

Language accessibility in academic publishing: The role of the editor in bridging the linguistic gap

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Abstract

Accessibility to academic text has often been understood to refer to factors other than language, such as physically being able to access the text, which has led to discussions on open access systems. In this research, the question of accessibility refers to the editor's understanding of the reader's ability to comprehend academic text. The purpose of this research was to understand how editors of academic books consider the varying language backgrounds of South African academics. The research used the concept of the linguistic gap to identify the role of the editor in navigating the gap that exists between academic authors and their audience. The investigation made use of a qualitative research method, which included primary and secondary data collection. This was made up of literature that was consulted to build the literature review, along with the discussions with the participants. The data collection method of the research included the information gathered in the literature review, along with the interviews conducted with the research participants. This method was relevant to understanding the role of the editor in making academic text accessible, because it equipped the researcher to investigate the experiences of academic editors and publishers in ensuring that the text that is published is accessible to the reader. The study showed that there is definitely a gap that exists between the academic author and the reader. The cause of this gap was identified as being two-fold, the first cause being the miscommunication between first language and second language speakers of English. The second reason is the varying levels of education between the author and the reader. The research findings have shown that the role of the editor is to ensure that the message communicated by the author is seamlessly received by the reader. The editor exists within a balance of ensuring that they meet the editing brief that has been specified by the publisher, along with making sure that the author is satisfied with the edit conducted on the text and, lastly, ensuring that the reader is able to understand what is being communicated. Recommendations for further research include, picking up where this research left off, by including academic authors and readers of different levels in the study. This would provide a holistic view on the question of language accessibility in academic publishing.

Keywords: Academic publishing; Audience; Editor; Language accessibility; Linguistic gap.

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Chapter One: Research Introduction

The purpose of this research is to understand how editors of academic books consider the varying language backgrounds of South African academics. The research uses the concept of the linguistic gap to identify the role of the editor in navigating the gap that exists between academic authors and their audience. This chapter provides background information, which gave rise to this research report. The research aim, objectives and the research questions are also outlined in this section. Finally, a chapter outline explains the structure of the research report.

1.1. Background information

Accessibility to academic text has often been understood to refer to factors other than language, such as physically being able to access the text. Shaw (2014) states that many South African's are barely having their basic needs met, which makes people less likely to have access to books and spending money on them. This has led to discussions on open access systems. In this research, the question of accessibility refers to the editor's understanding of the reader's ability to comprehend academic text. According to Law (2011) academic editors often work within academic institutes that are focused on broadening research. Therefore, there are various areas of focus for academic editors. These include textbooks, scholarly texts, such as journals, and research-based academic books. The academic text referred to in this research are books that are based on academic research. The context of this study is situated within the South African academic publishing sector and the broader South African socio-linguistic context. The Publishers Association of South Africa defines academic publishing as a sector that produces 'textbooks and other products for university students, as well as professional products and books for continuing professional development' (2022: 32). The term academic publishing, however, is often used interchangeably with scholarly publishing. Scholarly publishing is defined as the distribution of scholarly research, usually through journal articles, research reports and books (Jonkoping University, 2020). In the context of this research, academic publishing can be understood to refer to the publication of research-based books.

There is little consensus on what exactly the role of the editor is; it is important to note that an editor's role is not confined to editing a text (Law, 2011). Despite the research that has been conducted on editors, little is still known on their role, which has led to many misconceptions

on what an editor actually does. Law (2011) states that the role of the editor has often been confined to correcting spelling and grammatical errors. The editor is situated within book publishing, and amongst others, plays a vital role in book production. Davis (2004) describes the editor as the cornerstone of book production. Academic editors must ensure that a manuscript meets the needs of the major stakeholders, who are the publisher, author and reader. Law (2011) describes the editor's role as requiring a careful balance between presenting the author's work accurately and meeting the needs of the reader, while also making sure that the publisher's standards are adhered to. Law (2014) further states that the role of the editor has been a contentious subject, due to the lack of research, particularly in South Africa. Within the South African context, editors too, come from varying backgrounds and on an individual level, they have to navigate the linguistic gap between author and reader. Hart and Risley (1995) argue that many children that come from financially disadvantaged backgrounds learn fewer words than their affluent counterparts. This was defined as the "language gap". This language gap, according to Hart and Risley (1995), is the cause for learners from underprivileged backgrounds doing poorly academically. This aged argument is still relevant today, as research conducted by Madima and Makananise (2020) illustrates that English is not fully accessible to students in the rural areas of South Africa. They maintain that this lack of accessibility could negatively impact their academic achievements (Madima & Makananise, 2020). However, researchers such as Johnson, Avineri and Johnson (2017) argue against the importance placed on language towards achieving academic success. Johnson *et al.*, (2017) state that there are several socioeconomic factors, other than language, that contribute to academic achievements. For the purpose of this research the concept of the linguistic gap will refer to a non-native English speaker's difficulty to engage with academic text due to complex words that academic text is often associated with.

1.2. Research Aim

The aim of this research was to identify the role of editors in ensuring that academic texts are accessible to academic audiences who are not first language English speakers. This was done while exploring the linguistic gap within academic publishing and looking at how editors bridge this gap. The research has also explored how editors navigate the South African socio-linguistic barriers within the context of professional editorial standards.

1.3. Research problem

Academics who are not first language English speakers in South Africa have difficulty accessing information presented in academic literature, due to the way language is used. According to an industry survey conducted by PASA (2020) the academic sector is dominated by books that are produced in English, which is a result of the growing use of English in academia. Academics who interact with English as an additional language, may be faced with difficulty when having to read and research, which could also affect their writing skills. Multilingualism is an intricate part of South African society and is a widespread global phenomenon. Aronin and Singleton (2012) suggest that multilingualism stems from the need to communicate across linguistic limits. English has become the language that allows people to communicate with each other despite having different linguistic backgrounds (Amano, Gonza 'lez-Varo & Sutherland, 2016). In South Africa, English is one of 11 official languages that is spoken by the population. Many South Africans do not speak English as a first language, which creates structural barriers in their engagement with academic literature, because much of their learning and reading is in English. Wenger (1998) argues that language is an access card that can grant or deny people access to influential social structures. Mostert (2004) asserts that the objective in publishing is to communicate information to an audience. The editor would therefore play a vital role in ensuring that the audience is able to understand the information that the writer is communicating.

1.4. Research questions

1.4.1. Central Research question

What is the role of editors in ensuring that academic literature is accessible to audiences who are not first language English speakers?

1.4.2. Sub Research questions

- How do editors navigate the socio-linguistic barriers that exist within the South African academic publishing context?
- To what extent do editors fill the linguistic gap within the South African academic publishing sector?

1.5. Research Objectives

The objectives of this study were:

1. To investigate the linguistic gap in academic publishing
2. To determine the role of the editor in bridging the linguistic gap
3. To explore factors that may influence the edit conducted on the text

1.6. Significance of the study

The editor plays a significant part in the publication process, yet there is still some uncertainty surrounding what it is exactly that they do. Law (2011) states that many people, both those who are and who are not in the publishing industry do not fully understand what the role of the editor entails. This research aimed to provide clarity on the role of editors and illustrate the conduct that editors use when handling a manuscript. This report could be beneficial firstly to people who are hoping to join the publishing industry, such as academic writers, as it is situated within academia and professional work. Secondly this report could be beneficial to industry professionals, because it explored issues surrounding language accessibility in academic publishing, which would allow them to reflect on ways that would consider the different backgrounds of their target audiences.

1.7. Research Assumptions

The assumption of this research is that there is a linguistic gap that exists within academic publishing, because academic writers do not consider the needs and varying backgrounds of academics who are not first language English speakers. Therefore, it is the duty of the editor to ensure that academic literature is accessible to a multilingual audience.

1.8. Chapter Outline

Chapter One: Research Introduction

This section focused on presenting the background to the research topic, by setting out the context in which the research exists. Included in this chapter is the research problem, research objectives, research questions, the significance of the research and the research assumptions.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This section consists of a comprehensive review of books, articles and journals that look at the role of the editor in academic publishing and the context in which they exist. It discusses the concept of language accessibility and the linguistic gap, which is a result of the multilingual and diverse context of the publishing industry in South Africa. Through defining the role of the editor, it is established that the editor is not necessarily in a position of power, and this affects the editorial process. This chapter also provides an international view of language accessibility, by looking at the academic publishing sector in Tunisia and Thailand. Lastly, the theoretical framework is discussed.

Chapter Three: Research Method

The methodology and research design are discussed in detail in this chapter. This researcher determined that the most suitable method to address the research questions would be a qualitative method. The data collection process, sampling and data collection tools used in this research are also explained in chapter three. The limitations of this study are also highlighted here.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis

This chapter presents the research results and provides an analysis of the data collected. It is through this analysis that the themes and subthemes emerged. The data is therefore presented thematically, with five main themes that include, academic publishing, the role of the editor, author responsibility, language accessibility and the linguistic gap. This chapter provides a baseline for the discussion that follows in chapter five.

Chapter Five: Discussion of Results

The results of the research are discussed in detail. This chapter follows the same thematic structure of chapter four. The discussion section endeavours to address the research problem – understanding the role of editors in navigating South Africa's socio-linguistic context and making sure that the academic text is accessible to the audience.

Chapter Six: Findings, Recommendations and Conclusion

This chapter concludes the conducted research by highlighting the findings. Recommendations for further research areas are outlined, these are made on the basis of the research findings. Final thoughts of the researcher are offered as concluding remarks.

1.9. Summary

This section has presented introductory information on the conducted research. It highlighted the background to the study; the research aims and problem. The research problem and questions were outlined. Lastly, the significance of this study and its assumptions have been presented, along with the chapter outline. Chapter two will follow, which will present the literature review that was conducted.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter covers a range of views on the role editors play in ensuring that academic text is accessible to readers who are not first language English speakers. It addresses the discussions on the circumstances of editing and the role editors have in academic publishing. This section also defines key concepts that were raised in the research questions and that form the basis of this study. The research examines how, or if, editors of academic books consider the varying language backgrounds of South African academics, in an application of the concept of a linguistic gap for academics who did not grow up with English as a home language. Van Aswegen (2007) states that literature reviews should not only present previous research, but also show engagement with the literature. Therefore, the literature review will also analyse the research questions and draw links between past research and the present research. This chapter begins by defining language accessibility and the linguistic gap within academic publishing. Existing debates on these issues are outlined, to provide an elaboration on the research problem statement. This is followed by the outlining of the South African academic publishing sector and the role of the editor. Various factors that influence the role of the editor within academic publishing are also discussed. Ultimately, this literature review shows the importance of the role of the editor by looking at the socio-linguistic environment they need to navigate in an effort to bridge the gap between the author and the reader. The literature review also provides a depiction of the question of language accessibility in academic publishing in Tunisia and Thailand. This assists in understanding the kind of research that has been done in other multilingual countries. Lastly, this chapter provides a theoretical framework, which explains the lens through which this research was conducted.

2.2. Language accessibility

Language plays a major role in the transferral of knowledge and information, particularly in the academic publishing sector. Amano, González-Varo and Sutherland (2016) state that language barriers can create gaps in information transferral. Language accessibility in academic publishing has been a topic of debate that has resulted in two main schools of thought. According to Soler, this argument is divided between those who ‘award language a

privileging role in shaping scholars experience in academic publishing...and those who place more emphasis on non-linguistic factors such as access to material resources, academic experience, degree of seniority, and one's professional network' (2019:389). Scholars such as Hyland (2016) argue that scholars who support the view of language privilege in academic publishing are creating divisions between native and non-native English speakers. Hyland (2016:66) challenges the view of language privilege by stating that focusing on language limitations results in authors, who are not native English speakers, looking for 'prejudice rather than revision' and discourages them from writing. Hyland (2016) further states that arguments that support linguistic privilege marginalise the challenges faced by native English-speaking academics when publishing. In response to Hyland's argument, Politzer-Ahles, Holliday, Girolamo, Spsychalska and Berkson (2016) argue that language privilege in academic publishing does exist. They further state that despite the benefits of having English as the universal academic medium, there are disadvantages to non-native English speakers that have to be acknowledged. Despite these varying views, the consensus is that more research is needed on language accessibility in academic publishing.

2.2.1. The linguistic gap

South Africa is a multilingual and multicultural melting pot that is often referred to as the Rainbow Nation (Perkins, 2016; Starck-Alder, 2003). It does not only include its own indigenous languages and cultures, but also a host of international languages and cultures. English has become the language that allows people to communicate with each other despite having different linguistic backgrounds. Therefore, academic spaces are remarkably similar to the society they exist within. Amano *et al.*, (2016) describe English as a *lingua franca* of global scientific activities. Sung (2014) defines a *lingua franca* as a language used by people who do not share the same first language. To reach a wider audience and to cater to international readers, academic publishers produce their work in English. English occupies a dominant space in the South African education system (Barkhuizen, 2002). The South African census held in 2011 indicated that in a population of 51,8 million, only 9,6% spoke English as a first language (Statistics South Africa, 2012). Monyai (2010) states that for many black students, there is not enough exposure to English outside of an educational environment. This is particularly true for students who come from rural areas. According to Madima and Makananise (2020), students in rural areas lack basic proficiency in English due to the lack of communal exposure, as many of them speak African languages as their home languages. An

individual's ability to acquire a language is largely based on their surroundings, particularly in their home environment. Bock and Mheta (2014) identify various theories that discuss the way people may acquire language, despite their differences, all the theories discussed reiterate the importance of constant interaction with people in acquiring language. Therefore, if many students lack basic proficiency in English, this situation will be exasperated by the language used in academic text. Madima and Makananise (2020) describe language proficiency using two structures, the Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills [BICS] and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency [CALP]. They further describe BICS as an individual's ability to talk about simple things in everyday situations, while CALP is described as the academic language used in educational settings that enables students to understand the content (Madima & Makananise, 2020). An academic audience would need to be proficient within both structures to be able to fully engage with and comprehend academic text. However, many academics who come from disadvantaged backgrounds predominantly speak African languages and therefore lack proficiency in English. The lack of engagement with the English language outside of educational settings and within their communities results in a shortfall between the reader and the academic author. Dodds (2015: 206) argues that academic publications are produced by a 'small group of authors who may not always reflect the broader needs and concerns of the wider community of readers'. It becomes the editor's responsibility to become a bridge between the author's message and the reader's understanding of the text.

2.2.2. Plain language movement

Garwood (2014) characterises plain language writing as a movement that is geared towards improving the public's access to information. Cornelius (2015) makes use of De Beaugrande and Dressler's (1981) seven principles of textuality to define plain language, this includes cohesion, coherence, acceptability, intentionality, informativity, contextuality and intertextuality. Cornelius (2015) further states that the objective of the plain language movement is to remove any unnecessary obstacles to the reader, and therefore should be measured using the seven principles. Gilliver (2015) argues that the principles of plain language writing should include omitting preventable words, making sure that a single idea is presented in its own paragraph, and proofreading the text. Plain language experts have argued that there is a way of presenting complex information in an accessible way (Garwood, 2014). The plain language movement puts the reader at the centre; their needs, particularly their linguistic needs, are constantly being considered. According to Cornelius (2015) the use of plain

language can be considered a basic human right, as it addresses the right of access to information as stipulated in the National Credit Act (2005) and the Consumer Protection Act (2008). Garwood (2014:12) highlights a gap between the plain language movement and academia, which is due to the ‘highly specialised language’ used to present information. Evans (2020) states that the use of plain language in text reduces confusion and increases understanding. Gilliver (2015) highlights that plain language writing does not mean dumbing down the message, but rather it means using words that the reader may understand when reading academic text. In the academic environment, the target audience largely determines the kind of language that is used, as will be discussed in section 2.3 below.

2.3. Academic writing

Luo and Hyland (2019) state that academic writing is characterised by a complexity that can be challenging for both native and non-native English-speaking authors and their audiences. Academic writing is often riddled with the use of complex language by academic authors. Ndiloseh (2019) describes academic writing as a specialised skill. Academic writing requires a notable command of the English language (Abdeljaoued & Labassi, 2021). Mewburn and Thomson further describe academic writing as ‘jargonistic and turgid’ (2013: 1106). The purpose for academic writing largely determines the kind of audience it is intended for. In academia, the intended audience is largely made up of academics, researchers, students, professionals and the educated public (Mewburn & Thomson, 2013). Tomaszewski, MacDonald and Poulin (2013) state that academic publishers are often characterised by their primary target audience. The intention of academic writing is to present research-based information, to encourage and enable conversations on the subject. Afful (2009: 22) states that academic writing should include clarity of language, which is defined as avoiding ‘ambiguity, vagueness, padding, verbosity, circumlocution, clichés and unnecessary obfuscating jargon’. Pinker (2014) argues that academics that have succeeded in academic writing must be able to have aligned the truth of their argument with language, which is evidenced through ‘clarity and simplicity’. Soler (2019) notes that scholars tend to use language strategically when writing for publication purposes. Demir (2019) describes this strategic use of language as ‘flowery language’, which is often used to demonstrate their vast knowledge over a topic. This strategic use of language can make the text difficult for potential readers to follow. According to Pinker there are two main reasons behind academic writing; firstly, the writer’s aim is to ‘satisfy the reader’s need for a particular kind of information’ (2014: 3). Secondly, the writer’s need to

uphold their reputation by proving their knowledge and experience of a subject. If an academic author is only concerned with upholding their reputation amongst their peers, they are less likely to consider whether the language they use is accessible to the reader, as they are focused on demonstrating their expertise of the subject. However, according to Demir (2019), some academics unconsciously use flowery language because of the knowledge they have acquired over their academic life. Pinker (2014) describes an author's inability to explain complicated ideas in layman terms as the 'curse of knowledge'. This could suggest that oftentimes the writer is unable to consider the readers background knowledge and education. This becomes the duty of the editor. The editor is tasked with considering factors such as the reader's motivation for reading, their possible background knowledge on the written subject and their education (Law, 2014). These factors influence the way editors handle the text.

2.3.1. Pressure to publish

University based academics have found themselves faced with pressure to publish to be eligible for recognition and benefits. Halcomb-Smith, Crump and Sarkar describe publishing in academia as the 'cornerstone of the educational landscape; it is the main currency of academic scholarship and a key site for the growth of collective wealth of knowledge' (2020: 58). Publishing is an important way of ensuring that an author's work reaches a wider audience. Kwanya (2018) states that the publication of a researcher's work attracts attention to the researcher and their institution. This may affect the researcher's standing in the university. Kwanya (2018) adds that many universities use an academic's publishing record to assess their competence. The pressure on academics to publish is infamously known as 'publish or perish'. Amutuhair (2022) problematizes the concept of publish or perish for African academics and argues that the concept overlooks the challenges faced by African academics. These challenges include access to academic materials, high publication costs, limited funding, and class differences that limit access to English (Amutuhair, 2022).

The pressure that academics may be faced with to publish, may result in them overlooking the linguistic needs of their audience, which may make the text inaccessible. However, as noted by Luo and Hyland (2019) in the previous section, the question of language accessibility can have an impact on both the reader and author, because oftentimes, the author may also be a non-native English speaker, which can affect their language presentation in the text. Abdeljaoued and Labassi (2021) support this view by stating that writing for publication is a burdensome

and traumatic process, which is doubled when English is not your first language, as the publishing process will bring with it additional linguistic challenges. Bitrus-Ojiambo, Mwaura and Majanja note that ‘prior English proficiency does not transfer to linguistic competencies for academic purposes’ (2017: 10). This implies that an individual that can speak English, should not be assumed to be proficient in all domains, namely academia.

2.4. Academic publishing

The academic publishing sector describes publications that cater for the tertiary education sector. This market is mostly made up of university students, lecturers, and academic libraries (Sleith, 2002). According to Hyland (2015), academic publishing has become an industry that has a huge impact on the professional lives of academics. The South African publishing industry is made up of three key sectors, which include education, trade and academic – academic being the smallest of the three (PASA, 2022). According to PASA (2018), the academic sector makes up 12% of the South African publishing industry. Thompson (2005) states that book publishers are regarded as individuals and organisations that are responsible for making information available for the public. This is particularly true for academic publishers, who are situated within academia. Mostert (2004) states that publishers are responsible for producing appropriate material to their readers. PASA (2018) depicts academic publishing as being filled with local professionals who author materials for tertiary education and specialists. Academic publishers are usually attached to universities. Therefore, they are referred to as university presses, which are centred on academic research. According to the book publishing industry survey conducted by PASA (2020), the academic sector is dominated by a select number of ‘local players’. Examples of these presses include Wits Press, UCT Press, UNISA Press and UKZN Press. These institutions tend to produce research-based books written by academics for other academics and specialist readers. Sleith (2002:2) regards university presses as the ‘publishing arm of a university’. This affiliation distinguishes university presses from independent academic publishers, such as MacMillan’s Springer group, HSRC Press and Van Schaik. The main aim of university presses is to distribute knowledge, which is generally written for academics and by academics (Sleith, 2002). This may make the language used in academic publications difficult for readers to understand. Editors are therefore an important part of the production process, as they ensure that the language used to present the information is accessible to readers. Ndiloseh (2019) states that in the academic publishing sector content is the central focus, because tertiary institutions are more interested in academic

publications based on their content. Soudien (2014) states that academic publishers have had to become corporate as a result of their academic institutions wanting to increase their international academic reputation. This may imply that the reader's linguistic capabilities are often not taken into consideration by the author and publisher.

2.5. Academic editing

2.5.1. What is an editor?

Editors have often been described as gatekeepers of the publishing industry. Baverstock (2015) states that in the history of publishing, editors have been the ultimate decision makers on whether a manuscript would be accepted. DeLuiliis (2015) defines gatekeeping as an activity that monitors the kind of information that is published. Gatekeepers are those with the power to decide the information that is allowed to be disseminated. This gatekeeper title given to editors could also be understood to include the editor's role in the editorial process of manuscript production. Zelenkauskaitė (2019) states that gatekeeping involves selection and filtering of the kind of message that is published. Sato (2012) depicts editors as having a filtering role. Editors filter text to make sure it meets the publishing standard of the publishing press. Davies (2004) describes the editor as the 'prime person' who keeps in regular contact with authors throughout the production process. This makes editing a central and an integral part of book production.

There are various types of editors within book publishing, this includes commissioning editors, copyeditors, developmental editors, substantive editors, and proof-readers. The most commonly referred to editor in the publication process is the commissioning editor, who may not always participate in the editing process, but is instrumental in contracting manuscripts for publication (Davies, 2004). Copyeditors check for grammatical errors and inconsistencies (Sturgis, 2010). Developmental editors, according to Wright (2019), are more concerned with the structure of the manuscript, rather than grammatical issues. Substantive editors, who are also referred to as content editors, handle grammar, similar to copyeditors. However, they go a step further by also looking into text style and lucidity (Wright, 2019). Perkins (2016) states that substantive editing requires a deeper level of engagement. Lastly, proof-readers handle text that has already been edited, they do not make any major changes to the text, but look for minor errors that may have slipped by the initial editing. Wright (2019) describes proof-readers

as the last line of defence before publication. Perkins (2016) highlights that the roles of editors in publishing companies are very fluid and interchangeable. In many publishing companies the editor roles that have been outlined are often held by one or two people. Oftentimes, publishers outsource their editors by hiring freelancers. The different types of editing also illustrate the detailed work that goes into editing a manuscript. The editor is responsible for the manuscript at various stages of the publication and is charged with ensuring that the text meets the publications standards of the press. In this research the kind of editor that will be studied is the copyeditor and substantive editor, because these kinds of editors interact with the text at an in-depth level by reviewing the text style and whether the message of the author is portrayed with clarity. The level of engagement the substantive editor and copyeditor has with the text requires them to ensure that the text is accessible to potential readers.

2.5.2. The role of the editor

The role of the editor is often labelled as a mediatory one. Butcher, Drake and Leach (2006: 1) define the role of an editor as removing ‘any obstacle between the reader and what the author wants to convey and to find and solve any problems ... so that production can go ahead without interruption or unnecessary expense’. The editor ensures that the needs of the author and audience are adequately met. According to Clark and Phillip (2014), in many instances the editor is the only one, other than the author, who would have read the manuscript prior to its publication. Shasok (2001) adds that oftentimes the editor is the only writing advisor the writer may have, therefore guiding authors becomes a part of their role. The editorial process may involve varying degrees of interference with the authors’ work. It is the editor’s duty to ensure that the manuscript meets the publishing standard of the publishing company. This process can be met with resistance from authors, which can lead to a power struggle (Bregin, 2007).

2.5.3. Ethics of editing

Ethics are values that guide people when conducting an activity (Resnik, 2015). Ciulla, Knights, Mabey and Tomkins (2017) define ethics as a morality between people that is based on trust and obligation. Editors also make use of a set of values that guide their work. Law (2011) notes that there are no editing standards within the South African context. The lack of guidelines, Law (2011) further argues, has allowed for the editing industry to be unregulated. The lack of guidelines within the editing industry has led to many not understanding the role

and value of the editor. Van Aswegen (2007) argues that despite there not being any South African editing standards, the Professional Editors Group distributes the Australian editing standard to its affiliates. The work conducted by editors is also largely guided by house styles and editing briefs of each individual publisher. Mostert (2004) describes the editing brief as the editorial concept that is established by publishers when determining the overall structure of the book. Sturgis (2010) describes these house styles as being default settings as on a computer; their aim is to provide a sense of uniformity in their work and reduce the ‘number of mechanical decisions’ that editors have to make, which allows them to focus on the language aspect of the text. Mostert (2004) adds that the publisher is the one who establishes the ‘editorial concept’ of a manuscript. Perkins (2011) states that editors are guided by their own structure of values. Editing is a subjective activity; therefore, it becomes the editor’s responsibility to ensure that they are as objective as possible when handling text. Mackenzie (2011) states that editors are limited by their cultural and intellectual backgrounds, making it their duty to overcome their own biases. Oftentimes the editor’s work is guided by the standards of the organisation that the editor works for.

2.6. Publishing value chain

The book publishing value chain is defined as a commercial system that includes various components that enable the production and dissemination of books (Mostert, 2004). The chain is made up of independent but also interrelated organizations or individuals that do specific tasks and are compensated for those tasks (Thompson, 2005). The traditional participants of the value chain include the content creators, the publishers, printers, distributors, retailers and the consumers. The purpose of each functional link is to add value to the product, by way of producing or delivering the book to the consumer (Thompson, 2005). The responsibility of publishers, according to Darnton (1982), has included writing up contracts, establishing relationships with booksellers, negotiate with political figures and handle the finances, suppliers, shippers and marketing. Publishers have had a significant role in book production and dissemination. Adams and Barker (1993) describe the publishers as being the ‘point of departure’, in which the decision to undertake the production of a book is determined. Publishers provide editors with the editing brief that determines the work that needs to be done on the manuscript. Sturgis (2010) states that publishers provide editors with the editing brief and house style that guides the work done by the editor. The production process is an important aspect of the value chain, as it includes quality assurance and consistency. Carolan and Evain

(2013) state that publishers still contribute an immeasurable value to this process, by ensuring that both the needs of the author and reader are met. They further state that the editorial support publishers provide are an essential part of the development of the book.

2.6.1. Value added by editors/editorial process

Editors exist within the publishing value chain. Digital technologies have brought vast changes into the publishing industry and have led to many questioning the need for certain publishing professionals in book production. Davies (2004) argues that the role of the editor is a vital one. Authors will always need the services of an editor, whether using traditional or alternative methods of publishing. During the editorial process, manuscripts will undergo several stages of revision before being considered ready to publish (English, Gleiman, Hansman, Sun & Zacharakis, 2019). The editorial department, Davies continues, is the ‘key territory where most publishing ideas are received, created and then developed’ (2004:1). Editors add value to text by making sure it meets publishing standards. The skill set of an editor often include strong writing and language skills, finance, marketing, and digital technologies, which enable them to view things at a micro and macro level (Davies, 2004). English *et al.*, (2019) interpret their roles as academic editors as one that encourages developmental growth of authors, increasing readership and enabling discussions around the content. They further state that the goal of the editor is to guide authors as they navigate the system of publications, through constant feedback on their work. Academic writing is a process that will always require revisions and incorporating the comments of the editor.

2.7. Factors that influence the editorial process

2.7.1. Costing

Costing plays an important role in book production; therefore, the editorial process is also affected by financial constraints. Davies (2004) defines costing as the amount of money that will be spent to produce a book. Jackson (2009) adds that costings cover the production of the manuscript, which includes editing, design, typesetting, proofing and indexing. The editor is often guided by the editing brief from the publisher, which determines the type of edit the text needs, the costings and the time limits (Perkins, 2016). Costing constraints within the editorial process may affect the type of edit that is conducted on the manuscript and the level of attention to detail. Mackenzie (2011) argues that editors have to constantly negotiate between the budget

set by the publisher and what the reader needs. Walby and Libbert (2019) state that academic publishing has become corporate, which has resulted in the deterioration of the value of the publishing process and professionalism of editors. The publishing industry is a business (Baverstock, 2015). Its infrastructure is made up of strategies that ensure profitability of the business. Stevenson (2007) states that most publishers work towards guaranteeing return on investment. Walby and Libbert (2019) add that this corporatization may be a result of lack of funding received by university presses. In an interview with Riess, Adam Glazer, director of marketing at Oxford University Press, states that academic publishers are regarded as ‘big corporations that exploit students and value profits over education’ (Riess, 2008).

According to Shea (2018) oftentimes money shapes the type of decisions editors have to make, which is not always in the best interest of the book. Ndiloseh (2019) supports this view by saying that during the editorial process, publishers and editors must make economically viable decisions, despite the impact they may have on the book. This suggests that academic text may not undergo an adequate edit that would make the language accessible due to financial limitations set by publishers. Suber (2012) argues that the academic sector can afford to overlook some costings, as many academic publishers are attached to universities, and therefore recipients of salaries and research grants. McGrail, Rickard and Jones (2006) state that the number of publications produced by universities are an indication of their performance, but also acts as a criterion to qualify for government funding. The academic market is not as profit driven as the trade market, which could allow them to recover their financial investments through other means. Suber (2012) further states that universities provide their presses with research grants to allow them to ‘gift’ the public with the research.

2.7.2. Time

Shea (2018) argues that it would be to the detriment of editors if they invested too much of their time to one specific manuscript or author. It is quite common that authors may work with one editor, however editors have a few authors they are working with (Ndiloseh, 2019). This makes it challenging for editors to prioritise one author, which may affect the adequacy of the edit conducted on a manuscript. Davies emphasizes the importance of the publication process schedule, ‘it is absolutely essential that nothing in house impedes its progress through to that special publication date’ (2004:68). This strict adherence to the schedule may affect the edits conducted on the text, as plain language edits may take more time to complete.

Davies states that in many instances editors are unable to read through manuscripts, due to the pressures associated with their role, the reading of the text is then often left to ‘outside experts to evaluate the quality of the scholarship’ (2004:85). These subject experts are peer reviewers who ensure that the content of the book is accurate and in line with the publishing standards of the publishing press. According to Bornmann (2011) peer reviewing is a system used in scientific disciplines to ensure quality control of the type of research that is published. Panda (2019) defines peer review as a method through which research articles are evaluated by editors and industry experts before either being accepted or rejected for publication by academic publishers. The peer reviewers reading, to some editors, may substitute the need for them to read the text (Davies, 2004). Walby and Lippert (2019) support this view by stating that the academic editors that they have encountered often uncritically accept the reviewer assessments. They call this ‘editing avoidance’ (Walby & Lippert, 2019: 366).

2.8. International example of academic publishing and the language question

The question of language accessibility in academic publishing is not exclusive to South Africa, but is a feat faced by many multilingual countries. This section will provide two case studies, as examples of the language issues within academia in multilingual countries. This researcher recognises that the use of two case studies is not generalisable to all multilingual countries. However, by providing these case studies, this researcher aims to illustrate that language inaccessibility in academic publishing exists beyond South Africa.

The first case study looks at academic publishing in Tunisia. According to Badwan (2019), Arabic is recognized as the national language and used as the medium of instruction in schools. French and English are taught as foreign languages; with French being introduced at grade 3 and English at grade 6 (Badwan, 2019). Unlike South Africa, Tunisia does not have an entangled history with English that bears significance in their present-day language ideologies. Abdeljaoued and Labassi (2021) state that in Tunisia, English does not have any historic or political influence, rather the social elite have tried endlessly to prevent the introduction of English as a medium of instruction. Despite South Africa and Tunisia having different relationships with English, both countries have to navigate the question of language accessibility within academia, due to it not being a language spoken by a large majority of the country. Research conducted by Abdeljaoued and Labassi (2021) illustrates that the prominence of English in academia has placed an immense amount of pressure on scholars to

produce text in English in order to survive the academic publishing environment. The reason for this often includes gaining visibility in the academic world and being able to communicate with academics outside of the country. The research conducted by Abdeljaoued and Labassi (2021) was made up of 12 university-based scholars with experience in the publication process. The research reported that although Tunisian scholars had difficulty with producing published works in English, the participants viewed English as a necessary evil to getting noticed in the publishing market and being eligible for tenured positions. Interestingly, the report found that the dominance of English is not viewed as a threat to the national language of Arabic. This is due to the medium of instruction at tertiary level being French, therefore ‘using another foreign language does not seem to be a threat to the national pride... English is...a currency for research to reach the world; it is not the 21st century linguistic flagship of neo-colonialism nor is it the poisoned pill under the guise of the noble cause of the worldwide communication of science’ (Abdeljaoued & Labassi, 2021: 251). This shows that the dominance of English in academia moves beyond colonial history, but rather has more to do with globalisation. Despite the ambivalent attitude Tunisian scholars may have towards English, Abdeljaoued and Labassi (2021), report that several scholars reported feeling disadvantaged, as they are required to navigate academic writing in English. This can be a tedious trial-and-error process.

The second case study looks at academic publishing in Thailand. Rhekhalilit and Lerdpaisalwong (2019) state that the use of English in academia has accelerated, particularly in non-dominant English countries like Thailand. However, it has been noted that English proficiency is quite low among Thai communities, this is mainly due to lack of opportunities to use English in their daily life (Glass, 2009). Research conducted by Rhekhalilit and Lerdpaisalwong (2019) investigates the language used in academic journals in Thailand in 2005 and in 2015. The data collected in their research was made up of 663 journal articles from the science and humanities field, along with 73 academic writers. The results of their study indicated that the use of English in academia has notably grown, however it is still less popular among Thai scholars dependent on their field. In the Humanities field, in 2005, 88% of the academic articles written were in Thai and 12% were in English. In 2015 Thai articles made up 84%, while English rose slightly to 16%. In the science field, in 2005, Thai articles made up 83%, while English was 17%. In 2015, Thai articles dropped to 60%, while English articles rose to 40% (Rhekhalilit & Lerdpaisalwong, 2019). They note that Thai has been the dominant language used in academic publications, as several of their participants indicated that they

prefer to write in Thai. The reasons for this decision included the authors own proficiency and that of the reader, who they assumed to be Thai (Rhekhailit & Lerdpaisalwong, 2019). The question of language accessibility is raised as some participants indicated that they prefer to read academic text written in Thai, as they often had difficulty understanding the English terminology. Scholars who chose to write in English did so due to ‘lack of technical terms in their field in Thai’ (Rhekhailit & Lerdpaisalwong, 2019: 355). The use of English in academic publications has grown and continues to grow globally, as scholars seek to interact with each other on a global scale. The research conducted by Rhekhailit and Lerdpaisalwong (2019) illustrates that in an environment that nurtures multilingualism, academic writers can better consider the needs of their audience.

2.9. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework that was used as the lens through which this study was conducted was the themes used in the literature review. This was used alongside dialectical thought. Dialectical thought stems from Hegelian philosophy that highlights the intertwined relationship between ideas that contradict each other (Cressman, 2020). The analysis conducted on the data collected during the interviews has shown that there are various dialectical situations that exist in academic publishing that editors must navigate through in their efforts to make language accessible.

The themes that were used as a framework are language accessibility, academic publishing and editors, and factors that may influence the editorial process. Van Aswegen (2007) states that the literature review should provide a basis for the research that will be conducted. The framework of this research combined the themes raised in the literature review and dialectical thought to provide a better understanding of the academic landscape editors must navigate in an effort to bridge the linguistic gap, by making language accessible.

The structure of the literature review provides a framework that will inform the data collection and analysis. The discussion of the results will include the use of a dialectical lens towards understanding the role of the editor within academic publishing.

The research presented in the literature review has illustrated that despite the linguistic gap that exists in South Africa due to varying socio-linguistic backgrounds, there is little research on how editors mediate this terrain and uphold the expectations of the publisher. This problem is intensified by there being no South African editing standards that guide editors on how

to consider the needs of the author, while ensuring that second language English speakers are able to understand and engage with the text. Despite there being editing standards from other countries that are available to South African editors, these standards are unable to consider the South African context of language and editing. The issue of language accessibility is not unique to South Africa, however having an editing standard that addresses the problems that South African editors are challenged with, may assist editors in bridging the linguistic gap. The research gap that this research hopes to fill is to identify the role of the academic editor and explore how editors navigate the socio-linguistic barriers that exist within the South African academic publishing context.

2.10. Summary

This chapter has provided a review of existing literature on language accessibility, the role of the editor and academic publishing and writing. The literature review discussed the first theme of language accessibility, which presents two underlying themes of the linguistic gap and the plain language movement. This section explores the sociolinguistic context of South Africa, while looking at the gap that exists between academic authors and readers, and therefore why there may be a need for an editor. The second theme that is outlined is the academic editor, under this topic there were various sub themes that were identified. These sub themes include defining the role of the editor, discussing the types of editors that exist during book production, analysing the value added by editors and the ethics of editing and lastly noting factors that may influence the editorial process. The following themes that are analysed are academic publishing and academic writing. These themes look at the expectations that publishers may have for the manuscripts they accept and how these expectations may make the text inaccessible to readers, as the authors work towards ensuring that they get their work published. The chapter concludes by outlining the theoretical framework that was used in conducting the research. The literature review is the framework that was used in data collection and analysis. The following chapter will provide a discussion on the methodology used to gather data. It discusses the sample method used to determine the participants of the research.

Chapter Three: Research Method

3.1. Introduction

Research methodology is an important part of the research process, as it highlights the strategies used to gather the data and how it was analysed. This research sought to explore the views of academic editors and publishers on language accessibility in academic publishing and understand the role of the editor. This section provides a discussion of the research method, tools and design strategies that were used in conducting the research. The data analysis approach of thematic content analysis is described and the reason for its use is motivated.

3.2. Research design

This investigation made use of a qualitative research method, which included primary and secondary data collection. McCusker and Gunaydin (2015) define qualitative research as a methodology that focuses on understanding the reasoning behind why a society functions the way it does. The qualitative method aims to understand the research participants through their approaches and expectations when conducting an edit on academic text. Katz (2019:352) states that the participants' experiences can be understood by 'tracing their actions and experiences from their own vantage point'. This method is relevant to understanding the role of the editor in making academic text accessible, because it equips the researcher to investigate the experiences of academic editors and publishers in ensuring that the text that is published is accessible to the reader. Qualitative research seeks to explore the experiences and attitudes that have resulted in a specific societal behaviour. This process will be better understood by investigating the editorial process and attempting to understand the editor's role during the academic publication process.

3.3. Research instruments

According to Hinds (2000) research is conducted through a lengthy systematic approach, and research instruments play a major role in the way the data is collected. The data was collected using interviews with the selected academic editors and publishers in South Africa. The interview questions were guided by the themes identified in the literature review. The literature review provided a basis for the questions that were discussed with the participants. The interviews allowed the researcher to have an in-depth discussion with the participant's experiences on the role of the editor in academic publishing and the various factors that must be considered to ensure that the language used in the text is accessible. The open-ended nature

of the interviews allowed the participants to interpret and respond to the questions in a way that is relevant to their experiences and knowledge. The researcher was therefore provided with ample opportunity to ask additional and follow-up questions based on the participants' responses.

3.4. Sampling

Sampling determines the type of people and number of people that will participate in a research (Whitehead & Whitehead, 2016). The type of sampling selection that was used at the beginning of the data collection stage was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling, according to Whitehead and Whitehead (2016, 112), is 'designed to recruit those who have the required status, experience and knowledge of interest to the researcher'. The research participants were chosen based on their relevance to the research aim and questions, which is to identify the role of editors. Initially it was decided that the participants would be chosen from academic presses and institutes within South Africa that produce research-based books. There was a total of 30 participants that were invited to participate in the research; 18 were freelance editors, 11 were organisation-based editors and publishers and lastly one was both a freelance editor and an organisation-based managing editor. The participants were chosen based on their role as academic editors and publishers. Of that total 30 invited participants, two managing editors referred the researcher to other people within their organisation, as they expressed that their roles did not involve dealing with the text and the editors. Eight invitees expressed interest; however, were ultimately unable to participate, due to time constraints. There were 10 invitees that did not respond at all. The remaining 10 are those who responded and participated in this research; they are made up of six freelance editors, two organisation-based editors and two publishers. Purposive sampling was the original sampling method, however the lack of response resulted in the use of the snowball sampling, as an additional sampling method. Of the 10 participants, three were a result of the snowballing sampling method. Lopez and Whitehead (2012) describe this type of sampling as a 'chain referral' that occurs when the researcher relies on their participants to put them in touch with additional participants who fit the research criteria. This research had initially proposed that most of its editors would come from academic presses. However, the resulting participants were six freelance editors and two organisation-based editors.

While the sample size was small and not generalizable, this study aimed to identify patterns within academic editing that made it possible to explore the concept of the linguistic gap and

language accessibility in academic publishing. The South African academic sector is fairly small compared to the education and trade sector. Though not all publishers respond to the industry survey, according to PASA (2019), the academic sector makes up 12% of the publishing sector, compared to education and trade sectors, which make up 62% and 26% respectively. Therefore, the results that will be gathered from the participants can be used to get an understanding of the role of the editor in academic publishing. The sample number includes two publishers and eight academic editors. Publishers were included in the research, because they tend to work closely with editors and authors. As has been discussed in section 2.6 of the literature review, publishers occupy a notable role in the publication process. Scholars such as Adams and Barker (1993), have gone as far as to refer to publishers as being the point of departure in the publishing value chain. Editors receive their editing brief from the publishers, therefore including publishers assisted in looking at the expectations within academic publishing. The academic editors were made up of editors who work in academic presses and freelance editors. The varying backgrounds and experiences of the participants provides the research with a wider frame of reference. The participants that were included in this study were chosen according to standards relevant to the research question. According to Lopez and Whitehead (2013, p.125) this pre-selection criteria is referred to as 'judgement sampling', as it is 'designed to provide information-rich cases for in-depth study'.

3.4.1. Sample profile

According to Fink the research sample is a part of a population; 'a good sample is a miniature version of the population of which it is a part – just like it, only smaller.' (2003: 1). The aim of the sample group used in this research is to provide insight on the role of editors in ensuring language accessibility in academic text. The sample size chosen for this research could be used as a measure of the academic sector population, because the participants would have varying degrees of experience within academic publishing. A sample profile has been provided to introduce the participants, however in line with keeping to their anonymity, their names and the academic institutions they represent will be withheld. Therefore, the participants are referred to using numbers. The academic editors are labelled as Editor 1 to 8, while the publishers are labelled as Publisher 1 to 2.

Table 3.4.1: Sample profile

Participants	Gender	Role	Experience	Company
Editor 1	Female	Managing editor and Freelance editor	14 years	Based full time at an academic research institute and works as a freelancer
Editor 2	Female	Commissioning editor	13 years	Is at a university press
Editor 3	Male	Freelance editor	10 years	Currently retired, mostly does freelancing work
Editor 4	Female	Freelance editor	27 years	Currently a freelance editor
Editor 5	Male	Academic author and freelance editor	12 years	An academic author and freelance editor. He also stated that he sits on the editorial board of an academic journal.
Editor 6	Male	Freelance editor	25 years	Freelance editor for a university press
Editor 7	Female	Freelance editor	17 years	Freelance editor for a university press
Editor 8	Female	Editor	17 years	Freelance editor for a university press

Publisher 1	Female	Commissioning editor	10 years	Based at an academic press
Publisher 2	Female	Production manager	5 years	Based at a university press

As depicted in table 3.4.1, a total of ten participants were interviewed. The two publishers that were interviewed are employed full time at varying academic institutions. Their roles within their respective institutions include briefing the copyeditors on the type of edit that would need to be conducted on the text. Publisher 1 indicated that she has been in her current position for 10 years, with an extensive background in academic editing. Publisher 2 indicated that she has been in her current role for five years with a medium amount of editing experience prior. A total of 8 editors participated in this research, their collective experience ranged from 10 years to 27 years. Of the 8 editors, two are employed full time as editors, while the remaining six worked as freelance and independent editors.

3.5. Procedure for data collection

The data of this research was collected in two ways, virtual interviews and self-completion questionnaires. During the recruitment process, participants were provided with the list of questions that would form the basis of the interviews. This was done to give participants a chance to familiarise themselves with the questions, and if they were willing, respond to the questions beforehand, in preparation for the discussion interviews. Seven of the participants preferred to forego the self-completion questionnaires and go straight into the interviews. One participant partook in both the interview and the questionnaire. Interviews are defined as a conversation which is aimed at gathering information regarding the participants interpretation of the research topic (Alshenqeeti, 2014). The interviews followed a semi-structured format, which allowed the researcher and participants more freedom in the way that the questions were asked and responded to. According to Phellas, Bloch and Seale (2012), interviews provide a wider scope to ask open-ended questions and elaborate on questions that participants may not understand. This was particularly important during the interview discussions, because there were concepts, such as the linguistic gap, that participants may have not been familiar with until the researcher provided more information on the research aims and objectives. There were eight interviews conducted using MS Teams and Zoom platforms. The duration of each

interview ranged from 30 minutes to an hour. These discussions allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions depending on how the participants responded to the questions.

However, there were two participants that preferred the self-completion questionnaires and not the interviews. The reasoning for this was mainly due to lack of availability for an interview. This did have a minor impact on the study, because the researcher was unable to discuss the questions and their responses as had been initially anticipated. The questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions; this was done to provide the participants with an opportunity to elaborate on their thoughts. The questionnaire was not designed to be an additional form of data collection at the initial stages of the research. However due to issues regarding setting aside time for an interview, the questionnaire became an alternate method for participants. Phellas, Bloch and Seale (2012) state that self-completion reduces the risk of researcher bias that may come through in the way the question is asked. However, the limited contact with the participants is also a disadvantage, because there were questions that were included that were based on concepts, they may have not been familiar with. These questions were ones that referred to the linguistic gap and language accessibility, as seen in appendix four and five. The researcher was also unable to clarify any misunderstandings or explain concepts that the participants may not have understood, therefore making answering those questions more difficult.

3.6. Data analysis and interpretation

According to Alhojailan, 'qualitative data collection is usually dependent on interpretation' (2012: 39). This means that data interpretation is a significant part of understanding the collected data. The data was analysed and interpreted qualitatively. The method that was used for data analysis and data interpretation was thematic analysis. Clarke and Braun (2014) describe thematic analysis as a process that identifies 'patterns of meaning' in qualitative information. The process of thematic analysis included transcribing the collected data and categorising it into themes that address the research questions. The themes were ones that had been established in the literature review. Kowal and O'Connell (2013) define data transcription as a visual representation of verbal and paralinguistic behaviour. All the interviews that were conducted were recorded, with the consent of the participants. The recording was later transcribed, which formed the initial aspect of the data analysis, as the researcher had to listen and re-listen to the recordings to ensure accuracy of the data.

The data analysis process involved narrowing the bulk of the information that was collected by codifying and providing meaning to it. Auerbach and Silverstein define data coding as a ‘procedure for organising the text of the transcripts, and discovering patterns within an organisational structure’ (2003:33). This assisted the researcher in narrowing down the information that has been gathered and helped formulate themes within the data. The researcher colour coded the themes when analysis was conducted on the transcripts. The use of the colours as representations of the themes assisted the researcher in discovering patterns that would be relevant to the study. Thematic analysis assisted in creating connections between the codified categories and highlighting the significance of these connections. This assisted the researcher in understanding the statements made towards the discussion of the research topic. The themes that were generated from the data were obtained from the interviews. The interview discussions were informed by the concepts outlined in the literature review, which included language accessibility, the role of the editor, academic writing and publishing. Alhojailan (2012) reiterates that thematic analysis presents themes based on the qualitative data collected. The thematic method of analysis was used to answer the research questions by looking at the responses to the interview questions, which aimed to understand the way academic editors navigate the linguistic gap in academic publishing. The categorisation of the data into various themes allowed the researcher to make connections between the data presented in the literature review and the data collected from the participants.

3.7. Limitations of study

A limitation of this study was that it focused solely on the editor. The academic author and reader were not part of this study. The researcher chose to not include them, firstly due to time constraints and secondly to ensure that the objectives of this research were adhered to. Including students in this research would have taken the research in an educational direction, which is not the aim of the present study. Excluding the academic audience and academic writers is a limitation on the study because their perceptions were not taken into consideration, to compare and contrast their views to those of the editors and publishers. An additional limitation of this study is the small sample size. The small sample size means that the data collected from the participants cannot be generalized back into the population.

3.8. Ethical considerations

A research proposal was submitted to and approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-medical). It is the approval from the committee that provided the researcher with the go-ahead to contact participants and collect their data. The ethical principles were upheld throughout the course of the study. These principles included getting informed consent from all participants, minimising the risk of harm to participants, ensuring their anonymity and confidentiality and giving participants the right to withdraw from the research should they wish to do so (Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden, 2001).

3.9. Summary

This chapter explained the research methodology and design used in the study. The sampling technique was described, along with a profile of the participants. The method used during the data collection and analysis was discussed. Lastly the limitations of this study and the ethical considerations were also outlined and explained. The next chapter will present the data analysis of the interview discussions.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis

4.1. Introduction

This chapter will provide an analysis of the data that was collected from the interviews that were conducted with academic editors and publishers. This section will display the experiences and thoughts of the participants regarding their response to the research questions. The analysis will be presented thematically, as thematic content analysis was used to analyse the data. Table 4.1 below presents the themes and subthemes that surfaced from the data analysis in line with the research objectives and questions of this study. The themes have been presented in a way that contextualises the environment in which academic editors exist. This contextualising will provide a foundation towards understanding the role of the editor. Understanding the academic environment and the role of the editor sets the scene towards understanding language accessibility in academic publishing, which further explains how this has resulted in the linguistic gap and how the editor acts as a bridge between the author and reader.

Table 4.1: Themes and subthemes

Themes	Sub themes
1. Academic publishing	Academic audience Academic pressure to publish Production costs
2. The role of the editor	Value added by editors Editing standards Editors as gatekeepers and facilitators
3. Author responsibility	Purpose of academic writing Reader responsibility
4. Language Accessibility	Plain language movement
5. Linguistic gap	Multilingualism in academic publishing

Table 4.1 presents the themes and subthemes that were discovered through the analysis of the data. Each theme and subtheme will be explained in detail below, by presenting extracts of the participants' responses and how it is relevant to the themes.

4.2. Theme 1: Academic publishing

In the discussions held with the participants, they made sure to continuously emphasise the academic publishing sector in which they exist. This illustrates that the work that they conduct on the text is determined by the context they work within. The participants indicated that despite their role in ensuring they get the author's message across to the reader, they still have to operate within the bounds of academia.

Editor 3 indicates this by stating that,

If you are a scholar or academic in training, then you are writing to contribute to the body of knowledge in academia. So your readers are automatically members of that professional body.

The sentiments expressed by Editor 3 were echoed by all the participants who stated that academic publishing caters to a particular group of people; the academic community. This is an important distinction to make, because it provides a framework for how editors will not only interact with the text, but also how they conceptualise the reader of the text.

4.2.1. Academic Audience

The audience of a publication determines the direction of the text and the way the editor interacts with the text when conducting an edit. Publisher 2 illustrates the importance of the audience by stating that,

There is a question of audience and who the book is aimed at. I don't expect a high school student to read what we publish, not that they can't, but they are just not the primary audience for these scholarly books.

Editor 5 emphasised the importance of the target audience by highlighting that,

But the question is, who in their right mind, if they are not studying towards a certain academic qualification, would pick a journal article to read as they would pick a novel from a bookshop? No one, it's those that are in academia that read academic articles, those that want to cite them.

The target audience is the expected readership of the publication. The publishers and editors that participated in this study agreed that they tend to assume that, more often than not, their audience will be someone within the academic community. According to the participants, the reader is also an active participant in the academic community. Therefore, the academic audience has a responsibility to ensure that they understand the language of their discipline.

Editor 3 brought up an interesting and important point about the academic audience, by questioning the kind of reader that the text is for;

First question to you would be, who is the reader, because there is no generic reader. Is the reader one of your peers? The examiner? Is the reader one of your participants? Each of those readers are totally different.

Editor 3 illustrates that even within the academic community, there is still a differentiation of audiences. This is supported by Editor 1 and Publisher 2, who both stated that a journal article, a thesis and an academic book are different kinds of academic text, therefore the way that each text is handled will differ, as each of those texts have different kinds of readers. The target audience within academic publishing tends to be mainly academic, which includes other scholars, students and practitioners.

4.2.1.1. Other scholars

This type of target audience can also be referred to as the academic authors' peers. Often academic authors are writing to expand the body of knowledge in a particular field. Their aim in their writing is also to have their peers interact with their text and possibly respond in their own academic publication.

Regarding this, Editor 8 states that,

Some of the books I have worked on are just not going to be read by the general reader or even first-year students. They are written for other academics, and as specialist subject matter, so the authors engage with the most complex/technical issues and language of their field.

4.2.1.2. Students

The participants have indicated that there are various levels of readers in academic publishing, tertiary students are one of the primary audiences within academia. They are looking to grow their understanding of a subject and are required to engage with various academic texts as references.

Editor 1 states that,

Your audience would be the specialist reader, but you also get those who are students, like undergrad students, who may want to use whatever, if it's a book, as a reference material.

4.2.1.3. Practitioners

This type of audience could include people who are experts within that particular field, however may not be directly based within academia. This group is made up of professionals, who may be looking to update themselves on the latest research in their field. Therefore, academic publishing has to produce professional text using a professional language. This type of language use may not always be accessible.

Editor 3 reiterates that,

There are concepts, there are all sorts of things in a professional practice that would require language that is not of everyday.

4.2.2. Academic pressure to publish

A vital characterization that differentiates academic publishing from the other publishing sectors is the pressure academic authors are faced with to publish. Publication within academia is vital for academics, particularly those that are based in universities.

In relation to the academic environment, Publisher 1 stated that,

Academics that are based in universities are expected to publish a certain number of journal articles or book chapters, so I would say that there is, to a particular limit, pressure from the workplace to publish.

Publisher 1 depicts the academic publishing environment to be a pressure filled one, due to many academics feeling pressure from their universities to produce published works. Publisher 2 refers to the need for academics to produce publications as the ‘publishing cycle’. They describe it as a system that awards published authors through their professional standings within universities. Academic publishers exist at the centre of this cycle, as they are viewed as the means through which to become published. The pressure to publish is not only placed on authors, but on the publishers too. Publisher 2 states that university presses are also required to produce publications in order to remain financially viable.

4.2.3. Production costs

All the participants voiced the importance of costing in academic publishing, because it guides the kind of work that will be done on a manuscript during its production.

Publisher 1 agreed that costing has an impact on the editorial process,

A plain straightforward edit; a clean up of language would be your cheapest one. But if you are asking the editor to rewrite certain things and change things to the simplest form, it's more work and entails more time, and therefore obviously is more expensive – it does have cost implications. If your editor has just been tasked with a basic clean up and not anything extensive, it will have that impact. Because they have been tasked to do a basic edit, nothing more nothing less.

Publisher 2 pointed out that despite the subsidies that universities may receive, the money is used to fund other research in the university, and does not necessarily come to the university press. They further explained that,

A university press still has to show its value and remain a sustainable arm of the university. We are heavily subsidised by the university, we don't run at a profit and we require funding. There is a limit to what we are capable of, in terms of the resources we have.

Moreover, in relation to the impact of costing on editing, Editor 4 added that,

Academic publishing is pretty tough, if you are looking at university presses, they have very limited budgets, but they do try.

The statements presented illustrate the importance of production costs during the production process, particularly in guiding the editorial work that is conducted on academic text. The publishers raise the importance of production costs at various levels. Publisher 1 focuses on the impact of costing at a micro level, which focuses on the editorial department. While Publisher 2 highlights the impact of production costs at a macro level, by looking at the role of the whole press in relation to its university. Editor 4 highlights that despite the challenges with production costs that may be faced, publishers work towards ensuring that their publications are up to standard. Several Editors expressed that despite the financial constraints they may be faced with, they work towards ensuring that the work they produce is up to par and will be seamless for the target audience.

4.3. Theme 2: The role of the editor

An important aspect of this research is understanding the role of the editor in academic publishing. The general consensus among the participants was that the editor plays an intermediary and supporting role. Editor 1 described their role as an editor as,

Ensuring that the work that they [authors] produce is of high quality...the editor needs to make sure they work within the brief that they have been given by the publisher and also within the budget.

Editor 2 stated that,

The role of the editor when approaching a text is not to rewrite the text in a way that suits them, their role is to see what the author's voice is and retain the author's voice, but polish the text so that there aren't any glaring errors that may make [reading] uncomfortable.

Editor 4 added that,

The role is two-fold, firstly it's to help the writer express themselves in the best way, so that their thinking process is clear. And making sure that there aren't any impediments... for someone who has done university level of study, they should be able to read it from the point of view of language and the sequence of things.

Interestingly, the term budget emerges in Editor 1's description of their role; it suggests that the role of the editor has budgetary constraints. This suggests that understanding the role of the editor can be expanded or contracted just by the budget. It makes for a relational understanding of the role of the editor because the role of an editor can be enhanced with a bigger budget. Editor 2's statement speaks to punctuation and grammar as being the key characteristics to the role of the editor. Editor 4's definition of the role of the editor highlights the supportive role that editors have towards authors. Editor 4's definition also addresses ensuring that language is accessible to the academic community. The participants summarised the role of the editor as ensuring that the needs of the author, publisher and reader are adequately met. When looking at language accessibility, their definitions of the role of the editor showed that the language only needs to be accessible to the academic community.

4.3.1. Value added by editors

The value added by editors during the editorial process makes them a significant part of book production. In describing the significance of editors as their presence throughout the production process, Editor 5 stated that,

The editor actually exists at every stage of the production process...from the beginning to the end, the editor is there.

Publisher 1 described the value added by the editor as their creativity,

Sometimes copy editors can be very creative, you as an author can say something in an ordinary and straightforward way and the editor can twist it around and make it interesting, they add art to it.

Editor 4 stated that,

The art of being an editor is that every document you come across will have different issues with it and needs to be assessed on its own terms...So absolutely crucial, a good editor is invaluable.

The participants' statements illustrate the importance of the role of the editor in the production process. The value added by editors is in the artistic way editors handle the text and in their consistent presence during the production process. The presence of the editor is manifested through the various types of editing that were outlined in the literature review; the commissioning editor, copy editor and the proofreader.

4.3.2. Editing standards

When questioned on the relevancy of South African standards, there were mixed responses among the editors and publishers on whether standards would add any value to the academic editing environment. However, the consensus amongst the participants is that their work is regulated by editing briefs they receive from publishers. When asked about the editing standards they use, Editor 6 stated,

That would depend entirely on the brief given, which would range from a basic copy edit, to a language edit, to an extensive cut of text to meet extent, to checking for conceptual contradictions, to picking up plagiarism, to an overwrite, etc.

Editor 6 illustrated that the kind of edit that would be conducted on the text is solely dependent on the editing brief. The role of the editor is therefore also determined by the publisher and the editing brief. Regarding the editing brief, Publisher 1 states that,

So in briefing the copy editor, you have to ensure that you let them know that this is intended for a certain readership, so please ensure that the simplest form of language is used within the text, so break it down but don't lose the meaning. So everything needs to be done in that sense.

A number of participants, particularly Editor 1 and 2, felt that the creation of South African standards would not change the way editors work, particularly in academic publishing, as they made use of international editing standards and the house style provided by the publishing house. Regarding South African editing standards, Editor 1 states that,

I don't think it would help in any way if we had our own home-brewed editing style. Why I am saying this is... institutions will just tailor-make them for their own needs. In other words, institutions adapt these styles, especially academic institutions in SA.

Editor 2 asserts that,

I don't know if having a South African standard on its own would be useful, maybe for academic it might not be, because English is quite global, but maybe if you are doing educational publishing and that would be more focused on a local market and audiences and that takes on a different question and political idea. Whereas in academic or scholarly publishing it's very global, so you want to find a global standard and not just a local standard.

The statements of the editors provide a contradiction with regards to the standards of editing. Editor 1 speaks about flexibility when approaching adherence to editing standards. This suggests that editing is context-based. However, Editor 2 speaks of a global community that dictates the rules and regulates the standards that are followed across the board.

Some participants agreed with this sentiment, as they felt that having South African editing standards could be helpful and bring some uniformity in their work. Editor 3 pointed out that,

I would use a South African style guide, if one was available for academic work...It might result in some sort of uniformity across the board. Within the guild there are

various schools of thought, there are people who are clearly very academic in their professional approach to editing; every 'i' must be dotted and every 't' must be crossed, the comma must be in exactly the right place and if it's not there you should be able to go to some resource and justify why you didn't. I approach my work from a completely different perspective, yes I am aware of the rules and I try and implement them as much as possible and so on.

Editor 4 affirmed that,

...standards are always a good idea, there are a lot of really bad editors, so from that point of view, if you can, meet certain standards when you are editing or are aware of the action you need to take.

Editor 5 highlighted that,

Standards are really context based, indeed that we are surviving on borrowed standards complicates the process of publishing texts that are academic related. What it means is that the standards we are using speak to foreign context and not to our own local context. It is imperative that we come up with our own standards that speak to the diversity that is South African...the cultural diversity and also the different level of education that we have in SA.

Editor 3, 4 and 5 echo Editor 1's sentiments that there is a fluid approach when it comes to editing. However, unlike Editor 1's view that the fluidity with editing standards would make South African standards redundant, Editor 3, 4 and 5 state that the fluidity in editing is exactly why South African editing standards need to be established and adopted.

4.3.3. Editors as gatekeepers and facilitators

Academic editors seemingly exist as both gatekeepers and facilitators.

Editor 1 argued that,

[As the editor you] ...ensure that you employ that subject specific language, but at the same time make sure that whatever the content is, is not ambiguous; it's easy for people to understand, yet it is not written in such a way that you are writing for the grade 7 pupils.

Editor 1's statement depicts the editor's gatekeeping role as being confined to the manner in which the language is presented in the text. This suggests that editors only make up a certain part of the gatekeeping that may take place in academic publishing, which illustrates that there are various stages of gatekeeping during the publication process.

Editor 4 maintained that,

As the editor you are aware of the reader like nobody else is aware in the production process. The publisher and the editor are guardians of excellence, you need that in academic publishing.

Editor 4's description of publishers and editors as 'guardians of excellence' reinforces the notion of an academic community, because the editor ensures that the publication is relevant to the community and speaks to their needs. It also depicts the publisher and editor as the ones who decide the manner in which information is disseminated. This suggests that the editor's role as a gatekeeper is an extension of the publisher's gatekeeping role. Editor 4's expression is supported by Editor 1, who places emphasis on the kind of people that are considered members of this community. They also highlight the type of message that is being published which is 'subject specific'.

Editor 3 illustrated the facilitating role editors may play, by showing how they incorporate teaching in their editorial process,

When I edit and I come across a word that has been completely misunderstood, I don't just change the word, I put a note in the margin to say this word means this, but I think you mean this. So I try and turn the editing process into part of the learning because writers of Masters and PhD thesis are in-training so let this also be a part of that training.

Editor 2 provides an additional example on the facilitation role that editors have to take in order to ensure that the content that is produced is not discriminatory;

And nowadays...we also have to consider inclusive language; how are you using a descriptor, like when you talk about illegal immigrants, are they illegal, are they refugees or asylum seekers? Sometimes these terms, the way in which they are used may have a moral bias. There is making sure that your language is not excluding or discriminating certain groups by presenting them in a particular way.

Editor 2 and 3 present another element that shapes the role of the editor, which is to minimise misunderstanding and being sensitive to social connotations in the language used. The participants demonstrated that editors take on a supportive role to their authors, while taking into consideration the needs of their readers.

4.4. Theme 3: Author responsibility

As described above, the editor plays an intermediary role between the author and the reader. This is an important aspect to remember, because the editor can only work on what they receive from the author. Their role is not to overwrite the author. Therefore, the author is also responsible for ensuring that the language of their text is accessible.

Publisher 1 said that,

The editor can only do so much, so if you say that the editor must change everything, then that's just having them rewrite the whole book. The editor can't take all the responsibility for that, because meaning can sometimes get lost and we don't want that.

Editor 2 affirmed that,

There is only so much work an editor can do; they are not there to overwrite your text, so at some point the responsibility also starts with the writer, to write in a certain way.

The participants emphasised that their role is to support the author. Therefore, they have to work with what they have been given by the author, while ensuring that they maintain the author's voice. The editor takes on an advisory role, as stated by the participants, the editor has limitations on what they can do. Therefore, they can only suggest changes that they think are necessary, to not overwrite the work of the author. However, ultimately the author decides whether to implement the editor's suggestions.

4.4.1. Purpose of academic writing

The reason for academic writing is often to encourage academics to engage with each other through their publications and to develop research in their fields of study.

Editor 4 insisted that,

Students [academics] need to be turned into authors, who are articulate so that people can understand them.

Editor 7 asserted that,

Academics are academics, they are not writers. Some of them happen to be really good authors and some happen to be passionate about language.

The participants all agreed that academic authors tend to be more focused on getting their message out rather than the way it is presented. This, they suggest, is because academics are scholars first and foremost. Therefore, academics need to be trained to become academic writers.

4.4.2. Reader responsibility

The question of the reader's responsibility resulted when the participants indicated that they have certain expectations from their reader who exists as a member of the academic community.

Publisher 2 reflected on the readers responsibility by stating that,

I wondered about the responsibility that the reader has to understand the content. They [Authors] do use jargon; they are speaking to a specific audience.

Editor 2 maintained that,

If a lawyer is talking to another lawyer then there is a legal language, if a lawyer is talking to a law student then that law student needs to learn that legal language, because that is part of your training.

According to the participants, the reader, as a member of the academic community, has a responsibility to ensure that they understand the language of their discipline. Editor 2's example using the legal profession indicates that the reader has to actively participate in ensuring that they understand the jargon of their discipline. This indicates that there is a certain level of understanding that the author, publishers and editors expect from the members of the academic community. This may affect the level of accessibility of the text.

4.5. Theme 4: Language accessibility

The issue of language accessibility looks into whether the language used in academic text is accessible to readers, particularly those who are not first language English speakers. When asked about their understanding of this concept, the participants responded as follows;

Editor 5 stated that,

It's not about complex vocabulary, it's about how you knit your expressions in such a way that the simple language is expressing complex ideas and that's making those ideas accessible and readable and appreciated by a first year student, who is coming straight from high school.

Editor 4 affirmed that,

There is an emphasis that your reader should be able to understand you, express yourself. Your research must be useful, don't use vocabulary you don't need to use. It's not going to impress anyone, what people want is information, they want accuracy, they want completeness.

According to the participants, language accessibility is about ensuring that the language used in the text is one that is understandable to the reader. Editor 5 describes the publishing process as an author's attempt to communicate with their reader, therefore the kind of language used is important. This is echoed by Editor 4, who placed importance on the reader being able to understand what is being conveyed by the author. A crucial point that Editor 5 raised is the readers' background, through their transition from high school to university.

This speaks to the question of the audience, which is the academic reader. Editor 3 emphasized that academic text only needs to be accessible to the academic audience.

4.5.1. Plain language movement in academic writing

The participants unanimously felt that the use of plain language in academic text would make the language more accessible.

Editor 5 said that,

Plain language speaks to simplicity of language but complexity of detail, we are not saying compromise on detail, but simplify it. Some have called it laymen language, write it in the language that a person can read and understand.

Publisher 1 mentioned that,

The plain language movement aims to make sure that text is as accessible as possible. It's a good way of making sure that language is accessible.

Editor 2 added that,

It's something that I am pushing for all the time. But sometimes in academic writing its a fine balancing act, because of course it would make it more accessible, but at the same time you are having to quote lots of people and rely on referring to other sources and they are using quite dense language, you kind of slip into it yourself. That puts a lot of pressure on an editor and there is also so much work an editor can do.

A crucial point that the participants raised regarding the implementation of the plain language movement in academic text is that it is not there to dumb down the work of the author, but rather make it more accessible. Editor 3 made sure to emphasise that even with the implementation of plain language, the text does not need to be accessible to people outside of that academic field. Editor 5 described this sentiment as the ‘simplicity of language but complexity of detail’. Editor 2 highlighted that a difficulty that may be encountered when using plain language in an academic environment is making use of references that use ‘dense language’, which may influence the kind of language used by the author.

4.6. Theme 5: The linguistic gap

In the context of this research, the linguistic gap is understood as an academic author’s inability to consider the linguistic needs of their readers who are not first language English speakers. Therefore, resulting in a gap that the editor needs to bridge. When asked about their views on the existence of this gap in academic publishing, all the participants agreed that it is there.

Publisher 1 emphasised that,

It does [exist], because in academia you have these well researched authors who would be writing as if they are writing for people who are on the same level, so their kind of writing is not going to be accessible to everyone.

Editor 8 described it as,

It relates to the gap between first-language and second-language speakers, as well as the gap between university-educated writers and non-university-educated readers – a gap between what is being said/written and what is being heard/read/understood, a failure of communication.

The participants describe the linguistic gap as a miscommunication between the author and the reader. As illustrated by Publisher 1 and Editor 8, there are various reasons for the gap; the first being ‘well researched authors’ who are seemingly unable to present their work for readers who are not at their level. The second reason for the linguistic gap is because of a communication breakdown between first-language and second-language speakers. This results in a communication gap between the authors and readers, as the authors may not always consider the language proficiency of their readers. The editor becomes a bridge in an effort to ensure proper communication between the author and reader.

4.6.1. Multilingualism in academic publishing

According to the Publishers Association of South Africa, the dominance of English publications is an emulation of the preference of English in academic spaces.

Editor 2 argued that,

English is quite global... in academic or scholarly publishing its [market and audience is] very global.

Editor 3 emphasised that,

For better or worse, English has become the lingua franca of the academic community.

Editor 5 and Publisher 2 questioned the accessibility of the English language as a medium of communication.

Editor 5 highlighted that,

How accessible is the English language when you are an editor in Africa? Editing text that is written in a context where we have 12 official languages.

Publisher 2 added that,

Why are second language students struggling and that's maybe more a question of language accessibility...With South Africa, there is just this inequality to access.

The participants demonstrated that English is widely used in academic publishing to allow for academic engagement internationally. Editor 3's statement that English is a lingua franca within academia highlights the cross-cultural communication that takes place in academic

publishing. Editor 5 and Publisher 2 suggest that the use of English as the medium of communication in academia may cause language inaccessibility resulting in a linguistic gap.

4.7. Summary

Chapter four presented the results that were gathered from the data collected during the interview discussions and questionnaires. The themes and subthemes that were identified from the data were presented. Chapter five will provide a discussion of the themes and results and relate them to the literature review.

Chapter Five: Discussion of Results

5.1. Introduction

The previous chapter provided an analysis of the data that was collected from discussions with the research participants. This section contains the discussions of these results. The discussion and interpretation of the results is informed by the research objectives and questions of the study. This section follows the same thematic structure as the analysis section.

5.2. Theme 1: Academic publishing

The findings revealed the importance of understanding the context in which academic editor's work within. It has been continuously emphasised that academic editors are situated within the academic environment, and therefore cater to the needs of the academic community. This is important to take note of, because the context in which editors are in determine their role in ensuring that the text is accessible. The idea of an academic community correlates with the definition of academic publishing by PASA (2019) that is presented in the literature review; they defined this sector as being a niche market that produces material specifically for members of the academic community. This illustrated that the academic publishing sector is heavily influenced by the academic community and is governed by the same rules that apply in academia. The influence of academia on academic publishing is supported by Padmalochanan (2019), who stated that academic publishing is largely influenced by external factors, namely academia, which has resulted in an interdependent relationship between the two. This theme addresses the research question of the conduct that editors follow in ensuring that academic text is accessible. Bourdieu argues that practices can only be understood within the 'social conditions in which it is implemented' (1990: 56). Therefore, to understand the role of academic editors, it is important to understand the context of academic publishing in which they exist. Academia, and by extension academic publishing, has been portrayed as being its own community and therefore caters to the members of that community. Academic publishers and editors are at the heart of academia. The influence of these structures in understanding the role of the editor emphasises Bourdieu's argument of the social conditions affecting the practices. This indicates that the role the editor plays is dictated by the structures that define academic publishing. Therefore, the ethics that editors use to make text accessible is guided by the regulations of academic publishing. The sub themes that will be discussed under this theme

can also be considered factors that influence academic publishing, which in turn determines the role of the editor and influences language accessibility.

5.2.1. Academic audience

An important point that was revealed in the findings was the audience of academic text. It was indicated that when approaching a text, editors and publishers have a profile of the kind of reader they expect would interact with the text; that reader being someone within the academic community. This is supported by Mostert (2004), who stated that publishers need to ensure that they produce relevant material for their audience. Baverstock (2015) added that publishers are largely consumed by the need to ensure that the content that is produced will fit the needs and be consumed by their target audience. Throughout the editorial process the editor has to keep in mind the target audience of the text and anticipate their needs when interacting with the text. Identifying the target audience is important, because it guides the editor on how they should approach the text. The academic audience determines the extent to which editors make language accessible, because the text only needs to be accessible to people within the academic community. In the academic publishing context, this audience would be made up of members of the academic community. As illustrated by Baverstock (2015), publishers have become market-centred to ensure that they reach their target audience. The dialectical situation becomes evident when the various multilingual backgrounds and the varying levels of proficiency of English of the academic audience is considered, because English as the dominant medium of communication within academia tends to be exclusionary. Editors have to make text accessible, but not accessible to the point where people that are not within the academic community can understand. Editors have to navigate this dialectic tension in academic publishing, which addresses the question of the extent to which editors fill the linguistic gap. This finding has illustrated that the expectations that editors and publishers have of their audience determines how accessible the text is. Publishers become so intent on meeting their audience's academic requirements, such as the need for certain information, and yet in most cases they are unable to meet their audience's linguistic needs, due to academic etiquette. This means that the linguistic needs of second language English speakers are not always met, resulting in a linguistic gap. The audience's linguistic needs often include considering their level of proficiency in the English language. Editors occupy the linguistic gap by considering the audience's possible background knowledge on the written subject and their education level, as stated by Law (2014).

5.2.2. Academic pressure to publish

The findings indicated that academic authors are under tremendous pressure to publish, this in turn places pressure on academic presses to produce publications. It was further revealed that the pressure to publish may result in authors and publishers being content-focused, in an effort to make the text appealing to academic institutions and individuals. It was also revealed that academic institutions receive funding from the government for works published, which is what causes the pressure to publish. The need for academic publishers, particularly university presses, to produce publications has led researchers such as Walby and Libbert (2019) to argue that academic publishing has become corporate. The pressure to publish is induced by the necessity for academic authors to advance their academic careers and be a part of the knowledge economy. The knowledge economy has come to be understood as the notion of “publish or perish”. Kung (2018) defines it as a principle on which employment, promotion, and tenure are based within academia. Researchers such as Ndiloseh (2017) have argued that academic publishers do not consider the needs of their audience, this view could be largely based on the pressure to publish. Academic publishers are part of an academic ecosystem and are also subject to the pressures academics may feel in needing to publish. The academic ecosystem becomes a system that is made up of the movement of money and prestige within academia. This pressure that exists in academic publishing can be considered as the reason why there exists a view that academic publishers do not necessarily think about their readers' linguistic needs. However, the possible language oversight by the publishers does not mean that language in academic text is completely disregarded. It becomes the role of the editor to ensure that any language concerns of the text have been attended to in a way that is cognizant of the audience's needs.

5.2.3. Production costs

The results have indicated that despite academic presses not working for profit, it is still important that they remain sustainable, whether they are attached to a university or not. An important point that was highlighted in the discussions was that the subsidies that the university may receive is not always allocated to the press, therefore adhering to the allocated production costs is imperative during the production process. This coincides with Baverstock (2015), who emphasised that the publishing industry is a business, therefore it needs to be sustainable for it to survive. Shea (2018) argued that the limited production costs allocated to the editorial process often affects the type of edit that is conducted on the manuscript and the level of

attention to detail. The grants that are generated by the published works of university press have led to debates on the issue of costs involved in book production. These debates tend to include the issue of accessibility in academic publishing and the resultant open access. Though this research looks at the question of language accessibility, costings are a crucial factor as they dictate the kind of work the editor will do, particularly freelance editors that are contracted per publication. This analysis supports the theory that there are factors that influence the edit conducted on the text, which has a knock-on effect on the accessibility of the language used in the text. One of these factors is production costs. Conducting a plain language edit on text can be time consuming and costly, which may influence the production costs and schedule. As discussed in the literature review, Davies (2004) emphasizes the importance of adhering to the production schedule. This is supported by Perkins (2017), who states that the budget assigned to production determines the scope of the editor's job, as editing can be time consuming and costly to the publisher. The academic publishing sector is a pressure filled sector that works towards proving its value, in an effort to garner funding for its publications. The costing allocated to production is vital, because it determines the kind of work that will be done on the manuscript for publication. This suggests that the costing limitation for the editorial process may be a reason for language inaccessibility in academic text. Academic editors have to ensure that they work according to the brief and within the costing that has been allocated to them.

5.3. Theme 2: The role of the editor

A point that was emphasised by the data, regarding the role of the editor, is that they have a supporting role to the author; their job is not to overwrite the author, but to enhance what has been presented by ensuring that the author's message is delivered to the reader seamlessly. This finding is supported by Butcher *et al.*, (2006), who defined the role of the editor as being one that mediates between the author and reader, while ensuring that costing limitation is adhered to. Shasok (2001) added that editors act as a guide to their authors. Editors have to navigate the tensions of academic publishing to ensure that the language used in academic text is accessible to the reader. However, editors also need to ensure that they adhere to the standards that exist within academia, and by extension academic publishing. Understanding the role of the academic editor is geared towards recognising how editors make language accessible and the extent to which they fill the linguistic gap. Editors have a mediating and supporting role. This means that despite their need to ensure that the reader is able to engage with the text efficiently, editors also have to make sure that they respect the role of the author. As Bregin (2007) stated,

the editing process is often met with resistance from the author. The editor's role in the publication process is to make sure that the needs of the author, publisher and reader are adequately met.

5.3.1. Value added by editors

The results of the study described the value of editors as being portrayed through the actual edit that they conduct on the text, but also as their mere presence during the production process. Mostert (2004) supported this by outlining the three kinds of edits, namely substantive editing, copy editing and proofreading, which are conducted at various stages of the production process. English *et al.*, (2019) demonstrated the value of editors by highlighting that during the editing process, the manuscript receives various notes of revision, prior to being considered ready for publication. Editors exist to ensure that the author's message is presented in a way that is accessible to their readers. The role of the editor has been characterised as adding value to the development of academic text. The different stages of editing that the manuscript goes through indicates that language, to some extent, is considered by publishers. The value that editors add to the text is in making sure that the author's attempt to communicate with their audience is successful. This theme addresses the question of the conduct that editors follow to make sure that the text is accessible to audiences who are not first language English speakers. A manuscript is not a book until it has undergone the production process, this is a process that editors are heavily involved in, to the point where they have been described as the cornerstone of the production process.

5.3.2. Editing standards

The discussion of editing standards, particularly the creation of South African standards, was quite interesting, as it was a topic that had the most varied results. The data illustrated that despite the lack of South African standards, the work editors conduct is largely dependent on the editing brief they receive from academic publishers, alongside the house style and universal standards, such as *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Sturgis (2010) described these house styles as being default settings like on a computer; their aim is to provide a sense of uniformity in their work and reduce the 'number of mechanical decisions' that editors have to make, which allows them to focus on the language aspect of the text. Researchers, such as Law (2014) have argued that editing in South Africa is unregulated due to the lack of South African editing standards, which has led to many editors imposing their own styles on the editorial work. The

issue of editing standards relates to the research question of how editors make text accessible and what conduct editors follow. Editors are at the mercy of the publishers that employ them and therefore work according to the brief and the house style they receive, which is in line with the academic environment they are situated in. Whether South African editing standards are developed, their implementation will be dependent on the publisher's decision to use them. Sturgis states that editors, particularly freelance editors, are often not involved in the development of house styles; 'the production editor assigns them work and the press writes their checks' (2010: 2). Academic editors are situated in a push-pull balance, where they want to make sure the language is accessible to their readers, however they are also confined by the written and unwritten rules of academic publishing. This is a depiction of the dialectical environment academic editors have to navigate. The development of a South African standard could contribute to language accessibility and bridging the gap between the author and reader. A South African editing guide would need to look beyond grammatical conventions and make explicit the complex socio-linguistic history of South Africa. This would make publishers and editors much more sensitive and aware of the linguistic gap where English is not spoken by the majority of South Africans.

5.3.3. Editors as gatekeepers and facilitators

The data indicated that the editor does have a gatekeeper role, as they have to ensure that the published text is in line with the publishing objectives and appropriate for their target audience. They have to keep in mind that their audience is limited to people who are situated within the academic community. The findings further highlighted that editors, additionally, have to act as facilitators to their authors to ensure that the text is accessible to their readers. The editor's role as both a gatekeeper and facilitator is supported by Sparks (2014) who argued that despite some truth that can be found in the gatekeeper metaphor that has been imposed on editors, it does not factor in additional functions that editors often undertake, such as mentoring inexperienced authors and communicating to relevant stakeholders. The role of the editor has often been relegated to just copy editing and proofreading. However, the role involves so much more than checking grammar, they have to ensure that the language used in academic text is accessible, firstly by making sure the reader understands the message. Secondly, editors have to make sure that the language is accessible in that it is not discriminatory against anyone. Editors have often been designated the role of the gatekeeper within the publishing industry, a role that has often been understood to be aimed towards keeping people out. However, it should also be

understood to portray the editors aim to uphold the academic standard, which characterises them as gatekeepers in the publishing industry. The editor has to be very sensitive to the target audience. They also have to work towards ensuring that the language is inclusive and not discriminatory. Editors must be cognizant of topical issues in society to ensure that the text they work on is inclusionary and is not biased. Understanding the role of the editor as a gatekeeper and facilitator provides an awareness of the actions editors have to take to ensure that language is accessible and meets the publishing standard.

5.4. Theme 3: Author responsibility

The analysis of the data revealed that the author is the point of departure in the publication process. The data further indicated that this researcher may have placed too much responsibility solely on the editor. When looking at the question of how accessible the language is, the data emphasised that the role of the editor is to support the author and not impose their own thoughts and opinions on the author's work. When defining the role of the editor, Shasok (2001) described the editor as a writing advisor, this suggests that there is only so much an editor can do, the author bears responsibility for how accessible their text is. The view that highlights the importance of the author's role is depicted in Darnton's model of the publishing process. The model illustrates the author as the point of departure, as it argues that the journey of the manuscript starts from the author to the publisher (Darnton, 1982). Bregin (2007) argued that many authors are resistant to the editor's suggestions. Bregin further suggested that author resistance is a result of their manuscripts being regarded as a labour of love; it is regarded as a personal journey that is a representation of their life's work. This means that some authors may regard the editor's suggestions as an attack on their work. To overcome this resistance, editors need to be sensitive to the author's preferences, while maintaining adherence to the house style (Bregin, 2007). Perkins (2017) reiterated that the editor needs to find a balance in respecting the author's work as their own, while considering the audience and publisher. When looking at the extent to which editors fill the linguistic gap, it is evident that editors should not be solely responsible for trying to bridge the linguistic gap. The author should hold a certain level of accountability when presenting the language used in academic text. There is a lot of pressure placed on editors, which can be attributed to people in and outside of the publishing community not understanding the role of the editor and the relationship dynamics between the author and the editor. In most instances, such as in the assumptions of this research, authors have gotten a pass on their part in ensuring that they communicate their research in a way that is accessible

to their audience. This may also largely be due to the academic environment that authors are in and the expectations that are set within those environments.

5.4.1. Purpose of academic writing

On the topic regarding the author's purpose for the academic writing, the findings indicated that there is an expectation that seemingly exists in academia, which is that academics have to present their work in a certain way to indicate their growth in their profession. A point that came through frequently in the data analysis is that academics are lifelong learners, who need to be taught how to write well, in an effort to ensure that the language they use is accessible to their audience. The findings emphasized that academics need to be trained to become writers. Defazio, Jones, Tennant and Hook (2010) have argued that being an effective writer is a skill that needs to be developed. Research conducted by Defazio et al. indicated that when most undergraduate students graduate, they do not have the skills needed to be 'successful communicators' (2010: 34). In the literature review, Soler (2019), stated that scholars tend to use language strategically when writing for publication purposes. Demir added that oftentimes, academic writers are unable to write in an accessible way, due to the knowledge they have gained over their academic career. Academics write to develop their professional standing and to contribute to the existing body of research on a particular subject. Academic writing requires critical thinking, research skills and a certain level of professionalism. Being an academic does not always translate to being a good author. There are editors who do their best to ensure that the editorial process results in the development of the manuscript and that of the academic as a writer. Editors can only do so much; they have a supportive role to authors and cannot impose their opinions on how the author ultimately decides to present their work. This is an important point to understand when considering the extent to which editors bridge the linguistic gap; the author is also responsible for filling the gap.

5.4.2. Reader's responsibility

An interesting point that came up during the data analysis was the responsibility the reader has in making sure that they familiarise themselves with the language used within the community of academia they have chosen to be a part of. The data illustrated that the academic reader has agency that enables them to take action towards making sure they understand the language of their discipline. Mohammadi and Thelwall (2019) state that reading academic text is a fundamental academic activity, as it informs an academic's research, assists in their

professional settings and provides awareness on topical issues. This reinforces the idea of the academic community and its members. The expected reader of academic text is a member of the academic community, therefore that reader is expected to be familiar with the terminology used in their field. Regarding the responsibility of the academic reader, this researcher had not considered the role of the reader prior to the discussions with the participants. It is a very important aspect to consider, because it depicts readers as active consumers of academic text. This theme has addressed the research question of the extent to which editors fill the linguistic gap that exists in the academic publishing sector. Similarly, to academic authors, the reader has the responsibility of filling the linguistic gap, by ensuring that they are familiar with the language of their discipline, as members of the academic community. An important aspect to note about accessibility of the text, particularly regarding a tertiary student studying towards a specific profession, is that they need to become acquainted and learn the jargon of that profession. However, language accessibility can be applied in the way jargon is presented for the target audience.

5.5. Theme 4: Language accessibility

The results highlighted that to ensure that the language used in academic text is accessible to readers, there needs to be a change in the way that authors communicate their work. This finding is supported by Dodds, who raised concerns about the quality of the academic publications, which can result in ‘an overload of highly specialised studies that are difficult for scholars to digest and which may even make it more difficult to find and use information effectively’ (2015: 206). Considering the academic context and the dialectical tensions that have been discussed, the topic of language accessibility becomes complicated due to the limitation of accessibility that exists in academic publishing. The inaccessibility of language to the reader creates a linguistic gap between the author and the reader. The gap between the author and the reader is often exacerbated by the pressures within academic publishing; firstly, the pressures that authors have to publish. Secondly, the expectations that authors and publishers may have of what their readers should be able to understand. The editor is then tasked with occupying the gap between the author and reader to facilitate communication between the author and the reader.

5.5.1. Plain language movement in academic text

The findings support the theory that the implementation of the plain language movement would make academic text accessible. However, the question of audience is once again raised; who does the text need to be accessible to? The question of language accessibility in academic publishing is a complex topic, especially when one takes into consideration the constraints that exist in academic publishing. The plain language movement has been regarded as a means of ensuring that language used in academic text is more accessible. However, when considering accessibility, the academic community needs to be considered as well. As has been discussed earlier, as much as academic text should be accessible, it does not need to be accessible to the point that any person can pick it up and read it. The text needs to be accessible to members of the academic community, and as members of this community, the audience also has a responsibility to equip themselves with the language of their discipline. The implementation of plain language in academic text would require education, as there are misconceptions on what exactly plain language is. Academic authors would need to be taught how to balance presenting their work in an appropriate yet accessible way.

5.6. Theme 5: The linguistic gap

The data has revealed that there is a linguistic gap between the author and the reader in academic publishing. This has been attributed to the language practices in South Africa, namely the dominance of English in academia. Derbal and Richards (2007) stressed the importance of language by describing language as the most sensitive instrument that can be used to measure social changes and practices. Research conducted by Monyai (2010) and Madima and Makananise (2020), as presented in the literature review, depicted the challenges that many second language English speakers are faced with. Dodds (2018) highlighted that the needs of the author and those of the reader do not always match. In the context of this research, the linguistic gap was understood as an academic author's failure to consider the linguistic needs of their readers who are not first language English speakers, therefore resulting in a gap that the editor needs to bridge. If the author is unable to consider the needs of their audience, particularly their linguistic needs, the editor becomes a bridging point between the two, to ensure adequate communication in a way that satisfies both their needs. This research sought to answer the extent to which editors fill the linguistic gap and their role in ensuring that academic text is accessible. The analysis has shown that there are various factors that has led

to language inaccessibility in academic text, the most prominent being the dominance of English in academia.

5.6.1. Multilingualism in academic publishing

The findings stressed that for better or for worse English is the language of instruction in academic publishing and the global academic community. Wasserman and Richards argued that academics that may decide to publish materials that are ‘accessible and relevant to local audiences’ (2015:726), do that to their own detriment. Alexander (2014) states that an English only policy prevents masses of non-English speakers from accessing information and stifles the creativity of people, who would have no choice but to express themselves in a language that is not their mother tongue. Publishing makes use of the practices of the society in a way that helps people acquire knowledge. The way people engage with this knowledge is dependent on their literacy practices. Hamilton (2010) describes literacy as a social practice, which is the way people use literacy to make meaning and understanding based on the social institutions they are part of. The idea of literacy as a social practice argues that there is a connection between literacy activities and the social structures they are embedded in. The linguistic gap exists because there is a discord between the medium of instruction in education and the languages spoken by the majority of the South African population. The editor exists in trying to bridge this gap, by ensuring that the language used in the text is accessible to readers that are not first language English speakers.

5.7. Summary

This section provided a discussion of the data presented in Chapter four. The themes and sub themes that were identified from the data collected were discussed using a dialectical reference, as it was identified during data analysis that editors have to navigate various dialectical situations within academic publishing. The main aim of the discussion section was to address the research questions that were raised in chapter one, by understanding the role of editors in navigating South Africa's socio-linguistic context and making sure that the academic text is accessible to the audience, namely non-native English speakers.

Chapter Six: Findings, Recommendations and Conclusion

6.1. Introduction

The aim of this research was to identify the role of editors in ensuring that academic texts are accessible to academics who are not first language English speakers. This was done while exploring the linguistic gap within academic publishing and looking at how editors bridge this gap. The research also explored how editors navigate the South African socio-linguistic barriers within the context of professional editorial ethics.

This chapter provides an outline of the findings that are addressed in the analysis and discussion sections and makes recommendations for further research. Lastly are the researcher's concluding remarks of the study.

6.2. Findings

The findings of this research will be discussed using the objectives that were outlined in the first chapter. This has been done to determine whether the research objectives have been satisfied. The aim of this research was to identify the role of the academic editor and explore how editors navigate the socio-linguistic barriers that exist within the South African academic publishing context.

6.2.1. Linguistic gap in academic publishing

The first objective was 'To investigate the linguistic gap in academic publishing'. The literature that was consulted to build the literature review, along with the discussions with the participants, showed that there is definitely a gap that exists between the academic author and the reader. The cause of this gap, as discussed in chapter 5, was identified as being two-fold; the first cause being the miscommunication between first language and second language speakers of English. Academia is largely conducted in English; however, the literature has highlighted that a vast majority of the South African population often have very little interaction with English in their communities. These individuals are then thrust into the academic use of English, without much support and assistance. The second reason is the varying levels of education between the author and the reader. As has been illustrated in the research, the academic author is often writing to prove their academic prowess in their field. This results in authors using complex 'flowery language' (Demir, 2019) that makes the text difficult to understand.

6.2.2. The role of the editor as a bridge between the author and reader

The second objective was ‘To determine the role of the editor in bridging the linguistic gap’. The research has shown that the role of the editor is to ensure that the message communicated by the author is seamlessly received by the reader. The editor exists within a balance of ensuring that they meet the editing brief that has been specified by the publisher, making sure that the author is satisfied with the editorial and ensuring that the reader is able to interact with the text. Being an editor in academic publishing is an underappreciated job that requires them to navigate the tensions that exist within academia and academic publishing, such as the production costs and academic pressure to publish, while trying to make sure that they constantly think about the reader, so that the language used in the text is accessible to them. The editor’s role as the bridge between the academic author and reader, however, is limited. The editor can only do so much, the extent of the work that they do is guided by the publisher’s editing brief, the author’s cooperation, and their expectations of who the academic audience is. A common misconception about the role of editors is that they have unlimited power in the editorial process and are therefore solely responsible for ensuring that the language used in academic text is accessible. The academic author and reader are not passive members within the publishing cycle, and therefore also play a part, respectively, in ensuring that the language used is accessible and that they are familiar with the language of their discipline.

6.2.3. Factors that affect academic editing

The third objective of this research was ‘To explore factors that may influence the edit conducted on the text’. The main factors that have been identified as influencing the edit conducted on the text are as follows:

- Academic audience
- Academic publishing
- Production costs
- Editing standards

The discussions highlighted the importance of the academic audience, as there is an expectation that both editors and publishers have of what the academic audience should be able to understand, particularly regarding the jargon used in their discipline.

The second factor that influences the edit is the academic publishing environment. The academic publishing sector is an integral part of the higher education sector, and therefore has

to adhere to the regulations of academia, such as ensuring that they meet academic standards, the most notable being determining that works that are published are satisfactory to members of the academic community. Discussions on the academic community revealed that academic text only needs to be accessible to members of the academic community. Editors are then constrained by making sure that the text is accessible to the academic community, but they are not mandated to make the text accessible to people outside of it.

The third factor that influences the editorial process are the production costs. Editors have to ensure that they work within the cost constraints that they have been given by the publishers. The final factor is editing standards. Editors are given instructions by publishers, which is based on the direction they want the book to take, which goes back to the target audience.

6.3. Recommendations for further research

Further research for this subject area could include looking into language policies in South African universities. This would also assist in determining what measures universities should or do take in trying to minimise the linguistic gap.

In a related line of thinking, the adopted South African constitution of 1996 acknowledges the historical marginalisation of indigenous languages. It promotes and supports national languages by acknowledging 11 official languages and instructs the state to “take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages” (Republic of South Africa, 1996: 4). Future research could investigate the plausibility of multilingualism and translation in academic publishing.

It would be of interest to pick up where this research left off, by including academic authors and non-native English readers of different levels in the study. This would provide a holistic view on the question of language accessibility in academic publishing.

6.3.1. Recommendations to publishers and authors

The incorporation of publishers to share insights and not only editors, provided novel insights to reveal how publishers and editors to a certain extent share similar roles and should be equally sensitive of the context in which they are embedded. Based on these revelations this researcher would like to suggest the following recommendations for publishers and authors:

The findings of this research have illustrated that a lot of emphasis is placed on ensuring that the content that is produced is relevant to the level of study of the audience. The same care

needs to be dedicated to language; ensuring that the various multilingual backgrounds of the audience are considered when commissioning a manuscript. The author and the editor can work towards ensuring that the information in the text is presented in a way that makes it easier for their audience to understand, such as using headings, bullet points and shorter sentences to make the text more palatable. The use of appropriate images and graphs can make the text more interactive. Lastly, the kind of language and grammar used in the text could be made easier for the audience to understand.

There is a lot of education that is needed on plain language writing in academia, it would be beneficial for academic authors to equip themselves with understanding what it is and how it could benefit their writing. Having editors at the developmental stage would assist authors with plain language writing, as it would ensure that the kind of language used in the text is both appropriate to their discipline and accessible to non-native English speakers.

6.4. Conclusion

The aim of this research was to identify the role of editors in ensuring that academic texts are accessible to academics who are not first language English speakers. This was done by looking into the academic publishing environment and how academic editors consider linguistic diversity of South African academics. The research used the notion of the linguistic gap, which argued that there is a gap between academic authors and readers who are not first language English speakers, which is due to the authors inability to consider the needs of their audience, which results in language inaccessibility. Language accessibility in academic publishing is a multifaceted undertaking, especially when you take into consideration the constraints that exist in academic publishing. The issue of language accessibility creates the linguistic gap in which the editor occupies to facilitate communication between the author and the reader. This research has shown that editors do not have as much power as this research's assumptions may have suggested. It has been illustrated that there are various pressures that exist within academic publishing. The editor plays a bridging role, by making sure that the author's and the reader's needs align, and the message is delivered in a way that satisfies both their needs. However, editors also need to ensure that they adhere to the standards that exist within academic publishing. Editors play a purely supportive role to authors; their role is not to rewrite the work of the author. Therefore, editors are not solely responsible for ensuring that academic text is accessible, but rather it is a joint effort from both the author and editor. Academic authors bear some responsibility in considering the linguistic needs of their audience.

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Appendix 1: Turnitin Report

Tabata_Research_report.docx			
ORIGINALITY REPORT			
3%	2%	1%	1%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS
PRIMARY SOURCES			
1	Dodds, Francis. "Understanding end-users in academic book publishing", Learned Publishing, 2015. Publication	<1 %	
2	Submitted to University of the Western Cape Student Paper	<1 %	
3	de Meillon, Zanne. "Environmentally Sustainable Pre-Consumer Textile Waste Approaches in South African Fashion Industry", University of Johannesburg (South Africa), 2021 Publication	<1 %	
4	www.tandfonline.com Internet Source	<1 %	
5	researchspace.ukzn.ac.za Internet Source	<1 %	
6	usir.salford.ac.uk Internet Source	<1 %	
7	mafiadoc.com Internet Source	<1 %	

Appendix 2: Consent Form

Consent to participate in research

Research title: Language accessibility in academic publishing: The role of the editor in bridging the linguistic gap

I [] agree to voluntary participate in the research. I am aware that even though I have signed the consent form, I am able to withdraw my participation at any time or refuse to answer at any time.

I have read the participant information sheet, and have had any questions explained to my full understanding. I have had the purpose of the research explained to me, and I understand that my participation will involve a discussion on the role of the editor in bridging the linguistic gap.

I am aware that all identifying makers of myself and the company I represent will be made anonymous in the reporting of the results.

I consent to an audio recording that will be kept in a password controlled device, along with all data I have provided. All information I have presented will be accessed by the researcher and supervisors only.

I am aware that I will not be compensated for my participation in any form.

I am aware that I can contact the researcher and supervisors for further information and clarification.

Signature of participant _____ Date _____

Signature of researcher _____ Date _____

Phindile Tabata

Student number: 2163181

Mobile: 0611219898

Email: 2163181@students.wits.ac.za

Supervisors' details:

Name: Colleen Dawson & Lorraine Nyamapfene

Contact Number: 011 717 4140

Email: Colleen.Dawson@wits.ac.za & lorraine.nyamapfene@wits.ac.za

Appendix 3: Participant information sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Dear Ma'am/Sir

My name is Phindile Tabata. I am currently enrolled for a Masters degree in Publishing Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am inviting you to participate in my research that is titled 'Language accessibility in academic publishing: The role of the editor in bridging the linguistic gap'.

I am conducting a research that hopes to investigate the role of the editor in making academic text accessible to readers who are not first language English speakers. Many South Africans do not speak English as a first language, which creates structural barriers in their engagement with academic literature. This research argues that there is a linguistic gap that exists within academic publishing because academic writers do not consider the needs and varying backgrounds of student readers who are not first language English speakers. Therefore, it becomes the duty of the editor to ensure that academic literature is accessible to these students.

I would like to request your participation in an interview to gain your perspective as an editor/publisher in the academic sector. The interview will take approximately an hour and will consist of open ended questions. I will send a set of questions for you to look at before we have an online interview. The interview will be held on MS Teams and will be recorded. All information gathered will be kept confidential, and in the final presentation of the data, your details along with any company mentioned shall be kept anonymous, with all identifying markers removed. The information shared with me will be held securely and treated with due respect and privacy.

If you feel uncomfortable with the questions at any point, you are welcome to decline to respond with no penalties if you choose to withdraw from the study. If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research, feel free to contact me on the details listed below.

A copy of the completed research could be made available to you should you wish.

Thank you for your participation.

Warmest regards

Phindile Tabata

Student number: 2163181

Mobile: 0611219898

Email: 2163181@students.wits.ac.za

Supervisors' details:

Name: Colleen Dawson & Lorraine Nyamapfene

Contact Number: 011 717 4140

Email: Colleen.Dawson@wits.ac.za & lorrainenyamapfene@gmail.com

Appendix 4: Questions to editors

Questions to editors

1. How would you describe the role of the editor?
2. What editing standards, if any, do you use when editing text?
 - 2.1. Do you think having a South African editing standard would help any more or less?
3. What is the editor's aim when approaching editing?
4. What is your understanding of language accessibility?
5. What do you understand by the phrase linguistic gap?
 - 5.1. Do you think it is something that exists?
6. To what extent is the author responsible for ensuring that their work is accessible?
 - 6.1. To what extent do you think editors are responsible for ensuring language accessibility?
7. How do you conceptualize the target audience when editing?
 - 7.1. How is the editor a bridge between the writer and the reader?
 - 7.2. Does the editor consider readers who are not first language English speakers?
8. What is the significance of your role in the production/editorial process?
9. What is the difference between your role and that of a peer reviewer?
10. What is your understanding of plain language editing?
 - 10.1. When is it or is not implemented? Why?
 - 10.2. Do you think the use of plain language in academic text would make the language more accessible?

Appendix 5: Questions to publishers

Questions to publishers

1. What is your understanding of language accessibility?
2. What do you understand by the phrase linguistic gap?
 - 2.1. Do you think it is something that exists?
3. What do you understand to be the role of the editor?
 - 3.1. How do you differentiate the role of the editor and that of a peer reviewer?
4. What are your expectations from editors?
5. To what extent is the author responsible for ensuring that their work is accessible?
 - 5.1. To what extent do you think editors are responsible for ensuring language accessibility?
6. Do you think publisher's expectation from academic authors is in any way to blame for language inaccessibility?
7. How does the production cost impact the work done by the editor?
8. During the commissioning process, do publishers consider the needs of readers, who are not first language English speakers?

Appendix 6: Ethics clearance



SCHOOL OF Literature, Language and Media ETHICS COMMITTEE **CONSTITUTED UNDER THE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)**

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

PROTOCOL NUMBER: SLLM-M21-06

PROJECT TITLE Language accessibility in
academic publishing: The role of the editor in bridging
the linguistic gap

INVESTIGATOR

Phindile Tabata

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT

SLLM/Publishing Studies

DATE CONSIDERED

Aug 2021

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

Approved

RISK LEVEL

Minimal risk

EXPIRY DATE

Date of submission of the project report

ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE

Oct 2021

CHAIRPERSON

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Colleen Dawson".

cc: Supervisor : Lorraine Nyamapfene

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Chairperson of the School/Department ethics committee.

I fully understand the conditions under which I am are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. J. J. J.', written over a horizontal line.

Signature

Date 06/01/2022