then re-articulating and contextualising it in his academic writing as he moves through his first year of study. As I have noted earlier, this remaking of text to reflect the individual's 'interests' is crucial because it reflects a personal reconstruction of the literary rhetorical form and an appropriation of meaning.

Thabo is also quite eloquent in the way he has drawn on the information from *The Economist* and used the *umbizo buciko* as a rhetorical technique to tell the story of the black market in beer trading:

So one may ask where does illegal retailers get their stock from because SAB cannot sell directly to illegal retailers? (The Economist Ltd. London 2000) Illegal retailers buy their stock indirectly from SAB via wholesalers (Thabo)

The excerpts above show that the students' past discourses have eventually been successfully integrated into the new discourse, which provides an answer to my fourth question: Are students succeeding in integrating past discourses into economics discourse? Vuyani's development of the question form from his first to his final assignment suggests support for my argument that student use their more familiar discourses to bridge to the new discourse and facilitate acquisition.

7.4.1.2 Use of first person and other features of 'involvement' typical of spoken discourse

In the first essay I showed that students often used the first person pronoun and features of ‘involvement’ in ways generally more associated with informal spoken language. In this final assignment, students mostly use the first person pronoun to structure their essays with phrases such as ‘First I will show...’ but, as the table indicates, there are some instances of using the first person together with verbs that refer to mental processes:

Table 7.4

First person reference <i>I, we, me, us</i>	5	4	5	2	1	1	4	3
Verbs referring to mental processes	4	1	0	2	0	1	0	3

In Chapter 6 I argued that the use of the first person with verbs referring to mental processes such as ‘I know’ ‘I think...’ is a feature of spoken language, used by speakers to involve the audience (Chafe 1982). The extracts below illustrate the way students are doing this in the final assignment. Gough (1996) notes that the discourse marker, ‘I can say’, as used by Thabo and Vuyani, below, is strongly influenced by mother tongue. He describes it as a feature of black English conversation equivalent to a common expression in African language discourse and says it is used in *English* conversation in a way that really means ‘I think’. The underlined phrases below might indicate that students are tentative about expressing their views:

I must [say] that SAB know how to advertise and [are] good in targeting consumers, they really know how to advertise and keep the competitors out of the market. (Sibongile)

In conclusion we can say that there is future in SAB. Currently SAB is increasing by 28% by volume internationally. I think SAB will go on making economic profit. (Vuyani)

All of this I can say made SAB to be monopolist and it will keep on growing until it own or lead the world (Thabo)

I think that there are many advantages and disadvantages according to monopoly power exercised by SAB. I feel that SAB is a very successful corporation and has a lot of time for the South African community by making a huge effort to supply most areas. (Philip)

The marker has responded to Philip's use of the first person with the marginal comment *in 3rd person please*. In 4.3.5. I noted that the use of the first person is almost unheard of in economics discourse and that tutors and some lecturers prefer students not to use the first person.

It is also interesting that Sibongile and Philip use the second person pronoun in ways which seem designed to encourage audience participation in a spoken context:

Another thing is that the consumers are benefiting from SAB they are buying beer at lower prices, even the person who does not have money can buy beer because it is sold in different containers. You can buy a can or a small bottle which is much cheaper. (Sibongile)

Because SAB make this effort and their prices are ridiculously low, you will find that the South African public have no problem with SAB using their monopoly power in the beer industry. (Philip)

All these examples indicate that students are still using personal pronouns in ways that are more typical of informal spoken language. Another device often used for involving the audience is rhetorical questioning (Chafe 1982) and as I indicated in 7.4.1.1. some students are using the rhetorical question quite effectively in this essay.

7.4.2. Advertising Discourse

In the first essay I found examples of interdiscursivity in the form of echoes of biblical and journalistic discourse which indicated that students were struggling to find the appropriate register. Once again in these essays students drew on phrases and words from a variety of discourses, but what is particularly interesting is that they revealed their changing 'interests' in the way they drew on the discourses of television advertising and the Internet. Some of the students from disadvantaged backgrounds had no access to computers before they came to university. However their first year curriculum includes Information Systems, so by September they were

very familiar with the Internet. Preparation for this essay included participating in an intranet discussion forum and using the Internet to find information (cf.4.6.). SAB advertises very widely on television and particularly on the sports channels and most students drew on TV advertising discourses. When I asked Ayanda about his reference to ‘community builders’ in the excerpt from his essay quoted below, he said that it came from a TV programme ‘Community Builder of the Year’ where SAB sponsors awards to community builders:

...SAB is also giving back to the society by granting awards to community builders by providing sponsorship to sport events so that the society will realise that sport is more important than crime and crime doesn't pay.
(Ayanda)

Students are quite easily swayed by the persuasive language they find on the SAB website and they borrow the language of advertising quite uncritically for their academic essays. This points to an urgent need for communications courses to teach students how to evaluate and critique the information they find on the World Wide Web as it is being used more and more as a resource in the writing of academic essays. In the extracts below, the underlined sections from Philip and Sherry's essays are refrains borrowed from the SAB website:

Some advantages for SAB using this power is the many jobs the corporation has made available, all 3400 of them, and don't forget the reasonably priced beer for which there is no substitute that they produce to give the South African beer drinking community instant pleasure and gratification. (Philip)

SAB also has been responsible in helping or serving the community at large. One of SAB's mottoes is to look after the community or society at large. It (SAB) has helped in some urgent and social needs like education and sport in the form of sponsorships. We all know that sport and beer have been synonymous in the uniting of our country (<http://www.SAB.co.za>) (Sherry)

Sherry, like so many of the students, sees sport and beer as *synonymous in the uniting of our country*. From the images and messages conveyed by popular culture, SAB has become more than just a brewery; it has become an icon of South Africanness, a symbol of the national identity. When students see South Africans celebrating their sporting triumphs on TV, SAB advertising is always somewhere in the background or even the foreground. Sibongile draws on SAB propaganda, revealing her ‘interest’ in quite overt ways as she quotes from her favourite

advertisements, often failing to use quotation marks. Sibongile is identifying with her own life experience as an avid soccer fan when she gets caught up in the lengthy digression, discussed in 7.2.2. In these extracts I have underlined the catchy phrases she draws on from the TV advertisements:

SAB is also keeping the competitors out of the market by doing effective advertising, they make sure that they target everyone from soccer lover to rugby lovers. Like if there are no beers then the soccer match will not start and that beer can bring people closer, even strangers and that if you want to welcome a stranger in your house you should give it a beer.

There is one advert that seem to be working very well to beer drinkers which say 'one nation one soul , one beer one goo..' [goal] soccer lovers love that one and kids too. I must say that SAB know how to advertise and good in targeting consumers they really know how to advertise and keep the competitors out of the market.

In my interview with her, Sibongile interrupted our discussion of distributive inefficiency, to say 'Ask me about the soccer' and then proceeded to explain the above extract. She said that, in the second sentence of the first paragraph, she was actually describing the scenario played out in one of her favourite TV advertisements. After this rather inappropriate and tangential snapshot of TV ads in the written extract, she returned to what was a perfectly valid argument, i.e. that advertising helps to keep competitors out of the market.

Sibongile recognises that she has a very informal style and commented on this a year later when she wrote the reflection on her progress as a reader and writer. She described how she loved reading and watching TV, and perhaps in the extracts from her essay describing the TV ads she is trying to animate her writing in the same way she animates her reading:

I noticed that my weakness is in writing, I have a problem in expressing myself on a paper and I tend to be informal. I write as if I'm writing a letter to a friend...

I love reading specially horror stories...

In high school we always used to read book loud for the whole class and my teacher always asked me to read... reading is fun cause you can always change your voice, make what you're reading interesting and fun. (From 'Reflection on literacy progress' by Sibongile, November 2002)

7.4.3. Finding the register

There are a number of other examples of interdiscursive intertextuality and stylistic features that indicate that students have not yet found the appropriate register. In the markers' discussion of these essays the lecturer commented that the subject of monopolies is an emotional issue in South Africa because of the power of the big conglomerates. She identified Ayanda's use of the phrase *reign of terror* in the following passage as a Marxist view and repeated that students needed more detachment from their personal ideas (situated meanings). Her written comment is shown in the left-hand margin beside the extract from Ayanda's assignment:

Not
appropriate in
an economics
essay

Moreover, South African Breweries plant capacity also act as a unique ingredient that SAB concealed over a number of years. SAB cannot reveal the ingredients that contributed to its reign of terror in the beer industry. It will be very difficult for new brewers to evolve the methods of producing a good quality of beer that can take SAB by storm.

Her interpretation may be correct; she certainly has a wealth of experience working with these students. However, my knowledge of the student and his background would indicate that Ayanda is not intending to present a Marxist view. Instead, I believe that he is experimenting with words, trying out new phrases. I noted in the analysis of the 'transition essay' (Chapter 6) that he uses old-fashioned language and there are further instances of it in this essay. For example, he repeatedly uses the conjunctions 'furthermore' and 'moreover', which might be described as formal and old fashioned. Gough (1996:68) has suggested that along with other 'new Englishes', black South African English (BSAfE) shows 'a penchant to the florid - a tendency to ornamental English' and 'idiosyncratic use of proverbs'. Gough draws on a range of theorists (Platt, Weber and Ho 1984:148-150, Wissing 1986:179 and Scheffler 1978:26) to provide explanations for this phenomenon and suggests that writers may use this kind of language because of limited knowledge of the appropriate register, rhetorical transfer from the mother-tongue or because they believe that 'the only good English is the more formal English' (1996:68).

Ayanda's passage above illustrates some of the metaphors he uses, such as *new brewers... take SAB by storm*; a little later in the same paragraph, he says *a monopolist is given the patent by government to... enjoy its invention fruitfully*. These phrases have a literary quality to them, indicating perhaps that he is a little more adventurous in his interdiscursive borrowing than some of the other students. It may be that he does not always have a sense of the appropriate register but he shows creativity in the way he draws on other discourses and reshapes them. These personal reconstructions are important steps in the process of acquiring the appropriate register as they assist students in making meaningful connections. Perhaps Ayanda has recognised metaphor as a characteristic of economic discourse.

The misinterpretation of the last part of the essay question encouraged the inclusion of other discourses. For instance, the discussion of the disadvantages of SAB's monopoly power for beer drinkers seemed to encourage the use of a moral tone. Many of the students told me that they did not drink alcohol and the reader may detect a rather disapproving note, illustrated by the modals *should* and *must* and by evaluative adjectives such as *unethical* and *dreadful* used in the extracts below:

The disadvantage that the beer drinkers or consumers are getting is that beer can destroy many families and marriages and SAB is not putting or matching that when they are advertising beer. Many people become alcoholics and then they loose their jobs and families that's why there are a lot of street kids its because of beer. SAB should say these things when they are advertising their beer. Look at the cigarette industry they issue warnings about smoking, how it kills and that pregnant woman should not smoke. SAB must do the same thing and stop being unethical. (Sibongile)

There is some dreadful things cause by SAB's products crime, domestic violence, rape, dead, car excedence, loss of jobs, brain damage, health problems, family crisis and self control. This is because of consumer surplus and price (Vuyani)

The only disadvantages that SAB do to SA beer drinkers is that SAB doesn't have warning on their product to show that drinking too much may end up doing something bad to a person, like a person can loose his/her minds if drinking too much. (Thabo)

7.5. Conclusion

This chapter has extended the exploration of the patterns and offered explanations for occurrences of those patterns in the student writing. This has enabled me to expand the dimensions of my analysis through a further investigation of the interpretative and explanatory levels of the framework.

I have indicated that demands on both linguistic and conceptual skills have advanced rapidly over the period of eight months on the economics course, therefore the final assignment is a far more challenging piece of writing than the first. This means one cannot do a straight comparison of the two essays and one needs to keep in mind the contextual issues. Nevertheless, it is interesting to review the changes that have taken place in the development of these students' interim literacies from the first to the last assignment.

Vuyani's story (7.2.1.1.) provides an illustration of the journey travelled by one student as he negotiates the new terrain of academic writing. It shows how the discourse types and forms of literacy encountered at earlier stages in his biography were imported quite transparently into his first assignment, with only halting attempts at adaptation. These then reappeared in his final assignment as a successful reappropriation and recontextualisation of these older literary forms. This is significant evidence that learning has taken place and that he is acquiring the new discourse. Vuyani's borrowing from the Internet in his second assignment can be seen as a stage in his development as a writer; it points to the important role of imitation in the acquisition of academic literacy and presents a challenge to traditional notions of plagiarism.

Intertextuality is a pervasive feature in both assignments. In the first assignment students drew heavily on spoken discourses from both everyday and literary experiences, and traces of these spoken discourses also filter into the final assignments. But in the monopolies assignment students reveal their changing 'interests' as they draw on and adapt discourses, such as those of the Internet, which they find available to them in the new social environment (cf.7.4.).

By the time students write the final essay, they have acquired tools such as the 'route map' for organising their essays, which contributes to a more coherent structure (cf.7.2.2.). But coherence breaks down when students again draw on situated meanings and thus misinterpret part of the essay task. The final assignment calls for students to grapple with very complex concepts and language in order to describe the abstract model for monopolies (cf.7.3.). As in the first assignment there is evidence that their situated meanings and cultural models can interfere with the ways students make sense of the model and the textbook.

The final chapter will draw together the findings of this research before discussing their implications and considering future directions for teachers who work in similar contexts.

Notes:

ⁱ Analytic writing is defined by Applebee (1981) as generalization and classification concerning a situation, problem, or theme with logical hierarchical relations among points.

ⁱⁱ In the text book, McConnell and Brue (2000) 'downsloping' is written as one word

ⁱⁱⁱ Non-italicised items have been inserted by me to make the text clearer to the reader.

^{iv} I have underlined nominalisations and used square brackets to indicate the long nominal groups.

^v I have reproduced an entire paragraph from Nomsa's last assignment, but the section marked in bold was not included in her 50 word extract.

^{vi} Economic theory indicates that the advantages of monopolisation of the industry are that this allows for economies of scale and therefore the monopoly firm can produce more efficiently than a large number of small firms and goods should cost less. Counter arguments are that monopolies reduce economic welfare (consumer surplus) and efficiency (productive, allocative and distributive). This tends to make goods scarcer and more expensive and the monopolist can be accused of not paying enough attention to the quality of products. Again this question calls for application. Students' understandings of the pros and cons of monopolies need to be applied to SAB. The reading from The Economist (2000) which they had been given, provides a clue when it says that SAB was very effective in improving productivity so that prices have stayed low.

^{vii} My Interpretation

Furthermore the question that remains is at what price-quantity combination will SAB choose to operate? What SAB will consider before answering this question is that it will produce another unit of output as long as that unit adds more to total revenue than it adds to total cost. SAB will continue producing output until the marginal cost is equal to SAB's marginal revenue OR until the marginal cost curve intersects the marginal revenue curve.

^{viii} 'Barriers to entry' are factors that block other firms from entering a market and these include 'economies of scale.'

^{ix} 'Economies of scale' are economies of mass production or reductions in the cost of producing a product because of the size of the firm.

^x Troublesome knowledge is knowledge that is alien or counter-intuitive or even intellectually absurd at face value (Perkins 1999).

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Chapter 8: Implications and Recommendations

'the utterance is related not only to preceding but to subsequent links in the chain of speech communication' (Bakhtin 1986:94).

8.1 Introduction

This study has focused on intertextuality in student writing, drawing on Bakhtin's idea that all texts respond to past utterances, anticipate future ones and are 'populated' with snatches of other discourses. These theoretical notions link to my principal research question which considers the relationship between the academic curriculum and student voices in a first year economics course. Bakhtin's concept of intertextuality is also central to some of my subsidiary questions which look at what the discourses, discourse models and literacy and learning practices are that students draw on as they write their essays.

Further subsidiary research questions consider change: firstly whether students have been successful in integrating past discourses into economics discourse and secondly what the shifts and changes are from the first to the last essay. These questions link to Kress's idea that changes in use and form take place constantly and that they 'arise as the result of the interested actions of individuals' (2000:155). I have pointed out that in these interim literacies the personal reconstructions or adaptation of written text to reflect the writers' interests are often an indication of a transformation of understanding and an appropriation of meaning. I have drawn on Gee's theories of situated meanings and cultural models as tools for analysing the ways in which students draw on existing linguistic resources to access new discourses and to make sense of new concepts. These theories link to a further key research question which considers the ways in which students use language to conceptualise and build knowledge. Thus linguistic and intertextual analysis of student writing, supplemented by student interviews, can provide us with insights into students' schema/cultural models and learning can be seen as a semiotic process (Wells 1999, Macken Horarik 1996:233).

In this last chapter I will address the final research question looking at how the findings of the study can be used to enhance students' access to economics discourse. I will begin by drawing together the findings of the research, then move on to consider the implications of my research findings and offer recommendations for:

- a) the teaching and assessment of economics
- b) my own practice as language and literacy educator and Academic Development practitioner.

8.2 Findings of the research

Interpretive qualitative studies such as this one are often criticised because they are not generalizable. But Davis (1995) points out that the strength of this type of study is that it allows for an in depth understanding of what is specific to a particular group. I have noted in Chapter 7 that development in writing is difficult to measure because it happens in diverse aspects of writing and at a different pace from one student to another. However the qualitative approach I have adopted has allowed an in depth analysis in which I have been able to take into account individual variation in development. Thus the detailed and nuanced insights from this research may enhance my own practice and be of assistance to my colleagues working on the bridging course in economics.

Qualitative studies establish 'grounded theory' (Glaser and Strauss 1967) through the process of analysing data and this grounded theory potentially allows for transfer to a wide range of social situations. Thus my findings may offer insights which are helpful to literacy teachers working in a variety of similar contexts across the curriculum. Because the study has focused exclusively on language and literacy for economics, it may illuminate issues in the learning and teaching of economics, which will be helpful to economics educators in a wide range of situations. Davis (1995) suggests that when a study provides this kind of thick description, the reader is intended to become a co-analyst of the data and interpretations presented. In addition the research may raise a range of questions with the potential for further research.

I have used Fairclough's three tiered approach to discourse analysis. While Chapters 4 and 5 focused mainly on the social and academic contexts, represented in the outer layer of the model, they did also contribute to an understanding of the processes of text production and interpretation in economics. The analysis of student writing in Chapters 6 and 7 moved back and forth between all three layers of the model, illustrating how the model works.

The student biographies, compiled from my interviews and observations, complemented the analysis of the essays in important ways. The study shows that the details of students' access to written and spoken English and their attitudes towards language learning may impact on their acquisition of new discourses. It is interesting that the students from the former DET schools seemed to show the greatest progress from the first to the last essay. Despite the gaps and disparities they had suffered in their education, they showed tremendous motivation to acquire the new discourse and their multilingual abilities may have assisted acquisition. The analysis also showed the ways the students' life experiences shaped their writing. For instance, Nkwenkwe's background and earlier literacy practices led to the use of 'journalistic discourse' in his first economics essay.

8.2.1. Intertextuality

The concepts of 'manifest intertextuality' and interdiscursivity, as refined by Fairclough (cf.2.3.3.), are explored throughout the analysis. Sections 6.2. and 7.2. have analysed students' attempts to acquire the academic practice of referencing, by integrating their readings and acknowledging outside sources. These sections have highlighted the difficulties students experience in transforming authoritative discourses. The study also delves into interdiscursivity and hybridity in student writing, illustrating, for instance, the way lexical density increases from the first to the last essays. Sections 6.4 and 7.4 examine the way students' texts have been built from a range of past and present discourses, discourse strategies and genres. Particularly notable in the first essay were the traces of African secondary discourses, seen in such features as clause chaining, repetition, rhetorical

questioning and the use of first and second person pronouns. In the final essay there is evidence of students 'reworking' past discourses so that they blend more acceptably into the new discourse (cf. 7.4.1.1.).

The exploration of student writing over a period of eight months has shown that there are a number of stages in the development of interim literacies. Initially some students, particularly Vuyani, drew strongly on both spoken and literary discourse types and forms of literacy encountered at earlier stages of their lives. The next stage for many students may be one where they mimic very closely or openly plagiarise the discourse of the textbook/lecturer. This was again most vividly illustrated by Vuyani in his second essay where he regurgitated chunks of text from some of the original sources. The students, guided by their interests, recognise the importance of sounding more like economists but the new discourse is so alien, so 'indissolubly fused' with the authority of others that they cannot yet make it their own and therefore they reproduce it.

Further stages of the interim literacy emerged in the analysis of the last essay. For instance there was a stage, for some students, where they deliberately avoided the use of economic terms because, despite strong social pressures to use appropriate language, they did not fully understand the terms and were not comfortable using them. It seems likely that this is a necessary stage in the interim literacy between borrowing misunderstood terms and learning to use those terms appropriately. The expansion of their interim literacies was illustrated in the last essay when they drew quite extensively on a range of different discourses, encountered in the new environment, such as the TV and the Internet. A close-to-final stage of the interim literacy arrives when the students have assimilated the new discourse sufficiently so that they are able to use it as their own; it is still flavoured with aspects of their past discourses and discourse strategies but these have been reworked and rearticulated so that they seem more appropriate for the new context. Gee (1996:136) would see this as an important stage because it creates possibilities for challenge and change. The students are able to use the new discourse in ways that are regarded as recognisable and acceptable, but one could not yet say that they had been 'colonised' (Kress 1985:10) by the dominant discourse; there is something fresh and original about their writing style.

The study shows the ways in which students build on their prior discourses and practices to learn new ways of writing. There are many examples that illustrate the importance of prior discourses and practices for scaffolding acquisition of the new. For instance, in 7.4.1.1., Vuyani builds on his practice of using rhetorical questions, refining it so that it looks acceptable in his economics essay. However, the analysis also shows that the requirements of academic discourse may conflict with many of the practices and discourses students bring with them from school. For instance the register and genres of economics text present tremendous challenges for students from diverse backgrounds who are new to the discourse of economics. In the first essay many students resorted to using the recount genre, a genre which would have been familiar from school composition writing and from African story telling practices. In addition, the complex vocabulary and condensed forms of the language of economics seem alien to all students, but particularly so for students who are learning economics in a second or third language. One illustration of this was Ayanda's explanation of the graph for monopolies, where an attempt to come to terms with the compressed code of abstract modelling led to surface errors in his writing such as poor sentence structure and punctuation.

8.2.2. Coherence

The study also explored coherence in some detail because coherence is so crucial to learning and making meaning in economics. The analysis in 6.2.2. and 7.2.2. showed that even in apparently unconnected pieces of student writing, the assembly of ideas is not entirely random. For instance, there was evidence of how students achieved a certain amount of coherence through a combination of cohesive ties and semantic relations, but in some of the extracts it was clear that the reader required a certain amount of background knowledge in order to be able to interpret the student writing. Indications were that essay writing practices at school had encouraged students to get 'the facts' down as quickly as possible without paying attention to coherence or logical development of argument. A comparison of first and final essays showed that coherence improves through guidance in building a case around

a main idea and organising propositions so that they are in a logical order and are relevant.

8.2.3. Situated meanings and the growth of understanding

Woven into the stages in the growth of interim literacies is the development in conceptual understanding. The analysis has shown that the variability in student writing is linked to social and cultural context. I have used Gee's notion of situated meanings and cultural models to investigate the ways in which students construct understanding in economics. Examples from the first essay showed how their different life experiences shaped students' cultural models of the command-orientated economy under apartheid. In the second essay, the case study of South African Breweries as a monopoly power seemed to trigger situated meanings and cultural models (cf. 7.2.2.) linked to SAB. This may have led the students to misinterpret the question on the advantages and disadvantages of monopoly power so that they drew on their own personal experiences of alcoholism and beer drinking, rather than taking the required analytical approach.

There was evidence that drawing on personal situated meanings may sometimes hinder and, at other times, help students in the acquisition of new concepts. In the discipline of economics, writers' own experiences are not valued. In fact, students' experiences may serve to confuse, rather than to contribute to economic understanding. For instance, as I pointed out in 6.3.2. and 7.3.4., the students' attempts to understand economic theory in terms of their own situated meanings may have encouraged them to collapse the simplified economic model with the far more complex 'real world' case studies. This led to a number of misconceptions.

Students do need to acquire the appropriate discourse and use economic analysis as evidence, rather than drawing on personal experience. However, there are other illustrations in the data that indicate that students' situated meanings are important because they can provide them with a framework for learning new concepts. For instance, students sometimes develop their own phrases and words for new concepts and these personal reconstructions trigger important associations and situated

meanings for the students which allow learning to take place. This was illustrated in Nomisa's use of the phrase 'boss of the market' (6.3.3) as an interim term to assist her acquisition of the economic concept of 'consumer sovereignty'.

8.3. Implications and recommendations for first year extended /bridging courses in economics

The findings from the research indicate that students bring with them a wide variety of differing worldviews and life experiences. Addressing the needs of students from such a wide diversity of backgrounds is a challenge for educators as it calls for new approaches to teaching and learning. In the following section I will look at three broad implications for bridging courses in economics.

8.3.1. Catering to diversity

The research provides insights into how differing cultural models influence students' understanding of new material. This implies that teachers will be better equipped to address students' needs if they know more about the kinds of situated meanings and cultural models that students bring. The research revealed a number of instances where tutors and lecturers made assumptions about what students knew and found that their assumptions were wrong. In the case of the Transition essay, the lecturer has had to revise the curriculum because he can no longer assume that students have homogeneous, in-depth understandings of the way the economy was structured during apartheid (cf. 6.3.1.1.).

This means that teachers cannot afford to make assumptions about what students know but, rather, should use a variety of methods to probe for understanding. Focusing on students as active participants in the learning processes would allow teachers to connect with their students, to build an awareness of their backgrounds and a sensitivity to differences in prior learning. Teachers need to value diversity and develop ways of drawing on students varied experiences as a resource for knowledge construction. When students are provided with illustrations that are

familiar and meaningful, they are better able to engage with the new material. They will also be more motivated if they know that their experiences are valued.

Teachers should be encouraged to develop practical ways of making concepts explicit and accessible to a diversity of students, many of whom are not first language speakers of English. As the biographies of the case studies show, some of these students are competent in five or six languages and teachers can use this multilingualism as a resource by drawing on students' home languages where the opportunities arise. Research (Cummins 1984, Cummins and Swain 1986) has shown that cognitive processes generally work best through the first language. When speakers of the same language are encouraged to work together to clarify ideas and concepts in the home language this may trigger further useful associations for them.

In addition, the misinterpretation of the monopolies task has implications for the selection of topics for assignments, and particularly, for the ways in which these tasks are designed and mediated to students. It means that teachers need to be clear and specific in the way they design tasks and, in some cases, it may be necessary to have essay topics translated into the students' home languages.

This research has shown quite vividly that student writing can provide valuable insights into students' thought. Tutors and lecturers, involved in marking written assignments, who are trained to be sensitive to these insights, will develop a clearer sense of conceptual difficulties that students experience. In a course with a built-in language adjunct such as this one, close co-operation between the language and the discipline specialist seems absolutely crucial. Language and literacy specialists need to learn the disciplinary codes and methodologies from the 'insiders', but language analysis offered by these 'outsiders' to the discipline can often be very illuminating for economics educators.

8.3.2. Economic modelling

As I have pointed out, economic modelling presents difficulties for the students because there are contradictions between the hypothetical model and 'real' world illustrations. My research shows that students tended to collapse the theoretical abstraction with the 'real' world experience or the case study, which is never as simple as the model.

To address the problems students had with economic modelling there is a need to make explicit the 'deep rules' of the culture (Ballard and Clanchy 1988). This means not only teaching students how economists read and write, but also familiarising them with the epistemology and the modes of analysis of the discipline. Papps and Henderson (1977) indicate that students find models difficult because they do not understand enough about the methodologies that economists use. They recommend that lecturers show students how and why economists develop theories and models. They need to make students aware that because reality is so complex, economists develop simple models and abstract from reality in order to reduce reality to manageable proportions to make theorising and predicting simpler. If students understand that the model will not conform to reality in every respect, i.e. the '*ceteris paribus*'¹ rule, there should be less confusion.

Teaching the deep rules of the culture is not something that the language specialist can do. The specific form of knowledge construction in economics and the language in which that knowledge is expressed have to be made explicit. First year economics classes which start with an introduction to the epistemology and the methodologies of the discipline lay a solid foundation for the learning of economics because students gain an understanding of how the discipline has developed and what its procedures are. This also involves showing students how the forms of enquiry and methods of representing knowledge contrast with some of the practices encouraged at school. However, laying a foundation is not enough and economics students need constant reminding of the *ceteris paribus* rule. This 'reminding' process could be carried out in preparation for an essay such as the monopolies essay. Students could read and research a case study of a monopoly and then look at the theory in relation

to the case study illustration. They would consider the ways in which the case study shows some characteristics of the theoretical model for monopolies but lacks others. The lecturer could then remind them of how and why the economic model is developed and point out that the model is never directly applicable to the real world. In first year classes where there is a language and communications adjunct, as in ECO100A, this preparation for the essay could be done as a collaborative process between economics and language tutors.

8.3.3. Acquiring the lexico-grammatical features of economics

The students' biographies and literacy histories recorded in Chapter 5 showed that occasions for speaking and writing English in the former DET schools were limited. All students, but particularly EAL students, need as many opportunities as possible for trying out the new discourse through talking and writing in non-threatening situations. This means that students should have opportunities for small group discussion and informal writing such as 'free writing' in both lectures and tutorials. This works best when students are provided with opportunities to use new concepts in problem-solving activities which allow them to make connections to their everyday worlds. A very effective technique for introducing informal writing into lectures is for the teacher to stop the class five minutes early and ask students to write a short paragraph summarising the content of the lecture or the tutorial. If time and numbers allow it, these summaries could be collected and marked. Not only do exercises like this allow students crucial opportunities for practising the discourse, but they give the teacher who marks them a good sense of how much has been understood.

My study has shown that students often develop their own phrases and words for new concepts and that these personal reconstructions trigger important associations for the students which allow learning to take place. If tutors know their students and understand their backgrounds, they can facilitate this process by creating situated meanings to assist the students. For instance, I noted the way a tutor created the situated meaning 'king of the market' to scaffold students' acquisition of the concept of 'consumer sovereignty' (6.3.3.).

Again, multilingual approaches may scaffold access to the new discourse for EAL speakers. The notion of a 'common underlying proficiency' (Cummins 1984) means that the home language can be used to assist more effective acquisition and development of the second language. Acknowledging and respecting a student's home language is a way of affirming him/her and validating the student's identity. Many tutors are multilingual and may be able to offer explanations of concepts in their home language/s or, if not, they may be able to call on students to do this. Tutors and lecturers in economics could begin developing bilingual glossaries/concept dictionaries of difficult course-specific concepts with students. An experiment of this nature has been conducted in a Humanities first year course (Nomdo *et al* 2002) but it has not yet been tried in economics. This may be a complex task in economics because, as my case study students have indicated (Section 5.6.1), many economics terms do not have equivalents in their home languages.

Once again the process of acquisition is facilitated if language specialists and economics specialists are working in partnership to provide constructive opportunities for talking and writing and mediating concepts.

8.4. Implications for economics courses generally

The description in Chapter 4 of the Language and Communications tutorial illustrates how teaching of economics at first year level can take the form of a partnership between economics specialists and language specialists. However, it would not be practical for all economics courses to run Language and Communications tutorials, not only because of the tremendous resource implications, but because such intensive interventions are not needed in all courses. However, in the changing context of South African higher education, lecturers and tutors will have to be equipped to address the language and literacy needs of an increasingly diverse group of students in all economics courses. At the moment in many mainstream courses, students are not told overtly how to proceed with reading the textbook and summarising it, or writing essays and referencing. As indicated in

Chapter 4, there are assumptions that students should have learnt the codes and practices of academic reading and writing at school and, if not, they are expected to teach themselves. However, these assumptions do not work adequately for everyone because some students have not been exposed to the appropriate academic literacy practices at school.

The findings of this research and the recommendations for the bridging course point to a number of ways in which lecturers and tutors in mainstream courses could be better equipped to address the language and literacy needs of a diversity of students:

- They could learn interactive teaching methodologies so that students are provided with more opportunities to try out the discourse in the spoken and the written mode both in tutorials and in lectures.
- In some courses lecturers need to encourage more student writing, not only so that students have more practice at developing their writing skills, but also so that they, the teachers, have more opportunities to connect with their students through reading what they write.
- Tutors and lecturers may need to be trained to make the task clear and explicit when designing questions and assignment topics.
- They should be trained to teach and assess literacy skills by mediating the readings and providing useful and constructive feedback on written assignments. For instance, rather than feedback comments such as, 'poor argument structure' or 'your essay lacks coherence' it may be necessary to indicate the ways in which the argument could be structured more logically or to offer suggestions of cohesive devices that could be helped to help improve coherence.
- All teachers should be trained to use multilingualism as a resource so that students' home languages are recognised and valued.

The findings of this research point to the variability in student writing which poses a problem for those of us who have to allocate 'marks' to students' written assignments. How do we remain fair in our assessments when ways of saying and meaning of differently socially positioned writers are non-equivalent? Phelps (1989) suggests that each student's context and historicity is central in judging students'

texts. Each text should be judged as part of a stream of previous and subsequent texts, so that it is seen as evolving and its 'historicity' is taken into account (see Phelps 1989 in Shayⁱⁱ 2003:18). This seems to point to the value of an assessor who really knows the students and has had an opportunity to follow progress and development in writing.

As I mentioned in Chapter 4, apart from a few exceptions, most examinations in the university are written in English. This raises concerns about the fairness of assessment procedures for EAL speakers. Research has shown that second language students take longer to read and to produce written work in academic English, a situation which is aggravated by the stress of time constraints in examinations (Faure *et al* 2003). This raises the issue of whether EAL speakers should be given extra time in examinations. Concerns such as these need to be given serious consideration and further research in the South African context might provide us with stronger arguments to justify policy changes.

I have described the ways in which the ECO100A course has attempted to address some of these difficult assessment issues by drawing up marking criteria and marking memos well in advance so that assessment practices can be made explicit to students before they start writing essays. Marking workshops encourage discussions among markers about how they are interpreting student writing and what it is they value, therefore they help to achieve greater consensus amongst markers (cf. 6.1.). Staff who set and mark written assignments in economics can benefit from being trained in these kinds of assessment practices.

Language Development (LD) practitioners are well equipped to build capacity in this way but training interventions need to be systemic and sustained so that tutors are supported throughout the academic year. In addition, if discipline lecturers work alongside LD practitioners, providing the necessary support in the content areas, they develop capacity themselves and the training exercise becomes a learning process for both.

8.5. Literacy teaching: Implications for practices of language teachers working in this field

8.5.1. Interim literacies

The strong influence of past practices and discourses means that if students are to acquire the new academic discourses, universities cannot afford to neglect the building of language and literacy in the foundation phases and beyond. Where EAL speakers are struggling with comprehension of the new discourses, teachers may need to develop creative multilingual and multimodal approaches to assist them.

These earlier discourses not only play an important role in assisting in the acquisition of new concepts but they also provide a framework for acquiring the new academic literacy practices. In the process of acquisition, the earlier discourses are adapted and transformed to reshape the new discourse. This means that we need to pay more attention to them so that we understand when they are assisting in the acquisition process and when not. It also means that rather than silencing or marginalising these other voices during the process of acquiring the new discourses, we need to value them by using them as a teaching and learning resource.

The data suggests that there is a stage in the interim literacies where students simply mimic the discourse (cf. Vuyani's story) in order to become better acquainted with it and to practise it. It seems important that this stage is recognised and that students are guided in appropriate academic conventions rather than being immediately penalised. However, if the borrowing is done without understanding it can mean that they have not fully made sense of the concepts and 'made them their own'. This can lead to learning problems later on. It is important that students are supported toward the next stage of the interim literacy. In order for them to acquire the new discourses they need to learn to transform them so that they are personally meaningful. When students such as Vuyani learn to adapt their prior discourses to the new academic context, they are inscribing their 'interests' on the new discourse. One could argue that students like Vuyani can be agents for change because when their adaptations are recognised as successful, they have the potential to impact on the dominant discourse in quite unique ways.

8.5.2. Acquiring the new discourse

Repeated evidence of students searching for the appropriate register and genre has led me to a re-examination of my own practice. The difficulties students experienced with register and each of the specialised genres they encountered (cf. 6.3., 6.4., 7.3. and 7.4.) suggest that students would benefit from a more strongly genre-based approach. The Language and Communications classes had introduced them to the genre of academic argument but the data suggests that our approach was not detailed or specific enough. I believe students would benefit from having a clearer sense of what typical economic genresⁱⁱⁱ aim to do and why. We could model each new genre for them so that they become familiar with the text structures and language features of these genres.

However, for this approach to be effective, we would need to go beyond simply modelling two or three typical genres for the students. The focus should be on developing a metalanguage^{iv} so that students have a language and a methodology for describing and critiquing other texts. They would need to become familiar with the concepts of 'genre' and 'register' and to use words such as 'mode', 'modality' and 'connectives' because these would provide them with the tools to unpack any text they encounter. Developing the skills and the tools to deconstruct texts would take time and practice but it would give them the opportunity to use cultural and linguistic difference as a resource to understand and appreciate the diversity of discourses in the university environment. They could be taught to reflect critically on the differences between the texts of their everyday worlds and the specialised academic discourses. For instance, if students were given opportunities to compare and contrast an example of the familiar recount genre with that of an economic evaluation, they would develop an understanding of the ways in which various discourses organise or construct their knowledge.

This approach would entail focusing on language 'as object' for a period of time until students acquire the metalanguage. It might be tricky to achieve this in a language course which is adjunct to, or in service to another discipline. Students

would need to be persuaded that the language classes support the learning process that is happening in the discipline; in practical terms, they would want to see their marks improving. If this did not happen, they would lose respect for the language classes.

I think there are ways around this problem but these would again call for close co-operation between language specialists and discipline specialists. Firstly, a significant number of graded written assignments would have to be built into the economics course, so that students developed confidence in their writing and had visible evidence of the positive effects of language learning. Secondly, both economics teachers and language tutors would have to work to persuade students that developing a metalanguage for talking about language would enhance their learning of economics. The discipline of economics could be represented as a 'meaning potential', a set of associated registers which students should build up and then use in a series of texts or genres. This would mean that the metalanguage related literacy to learning; or in Macken-Horarik's terms it would build 'a framework for semioticising learning' (1996:275).

8.6. Conclusion

The study has provided a variety of new insights but it has also raised a number of questions about how we address the critical issues of cultural and linguistic difference. I believe that one of the most pressing questions is how we should deal with assessment issues when diversity is such an issue. Should students be tested in their home languages or, if they are tested in another language, should they not be allowed extra time in the examination? Secondly, I believe that we need research which explores other modes of meaning making. I have pointed to the value of the spoken mode for building new concepts. Reading is a mode that has remained relatively unexplored because of the complexities associated with reading research. Research by my colleague, Lucia Thesen (2001), is investigating the visual mode as a way to provide students with easier access. My research has only touched on the way the visual is becoming more salient in economics textbooks, but it would be fascinating to explore the ways in which the visual diagram supports learning in

economics. For instance have changes in the representation of diagrams in textbooks and lectures provided easier access for students?

Despite the limitations outlined in 8.2., this study has considerable relevance for the changing context of education in South Africa. It has addressed the very crucial issue of access to academic literacies. Many students who enter the university are giving up the struggle to acquire academic literacy. Chapter 4 pointed to the high failure and drop out rates in a Commerce Faculty at one tertiary institution in South Africa. Thus it seems that universities in South Africa are at a critical turning point. We need to find new ways of allowing these students access. One way of doing this is to analyse and expose the different ways in which students make meaning in the university context. The knowledge gleaned from this kind of analysis should enable us to draw on prior experiences and frames of reference, discourse patterns and skills to make the teaching environment more meaningful and relevant. This also allows us to recognise student differences as a resource to be respected and utilised. When students feel respected and realise that their own ideas and experiences are of value to others, their learning will be enhanced.

Notes:

ⁱ 'Ceteris paribus' means other things being equal.

ⁱⁱ Shay's recent research (2003) probes differences of interpretation among assessment communities and points to the importance of regular evaluations of assessment systems.

ⁱⁱⁱ I have described the genres of the two essays analysed in this study as that of evaluation and analysis.

^{iv} Metalanguage is a language for talking about language.

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<http://education.pwv.gov.za> South African Department of Education website

www.sab.co.za South African Breweries website

APPENDIX A -

Questions from first individual interviews:

In a sense this research is a partnership, I am wanting you to help me understand some of the things you say and where they come from, why you say them etc.

First some questions about learning to read and write:

Do you remember learning to read and write? Tell me about it?

Who was literate in your home and what kind of literacy? : books/ messages etc

What do you normally write ? letters, lists, messages etc.

How do you feel about writing now at university...

Do you think writing has an important place at university and in the working world?

This essay:

How does academic writing, like this essay, differ from other writing?

Tell me about the way you went about this writing?

How did you feel about writing this essay?

Do you think that because English is not your mother tongue, it makes this more difficult and in what way?

Do you feel that it is difficult to write like an economist?

Sometimes people talk about those who are "in" the discourse, do you feel you are?

Are there parts of this essay which were interesting to you ?

Are there parts that were troublesome?

Let's look at specific things in your essay:

APPENDIX B

ECO 110H LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION TUTORIAL OUTLINE of MODULE FOR FIRST SEMESTER 2001

Week	Eco 110h theme	Language and Communications Activity	Homework
19 February	Economic systems	LECTURES START No L & C tutorials this week	
26 February	Economic systems	Introduction to Language & Communication Language of Economics <i>Discussion: Learning Language Writing</i>	Complete written assignment Bring McConnell and Brue to next L&C tutorial
5 March	Economic systems	Academic Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preview • Overview 	
12 March	Production Possibilities Frontier	Academic Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inview • Introduction to Academic Argument: claims & evidence 	Reading
19 March	Is Economics a Science	Academic Conventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to reference an essay 	Reading
26 March	Circular Flow of Income etc	Diagnostic test: NO TUTORIALS THIS WEEK	
2 April	SA Economy	Feedback on test Paragraph and sentence structure	Writing exercise completed
9 April		VACATION	
16 April	SA Economy Price Theory	Academic Essay Writing Essay title analysis Writing as a Process	Reading for the essay
23 April	Price Theory Demand & Supply	Academic Essay Writing Analysing and synthesising information from the readings	Reading for the essay
30 April	Price Theory Demand & Supply	Academic Essay Writing	Preparation of the essay
7 May	Price Theory Elasticity	Academic Essay Writing Introductions and conclusions Referencing	Consultations with tutors Essay preparation

**ECO 110H LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION TUTORIAL
OUTLINE OF MODULE FOR SECOND SEMESTER 2001**

Week	Activity	Venue	Homework
16 July	No classes		
23 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding relevant information from readings • Writing 	Regular L&C tutorial room	Writing
30 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the project • Evaluating and selecting readings from the Web etc. 	Regular L&C tutorial room	Writing
6 August	Introduction to library resources	Dulverton Lab	Research for Project
13 August	Internet and online discussion	Dulverton Lab	Research for Project
20 August	online discussion	Dulverton Lab	Writing of Project Assignment
27 August	Preparation for Project Assignment and Presentations	Regular L&C tutorial room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing of Assignment • Prepare for Presentations
3 September		VACATION	
10 September	Group Presentations	Regular L&C tutorial room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment • Presentations
17 September	Group Presentations	Regular L&C tutorial room	Project Assignment due in Monday 1pm

KEY GRAPH

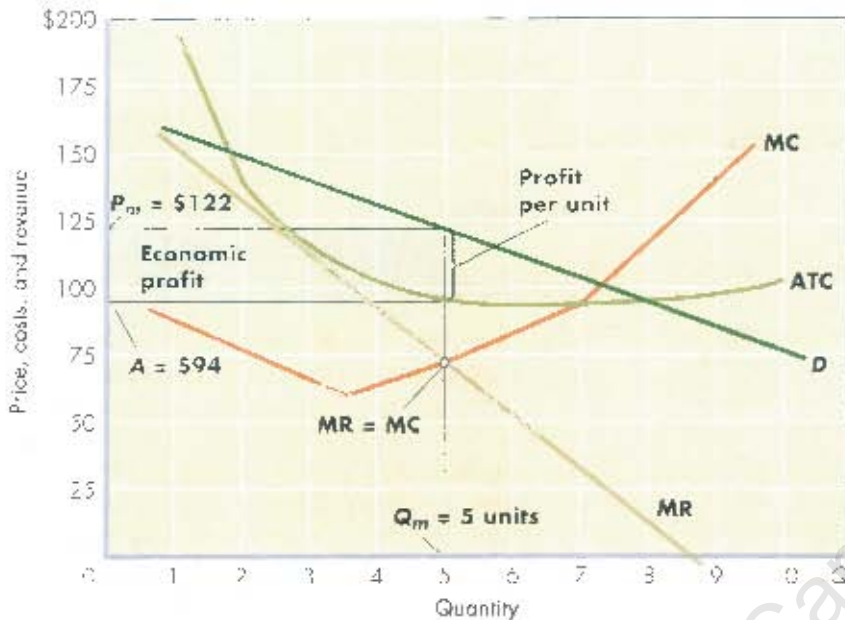


Figure 24.4

The profit-maximizing position of a pure monopolist. The pure monopolist maximizes profit by producing the $MR = MC$ output, here $Q_m = 5$ units. Then, as seen from the demand curve, it will charge price $P_m = \$122$. Average total cost will be $A = \$94$, meaning that per-unit profit is $P_m - A$ and total profit is $5 \times (P_m - A)$. Total economic profit is thus represented by the coupe rectangle.

Quick Quiz 24.4

- The MR curve lies below the demand curve in this figure because the:
 - demand curve is linear (a straight line).
 - demand curve is highly inelastic throughout its full length.
 - demand curve is highly elastic throughout its full length.
 - gain in revenue from an extra unit of output is less than the price charged for that unit of output.
- The area labeled "Economic profit" can be found by multiplying the difference between P and ATC by quantity. It also can be found by:
 - dividing profit per unit by quantity.
 - subtracting total cost from total revenue.
 - multiplying the coefficient of demand elasticity by quantity.
 - multiplying the difference between P and MC by quantity.
- This pure monopolist:
 - charges the highest price that it could achieve.
 - earns only a normal profit in the long run.
 - restricts output to create an insurmountable entry barrier.
 - restricts output to increase its price and total economic profit.
- At this monopolist's profit-maximizing output:
 - price equals marginal revenue.
 - price equals marginal cost.
 - price exceeds marginal cost.
 - profit per unit is maximized.

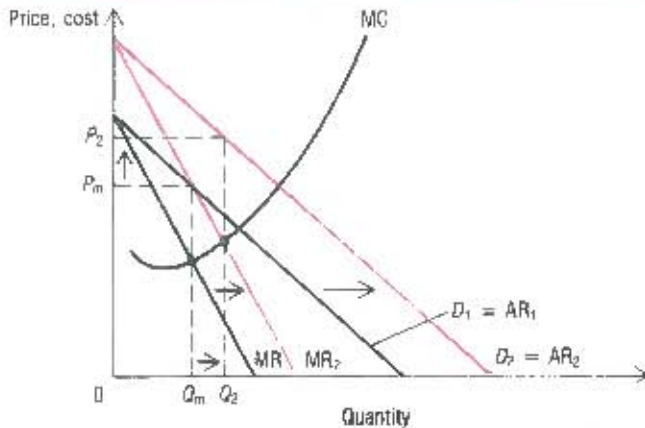
Answers: 1. d, 2. b, 3. d, 4. c

earns an economic profit of \$28 per unit, and the total economic profit is then \$140 ($= 5 \text{ units} \times \28). In Figure 24.4, per-unit profit is $P_m - A$, where A is the average total cost of producing Q_m units. We find total economic profit by multiplying this per-unit profit by the profit-maximizing output Q_m .

Another way we can determine the profit-maximizing output is by comparing total revenue and total cost at each possible level of production and choosing the output with the greatest positive

difference. Use columns 3 and 6 in Table 24.1 to verify our conclusion that 5 units is the profit-maximizing output. An accurate graphing of total revenue and total cost against output would also show the greatest difference (the maximum profit) at 5 units of output. Table 24.2 is a step-by-step summary of the process for determining the profit-maximizing output, profit-maximizing price, and economic profit in pure monopoly. (Key Question 5) 24.1

APPENDIX D



Monopolies adjust to demand increases by raising both quantity and price so that MC and MR are again equal.

FIGURE 8-4

however. If the demand curve were lower while costs remained the same, a monopoly would only make a normal profit (zero economic profit) in the long run (Figure 8-3a). The profit-maximizing output, Q_m , sells at a price at which average revenue is just equal to average cost. An even lower demand curve or higher costs (Figure 8-3b) may result in short-run economic losses for the monopolist. (Would you make an economic profit if you had a monopoly in buggy whips or 78-rpm records?)

Changes in Demand and Cost Adjusting to changes in demand or cost in pure monopoly is much simpler than in the competitive model. Unlike competitors who are price takers, monopolists are **price searchers**. Instead of adjusting quantity to a given market price, a monopolist adjusts price as well as quantity in order to find the profit-maximizing position.

What happens when market demand increases for a monopoly? The demand and marginal revenue curves both shift to the right (Figure 8-4). The monopolist increases output to Q_2 , where marginal cost is again equal to marginal revenue, and raises price to P_2 .¹

When cost per unit of output increases (Figure 8-5), the average and marginal cost curves shift up vertically by the amount of the increase. The monopolist responds by reducing output from Q_m to Q_2 (where $MC_2 = MR$) and raising price from P_m to P_2 . Note that price rises, *but by less than the vertical shift in the marginal cost curve!* As long as neither demand nor marginal cost is vertical (perfectly inelastic), profit-maximizing monopolists cannot increase price enough to pass the entire cost increase on to consumers. In the diagram, price would have to rise from P_m to P_1 to equal the amount of the cost increase, but the monopolist would only be able to sell Q_1 , which would be less profitable than producing Q_2 . Remember, practical economists (even monopolists) max-

Price searchers Firms that have some control over price as well as output in imperfectly competitive markets.



¹ For simplicity, the average cost curve has been left out of Figure 8-4, since it is only needed to determine the amount of profit.

APPENDIX E

Coherence: A logical flow between paragraphs.

Here is an extract from Mankiw about petrol prices. The paragraphs have been jumbled up. In pairs:

1. Arrange paragraphs A to D in the correct sequence. What kinds of evidence did you use for this task? Can you pick out particular linking words which helped you decide on the correct sequence? Circle them.
2. What is the central idea of the whole piece of writing ?
3. What is the main idea of paragraph C? Which sentence best states the main idea? (topic sentence) Underline it. How does this link to the central idea of the whole thing?
4. What is the main idea of paragraph D? Which sentence best states the main idea? Underline it. (topic sentence) How does this link to the central idea of the whole thing?
5. Think about your own writing.
 - Do you write clear topic sentences?
 - Does each paragraph have one main idea?
 - Do you link your paragraphs together? How?
 - Do all your paragraphs link to a central idea?

From Mankiw, G. 1998. *Principles of Economics*. Orlando: Dryden Press p. 105

WHY DID OPEC FAIL TO KEEP THE PRICE OF OIL HIGH?

A Yet OPEC found it difficult to maintain a high price. From 1982 to 1985, the price of oil steadily declined at about 10 percent per year. Dissatisfaction and disarray soon prevailed among the OPEC countries. In 1986 cooperation among OPEC members completely broke down, and the price of oil plunged 45 percent. In 1990 the price of oil (adjusted for overall inflation) was back to where it began in 1970, and it stayed at that low level throughout most of the 1990's.

B The situation is very different in the long run. Over long periods of time, producers of oil outside of OPEC respond to high prices by increasing oil exploration and by building new extraction capacity. Consumers respond with greater conservation, for instance by replacing old inefficient cars with newer efficient ones. Thus, as panel (b) of figure 5-9 shows, the long-run supply and demand curves are more elastic.

C Many of the most disruptive events for the world's economies over the past several decades have originated in the world market for oil. In the 1970's members of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) decided to raise the world price of oil in order to increase their incomes. These countries accomplished this goal by jointly reducing the amount of oil they supplied. From 1973 to 1974, the price of oil (adjusted for overall inflation) rose more than 50 percent. Then, a few years later, OPEC did the same thing again. The price of oil rose 14 percent in 1979, followed by 34 percent in 1980, and 34 percent in 1981.

D This episode shows how supply and demand can behave differently in the short run and in the long run. In the short run, both the supply and demand for oil are relatively inelastic. Supply is inelastic because the quantity of known oil reserves and the capacity for oil extraction cannot be changed quickly. Demand is inelastic because buying habits do not respond immediately to changes in price. Many drivers with old gas-guzzling cars, for instance, will just pay the higher price.

Adapted from worksheet developed by Shelley Angelil-Carter

APPENDIX F

Cohesion: Organization within a paragraph and links between sentences.

Below is a paragraph about OPEC from McConnell and Brue, p. 531. In pairs discuss:

1. What is the main idea of this paragraph? Underline the topic sentence which broadly expresses this main idea. Where is the topic sentence usually found?
2. What are the functions of the next four sentences in the paragraph?
3. Analyse the function of the words which have been circled. Show what the pronouns refer to.

OPEC was highly effective in the 1970s for several reasons. First, it dominated the world market for oil. If a nation imported oil, it was almost obligated to do business with OPEC. Second, world demand for oil was strong and expanding in the 1970s. Finally, the short-run demand for oil was highly inelastic because the economies of oil-importing nations such as the US were locked into low-gas-mileage automobiles and energy-intensive housing and capital equipment.

4. The above paragraph is incomplete. Arrange the sentences below in the correct order to complete the paragraph. What evidence are you using to figure out the correct sequence?
 - a. With inelastic demand, higher prices meant greatly increased total revenues to OPEC members.
 - b. As an illustration of this, figure 25-6 shows that between 1973 and 1980 OPEC was able to achieve an enormous increase in oil price by reducing output only very modestly.
 - c. The combination of increased revenues and lower total costs resulted in greatly expanded profits.
 - d. This inelasticity meant that a small restriction of output by OPEC would result in a relatively large price increase.
 - e. The accompanying smaller output meant lower total costs.
5. Think about your own writing:
 - Do you have a clear topic sentence?
 - Is this sentence supported by the sentences which follow?
 - Do your sentences follow a logical order?
 - Do you link sentences within paragraphs?

Here are some ideas for linking words:

To show sequence: first, second, next.

To indicate addition: moreover, furthermore, and.

To indicate contrast, or a change of direction: however, but, on the other hand, nevertheless.

To show when something is similar: similarly, likewise, by the same token.

To conclude: finally, in conclusion.

Words that link by referring to things already mentioned: e.g. articles like *the*, pronouns like *it*, *they*, and demonstratives like *this* and *these*.

APPENDIX G

Referencing in assignments: Why, when and how?

Why do we reference?

1. To acknowledge others' work-
'thank-you for the work and ideas'

2. To share resources - 'this is where
you'll find this information if you want
to read more'

3. To begin to place authors in a field of
knowledge and understand that
knowledge is constructed by authors

4. To show where we got our
information so it can be checked or
verified- 'is this accurate?'

5. To support our claims with evidence from what we have read

Referencing is not just a mechanical skill that you have to learn. Yes, you must know when to put an author and a date, how to do a bibliography, etc. But it is not only this.

1. Acknowledgement

Referencing is the way that academics **acknowledge their sources of information**. Knowledge is built on the work of others. Academics use the work of others, and need to acknowledge this. Similarly you the student must indicate to your tutor/lecturer what you have read and acknowledge the sources of your information and what evidence you have for your argument. This evidence can often be the writings of authorities in the field.

2. Sharing Resources.

Referencing is a way of sharing resources - it helps the reader find the readings that others have read, if they want to read more. When you read an academic article in a journal, notice how the writer uses references, see if there are any readings which you would like to follow up, and use the bibliography to find them. If you're looking for readings on a particular topic, one of the first places to check is always the bibliography of an article on this topic.

3. Understanding that knowledge is constructed.

Knowledge is not just a set of facts, rather it is constructed by authors. It is important to become aware of how authors do this. Take the time to notice authors, to notice which authors argue in a particular way, what their ideology or world view is. The more you get to know the authorities in your field, and the school of thought that they come from, the more confident you will be in using their writings to support your own, and eventually to contribute to the field of knowledge if you do postgraduate research.

4. For verification.

A reader may think that the way in which a writer has used evidence from another reading doesn't seem right. They may want to go back to the original source and check the information, and see if it has been used correctly. Similarly, your tutor may want to check your information and how you've used it. If she/he doesn't know the reading, she/he will be able to find it if it is included in your bibliography.

5. To support your argument with evidence.

In academic writing it is seldom good enough to simply state your argument and make your claims without evidence. Only the great authorities in the field sometimes get away with this! As a student, you always need to back up your argument with evidence. The point of view of writers in the field counts as evidence, as long as it is properly referenced.

When and how do we reference?

You have to reference whenever you're using words or ideas which you have got from other people. You don't have to reference your lecturer, tutor, or lecture notes, but just about everything else! There are different referencing systems. In Economics we use the **Harvard method** of referencing, as shown below, with author, date and sometimes page number in the body of the essay, and full details in the list of references or bibliography.

You need to cite the author, date and sometimes the page number in the body of your essay to show when you are using other people's ideas, as shown below. The rest of the details appear in the list of references.

Using the ideas of others in your own words.

- When we are simply using **the ideas of others in our own words**, we only need to cite **the author and the date**. For example:

According to Mankiw (1998), GDP is not a direct measure of our quality of life, but it can give us an indication of our ability to achieve this.

- You could also put the reference at the end of the sentence, like this:

GDP is not a direct measure of our quality of life, but it can give us an indication of our ability to achieve this. (Mankiw, 1998).

- In Economics we often use newspaper articles to keep up with the latest developments. To reference a newspaper article, you should indicate the author, if available, and the day the article appeared in the body of the essay. If there is no author given, as is often

the case for newspaper articles, you should simply state the name of the newspaper and the date, as follows:

The difference in the standard of living between rich and poor in South Africa has increased since 1994. (Business Day, 1.3.00)

- The Internet is increasingly a source of information. If you have used the Internet, and there is an author available, you need to cite the author's name and date of writing the article in the body of your essay. The website address and date that you retrieved the article go in the bibliography.

Referencing a direct quote.

When you write, you should try to write as much as possible in your own words. Summarize what you have read, paraphrase it, but use your own words. This is important, so I'll repeat it once more: **Try to write as much as possible in your own words.** If you decide that you want to use the words of an author, because they are particularly well written, and support your argument beautifully, then use these words. But you have to place them in inverted commas, and the **author, date, AND page number** have to be there! For example:

Mankiw (1998:7) writes that "GDP does not directly measure those things that make life worthwhile, but it does measure our ability to obtain the inputs into a worthwhile life".

The List of References.

A list of references (sometimes called a bibliography) must be included at the end of your essay. It simply gives the reader all the details, so that they can find any reading that you have used in your essay. Usually you only put the articles that you have referenced in the body of the essay into your list of references. These must be in **alphabetical order**. There are differences in the way that you list books, articles, newspapers and websites. You must underline a title of a book or journal, or if you are using a wordprocessor, you can put this in italics. Look at the following examples and notice the differences:

- **A magazine or newspaper article:**

Mnyanda, L. 2001. People's Budget misses mark because of ideology. Business Report, Feb. 27, p.2.

- **An article from a journal:**

Chapman, S. and Richardson, J. 1990. Tobacco Excise and Declining Tobacco Consumption: The case of Papua New Guinea. American Journal of Public Health. Vol. 80 (5) pp. 537-540.

- **A book:**

Mohr, P. and Fourie, L. 1995. Economics for South African Students. Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik Publishers

- **An Internet website:**

If available, give the author's name, the title of the article and date that the article was written. You also need to cite the website and date that you accessed it in your essay, and in the bibliography. As follows:

Heinz, P. 2000. Getting into Gear. <http://www.anc.org.za/lists/news.html> (March 28, 2001).

How do you reference and at the same time use your own ideas?

Writing a good essay means using your own 'voice' to build an argument with the help of the 'voices' of others. The difficult part is finding the balance between your own ideas and the ideas of others. You need to weave the work of others into your own, but only to support your argument. **Your 'voice' should be the most important presence.** The reader wants to know that you have understood the readings, and wants to get a sense of how you interpret these ideas, and what some of your own ideas are. So you need to indicate to the reader when it is your 'voice' speaking as the writer, and when it is the voices of others. Here are some useful words for introducing other people's writing:

According to X..... X further states that.....

X claims that..... X continues that.....

X argues that.....

X writes that....

X notes that....

X has indicated that...

X suggests that...

X points out that...

X found that...

X demonstrates that...

X concludes that...

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is the use of words or ideas of other writers (including fellow students) in your essays without acknowledgment. It is deliberately pretending that the someone else's work is your own when it is not. We know that referencing is a difficult skill to master, but you must be aware that the university regards plagiarism as a very serious offence, especially if there has been copying of another student's work. Plagiarised work will be given zero. In addition, a student who has plagiarised or cheated may be referred to the Vice-Chancellor, who may refer the student to one of the disciplinary courts of the university.

Examples of plagiarism:

1. **Copying:** Copying another student's essay, and copying word for word from books or articles.
2. **Cut and paste:** Putting together extracts from various authors to make up your essay. This sort of essay cannot be regarded as your own.
3. **Paraphrasing without acknowledgment:** Deliberately rewording an author's sentences and presenting them as your own.
4. **Lifting ideas:** Using an author's ideas, even in your own words, and presenting them as your own

APPENDIX II

Transition essay (Vuyani)

South Africa was under apartheid for long time where white were only favourites. This affected many economic systems. For instead, *Many of the businesses were owned by the state. The people or labour were owned by state, how?* There was this document which they called it pass. People were arrested if they didn't pay for their lives or any thing else. Labors, white people were the first priority where it comes to an employment. The prices were taken by a state too. *I suppose the economy of S. A between 1980 and 1990 was dissappointing because they didn't allow other countrys to trade with us as SA. This resulted in an expellion in sports and the investors where none. This was pure communism.*

The question which is remaining now is that: *is SA economy undergone a transition since 1990 to a market oriented ecomy?* I would say *Yes. Why? First of all people are free to now where ever they feel like.* The privatisation of many enterprise owned by a state. The individuals *are now free* to won a state property. The people are semi employed equally. But if you looked up *me*, it will take long time to accept *me*. The individual *are free* to take decision. e. g. farmers *are free* to decide on their properties. The foreign countries they *are now free* to trade with SA. SA is now participating on world sports event. e.g. Olympics, world cups etc. *I think the economy of S.A. has grown more rapidly because of investors com ng to S.A.*

The characteristics of command system here in SA *now e.g. all F.O.B owned by a state.* If the country decide to change *we* ripe the good reward look in SA each individual is free. "Economic system is charecterised by individuals, private freedom. private property, property rights, decentralised decision making and limited Government intervention." Economics for SA student 2nd ed. (2000) P Mohr and L Fourie. Pg 45-48

The decision are made by individual to satisfy the needs of consumers. They take decision on what to produce, how to produce it, for whom to produce and how to allocate it. The jobs are now created by this method "Over next two years, tens of thousand of jobs will go in the civil service and state owned enterprises due for privatisation and other form of restructuring. The state will also be selling thousands of properties for which it has now productive use" (Mail and Guardian 24 Feb – March 2000). This implies that state owned some enterprises that are not productive. These was the plan for the former state. *Why do we prefera this? how many? Because more money is being produced.* Some privatisation would give a state lot of money e. g. Eskom and Telkom.

South Africa really gone far. There are lot of enterprises which *we* believes black people should own them. This one plan for government for black empowerment. Lots of money is placed to create more jobs and to help the Black people on their business success. There is a difference between before 1990 and after 1990 on SA in transition.

Key

Code	Explanation and page reference
<i>Italics</i>	Coherence and Cohesion cf. p. 101 and use of connectives p. 115
xxx	Situated meanings about apartheid impacted on his understanding of the command economy cf. p. 106-108
	Use of repetition cf. p.116
	Use of rhetorical questions cf. p.119
	Use of the first person cf. p.120

ECO110H Project/Essay Marker's Guide

J Christie
2001

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There are 4 parts to this essay. This is made very clear in the way the task is set up and so students should approach the assignment in a logical step-by-step fashion.

Every essay should have an introduction to the topic; body of the essay which deals with the assignment topic in a focused way; and a conclusion which sums up the information that has been presented, and looks at the advantages and disadvantages of a monopoly. It is *not* necessary for students to provide headings for each of these sections to the essay. The assignment explicitly requires students to do research in addition to the reading that was given. Be on the lookout for *evidence* of this additional research. Do not be misled by a string of references listed in the bibliography (especially internet references); if there is no evidence of additional research, the student should be heavily penalised.

Every essay should have a cover page (penalise for handwritten cover pages), and a separate bibliography page at the end. Information should be referenced throughout the essay. Students who have not referenced and included a bibliography should be failed or penalised substantially. Plagiarism will be dealt with severely – all cases of suspected plagiarism are to be brought to me/Leonard.

Guidelines

1. Explain why SAB can be described as a monopolist.
Students need to recognise that SAB is not a *pure* monopoly, but a "near-monopoly". It has most of the characteristics of a monopoly:
While it is not the only firm in the beer market (there are a number of very small brewers around) but it is the only very large firm in the SA market which it certainly dominates;

SAB has a great deal of power over the price of beer (price setter);

There are definite barriers to entry for new producers. These have been put in place by SAB to protect itself from competition and are described in the accompanying reading. SAB is able to produce at very low prices because of the size of plant (economies of scale) and increasing productivity. This makes it very hard for competitors to break in. Limited size of SA market could also be cited as a barrier to entry since a large initial capital outlay would be required by new producers. SABs very efficient distribution network to outlying, isolated and rural areas, and its clever relations with shebeens are also barriers to entry.

One could argue that there are some substitutes for beer (depending on how you define the product), but to ardent beer drinkers there probably is no substitute for beer. Remember that the fewer close substitutes the product has, the greater the degree of monopoly power.

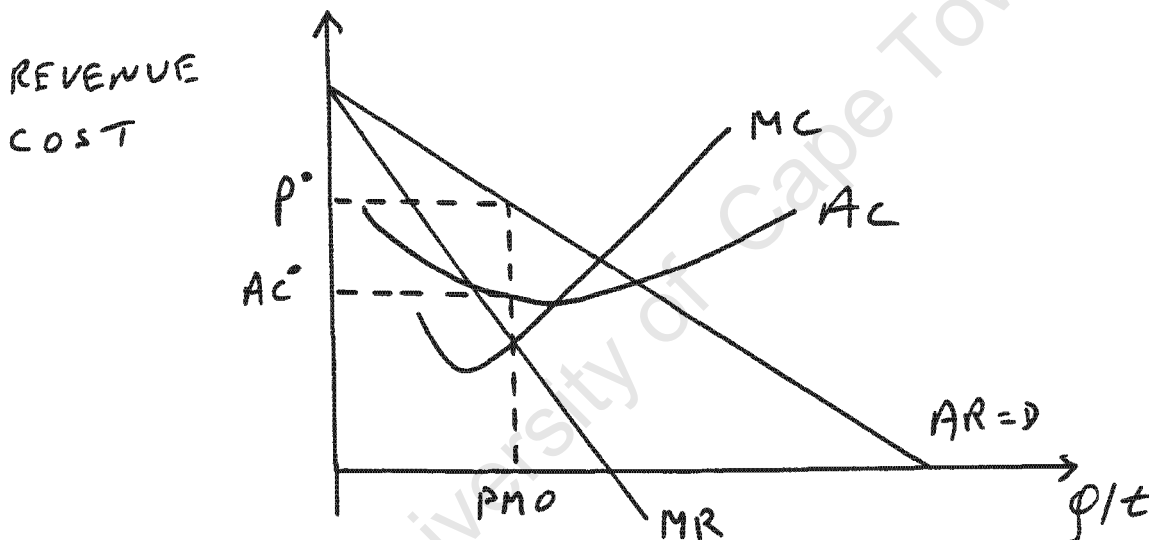
2. Describe the company showing how it has established itself as a monopoly and kept competitors out of the market.

This part of the essay could be blended very well with the discussion of barriers to entry in the first part. Otherwise students will probably mention barriers to entry in a more theoretical mode in the first part, and describe how SAB has "done it" in the second part. There is plenty of material around on this. Generally SAB has kept out competition using price wars and the threat of price wars (it can produce at exceptionally low prices). Plus it has worked hard at product differentiation and proliferation. Probably the best used weapon in its arsenal is advertising. SAB has an enormous marketing budget & we all know SAB ads (Charles Glass in the 80s etc).

The danger in this section is that students get carried away with anecdotal evidence & devote too much effort here.

3. Use a diagram to explain how SAB chooses its profit-maximising output and price. Produces where $MR = MC$, and where a firm has market power, MR does not equal price.

The classic monopoly diagram should be used here, and is most likely to show a profit scenario (but not necessary)



4. Advantages and disadvantages (concluding the essay)
Compare a near monopoly with perfect competition and show how the monopolisation of the industry reduces economic welfare (consumer surplus) and efficiency (productive, allocative and distributive). Diagram is not essential here.

However, firms with market power use their economic profits to finance research and development leading to new products and processes. The former enhances consumer welfare and the latter results in greater efficiency, lower costs of production and, ultimately, lower prices. For example, SAB improving production so that prices have stayed low.

There are other arguments that could be used – it will be interesting to see what independent research yields. Assess each on its merits. If you are unsure about the validity of an argument, ask Leonard or myself.

Due date: Monday, ~~30 September~~

1 OCTOBER

APPENDIX J

TASK ANALYSIS

WHAT ARE THE KEY WORDS THAT GUIDE YOU TO DEAL WITH THE TOPIC?

You need key words to:

- Define the BROAD TOPIC AREA
- Narrow the focus by requiring SPECIFIC DETAILS
- tell you HOW to deal with what you know

EXAMPLE: The following essay question would be analysed as shown

Question: The interpretation of National Income statistics raises a number of problems. Discuss two of these.

BROAD TOPIC AREA - interpretation of National Income statistics

SPECIFIC DETAILS - problems of interpretation

ACTION WORDS - discuss two problems

TASK 1: What would you be required to do if you had to write the essay below? First find the key words then analyse each title into its three parts as in the example below. Work in pairs.

1. Outline your reasons for becoming a UCT student

.....

.....

.....

2. Analyse your reasons for becoming a UCT student

.....

.....

In each of the following titles identify:

- a) 'broad area of knowledge
- b) specific focus
- c) 'action' word

1. "Adam Smith claimed that the market mechanism works like an invisible hand which co-ordinates the selfish actions of individuals to ensure that everyone is better off" (Mohr and Fourie 51: 1995) Discuss the market economy in the light of this statement. Indicate whether or not you agree with Adam Smith.
2. "Colonialism deserves neither the praise nor the blame it has often been given" (D.K. Fieldhouse). Assess the impact of colonialism on Africa in the light of this statement. Indicate whether or not you agree with Fieldhouse.
3. In the past, the bookshop, Concepts Corner used the Periodic method to record inventory. Now with the advanced computer systems that are available to the retail industry, the business has converted to the perpetual method of recording inventory. Please explain to me what the main differences are between the two methods and how Concepts Corner could benefit from the change.
4. Write a short essay in which you discuss the scope, aims and methods of social anthropology. Discuss how these have changed in recent years and briefly consider how, in your opinion, they should change in the future.