

https://dspace.org/

Investigating summary writing and stimulated-recall of college ESL students using a socio-cultural approach in a South African context

Chihobo, Akulina

2016

http://hdl.handle.net/10539/23251

Chihobo, Akulina (2016) Investigating summary writing and stimulated-recall of college ESL students using a socio-cultural approach in a South African context, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, <http://hdl.handle.net/10539/23251>

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

Abstract

The research topic for this study is, *An investigation into summary writing and stimulated-recall of College ESL students using a socio-cultural approach in a South African context*. The main research questions that were formulated to guide and frame this study were as follows; 1) What meta-cognitive reflections, students learning English as a second language with an African background engage in to deduce main ideas from a source text? 2) How is comprehension of a source text reflected in written summaries of these students? Two other sub-questions were framed for this study and these were; 1) What do students' responses show about the strategies they use in summary writing? 2) How do African rhetoric systems affect the formation of sentences in summary writing? Theoretical frameworks that informed this study were; translanguaging which is a socio-cultural approach to language teaching in a multilingual setting and the theory of Literacy as a social practice. These two formed the core elements of this study to help address questions raised for the study. In order to address these questions, four participants were purposively sampled. These participants were all registered for a three-year diploma course at a university in Gauteng which could not be named for ethical reasons. The participants were also registered for a compulsory course; Applied Communication skills, which was meant to inculcate in them workplace related communication skills. As part of the course, they were tasked with writing summaries for reports. This task revealed below standards writing skills, which justifies the need to teach summary writing owing to the students' writing skills which were below expected standards. The participants were selected according to their indigenous South African languages which were grouped under Nguni, Sotho, Venda and Tsonga. The methods that were used to collect data in this study were drawn from Ethnographic studies but this does not mean that this study was ethnographic. First, semi-structured interviews were conducted individually, ten minutes after writing the summaries. Secondly, document analysis was undertaken where participants wrote

two summaries translingually. The first summary was written in English whilst the other was written in their first languages. The reason for the summaries being written translingually was to check for understanding of the source text. The interviews were audio recorded after all ethical considerations were addressed, including seeking permission to record the participants. Anonymity could not be guaranteed because the interviews were done face-to-face. However, confidentiality was promised and the participants were assured that personally identifiable information would not be disclosed to unauthorised people and that raw data would be destroyed after a period of five years. In addition, pseudonyms were used on the summaries that the students wrote. Ultimately, the interviews were transcribed and coded using thematic and conceptual analysis methods. (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Ibrahim, 2012). Emerging themes were taken note of and discussed under the study's findings section. A discussion of the findings was done, situating them within the relevant body of literature to confirm or refute claims of previous research on the study. Conclusions of the study were drawn and recommendations made. Limitations of the study were acknowledged and implications for potential further research were suggested for this under researched area.