THE EFFECT OF A SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS-BASED SELF-INTERVENTION PROGRAMME ON THE ESL GRAMMAR PROFICIENCY OF GRADE 8 LEARNERS

by

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

English proficiency is regarded important for economic empowerment in South Africa, since English is the official business language of the country. South Africa is, however, a multilingual country, with 11 official languages. The majority of South African learners do not speak English as first language, but study English as an additional language in school. This leads to English Second Language (ESL) classroom complexities such as multilingualism, negative attitudes to ESL, and various levels of linguistic proficiency, which affect the teaching of the prescribed curriculum. Many learners arrive in secondary school (Grade 8) with underdeveloped English proficiency, which means that a lot of time in ESL classrooms is spent on re-teaching English language concepts, especially grammar concepts. This causes stress for both ESL teachers and learners. This study tested the effectiveness of a self-help ESL grammar intervention programme in order to establish whether existing gaps in grammar knowledge could be closed via self-study outside of the classroom. More specifically, the study asked the question whether learners' knowledge of Parts of Speech could be enhanced via a self-help intervention programme, which was based on the principles of Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG). SFG is not traditionally used as an instructional framework in ESL classrooms in the South African context. The rationale for assessing the efficiency of an SFG self-help intervention programme was that there is currently a dire need for alternative approaches to teaching ESL grammar, which would assist struggling learners to raise their proficiency levels quickly, and which would allow teachers to continue with the prescribed curriculum. The intervention programme was tested in a controlled quasi-experimental study, which included an experimental group and a control group, and which compared performance in the mid-year examination and year-end examination to performance in a baseline assessment. The results of the study showed that the self-intervention programme was effective in enhancing ESL learners' knowledge of Parts of Speech, and also had a positive effect on other aspects of grammar knowledge and on writing. Based on these findings, it is recommended that self-regulation and self-instruction be considered for inclusion in ESL syllabi in the South African context, as it can play a positive role in enhancing ESL learners' linguistic proficiency.

Key words: Parts of Speech (POS); Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL); Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG); Complexity Theory (CT); Dynamic Assessment (DA); Self-Regulated Learning (SRL); Traditional Grammar; Self-help Intervention

OPSOMMING IN AFRIKAANS

Engelse taalvaardigheid word as belangrik beskou vir ekonomiese bemagtiging in Suid–Afrika, aangesien Engels die offisiële besigheidstaal van die land is. Suid-Afrika het egter elf erkende offisiële landstale en is dus 'n meertalige land. Die oorgrote meerderheid Suid-Afrikaanse leerders se eerste taal is nie Engels nie, en hierdie leerders neem Engels as tweede taal (ook genoem eerste addisionnele taal) in 'n formele omgewing op skool. Dit veroorsaak verskeie uitdagings in Engelse tweedetaalklasse, onder andere meertalige leerders, 'n negatiewe houding teenoor Engels, en oneweredige ontwikkelingsvlakke in Engels. 'n Groot aantal leerders begin hul sekondêre skoolloopbaan met onderontwikkelde vaardighede in Engels, met name in grammatika. Dit beïnvloed die onderrig van die voorgeskrewe Engelse tweedetaal kurrikulum, veral in Graad 8. Onderwysers is dikwels genoodsaak om baie tyd aan die heronderrig van grammatikale konsepte te spandeer, alvorens die voorgeskrewe Graad 8 kurrikulum hervat kan word. Dit plaas spanning op sowel onderwysers as leerders. Die doel van hierdie studie was om die effektiwiteit van 'n self-onderrig intervensieprogram te toets – meer spesifiek om te toets of kennisgapings in "Parts of Speech (POS)" oorbrug kan word met 'n self-onderrig program wat gebaseer is op Sistemiese Funksionele Linguistiek (SFL). SFL word nie tradisioneel in die Suid-Afrikaanse leerprogram gebruik nie, en die rasionaal vir die toetsing van 'n SFL program was dat daar tans 'n geweldige vraag is na alternatiewe benaderings tot die onderrig van Engels, wat leerders sal ondersteun om hulle vaardigheidsvlakke snel te verbeter, sodat onderwysers kan voorgaan met die voorgeskrewe kurrikulum. Die SFL intervensieprogram in hierdie studie is deur middel van 'n gekontroleerde kwasi-eksperimentele metode getoets, wat 'n eksperimentele groep en 'n kontrolegroep ingesluit het. Die twee groepe se kennis van woordsoorte is in die middeljaar, asook die eindjaareksamen gemeet, en vergelyk met die resultate van 'n basislyntoets wat aan die begin van die jaar afgeneem is. Die resultate het bevestig dat die SFL intervensieprogram 'n positiewe effek gehad het op kennis van woordsoorte. Verdere positiewe effekte was merkbaar in ander aspekte van Engelse grammatika en in skryfvaardigheid. Na aanleiding van hierdie bevindinge is die aanbeveling van hierdie studie dat selfonderrig and self-regulasie oorweeg moet word as belangrike komponente van die Engels tweedetaal sillabus in die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks, aangesien dit 'n positiewe rol kan speel in die verbetering van Engels tweedetaal leerders se taalvaardigheid.

Sleutelwoorde: Woordsoorte; Sistemiese Funksionele Linguistiek; Kompleksiteitsteorie; Dinamiese Assesering; Self-regulasie; Tradisionele Taalkunde; Self-help Intervensie

AMAGQABANTSHINTSHI ISIXHOSA

Ubugcisa kulwimi lwesiNgesi bubaluleke kakhulu ekuxhobiseni ezoqoqosho eMzantsi Afrika kuba silulwimi lwezoshishino olusemthethweni kweli lizwe. Naxa kunjalo uMzantsi Afrika lilizwe elineelwimi ezininzi, apho ezili-11 zamiliselwa njengeelwimi ezisemthethweni. Uninzi lwabafundi baseMzantsi Afrika alusithethi njengolwimi lokuqala isiNgesi, koko lusifunda njengolwimi olongeziweyo esikolweni. Oku kukhokelela kwiingxaki ezininzi kwiklasi efundisa isiNgesi njengoLwimi lwesiBini, ezifana nokusetyenziswa kweelwimi ezininzi kwakunye namanqanaba awohlukileyo olwazi nobugcisa bokusebenzisa ulwimi, nto ezo zichaphazela ukufundiswa kwekharityhulam esekiweyo. Abafundi abaninzi bafika kwisikolo sasesekondari (iBanga lesi-8) bengenalwazi nabugcisa baneleyo besiNgesi, ngenxa yoko, kwiklasi yesiNgesi uLwimi lwesiBini kuchithwa ixesha elininzi kuphindaphindwa ukufundiswa kwesigama sesiNgesi, ngakumbi isigama segrama. Esi sifundo sophando siye sahlola ukusebenza kwenkqubo yongenelelo kufundiso lwegrama yesiNgesi uLwimi lwesiBini apho umfundi azinceda ngokwakhe, ukuze kufunyaniswe ukuba zingavaleka na ezi zikhewu zikhoyo zokuswela ulwazi lwegrama ngokuzifundela ngaphandle kweklasi. Olu phando lujolise ngakumbi kumbuzo wokuba, ingaba ulwazi lwabafundi ngeziGaba zeNtetho lungaphuculwa na ngokusebenzisa le nkqubo yongenelelo yokuzinceda esekelwe kwimithetho-siseko yeSystemic Functional Grammar (iSFG). ISFG ayisetyenziswa ngokwesithethe njengesakhelo sokufundisa kwiklasi yesiNgesi uLwimi lwesiBini eMzantsi Afrika. Esona sizathu sokuvavanya ukusebenza kwale nkqubo yongenelelo yokuzinceda yeSFG, kukuba kukho intswelo enkulu yeendlela ezizezinye zokufundisa igrama yesiNgesi uLwimi lwesiBini, nto leyo inokunceda abafundi abatsala nzima baphucule amaqondo abo obugcisa, kananjalo incede ootitshala bakwazi ukuqhubela phambili nekharityhulam emiselweyo. Le nkqubo yongenelelo yavavanywa kuphando oluphantsi kolawulo olwaziwa ngokuba sisifundo sophando olungagqibelelanga (quasi experimental study), olwaquka iqela lolingelo kunye neqela elisetyenziswa njengomgangatho wentelekiso (control group). Olu phando lwathelekisa indlela abaqhuba ngayo abafundi kwiimviwo zombindi wonyaka nezokuphela konyaka, ithelekiswa kunye nenkqubo yabafundi kuvavanyo olusisiseko. Iziphumo zophando zabonisa ukuba inkqubo yongenelelo yokuzinceda ibe nempumelelo ekuphuliseni ulwazi lwabafundi lweziGaba zeNtetho kwaye ibe nefuthe elakhayo nakweminye imiba yolwazi lwegrama nesakhono sokubhala. Ngokwezi ziphumo kucetyiswa ukuba kuqwalaselwe ukuzilawula nokuzifundisa kwabafundi njengenxalenye yesilabhasi yesiNgesi uLwimi lwesiBini ngokwemeko yaseMzantsi Afrika njengoko oku kuya kuba nefuthe elakhayo ekuphuhliseni ubugcisa babafundi bolwimi lwesiNgesi uLwimi lwesiBini.

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The greatest oak

was once a little nut who

held its ground.

- Author unknown -

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. General background to the study

In South Africa today, problems with the attainment of adequate language and literacy skills are central issues in the educational domain (Department of Basic Education, 2014; Mullis, Martin, Foy & Drucker, 2012; Mullis, Martin, Foy & Hooper, 2017). Apart from the complexity of the country's language policy, which accommodates eleven official languages, the problem exists that the African languages, despite being official languages, are not fully developed or recognised as academic languages. English is the official language of higher education and business in South Africa, which means that, in reality, all South African learners need to acquire a proper command of English as a Second language (ESL) in order to work in a professional environment.

The South African basic and secondary education system is inclusive and accommodates all races and nationalities. In theory, parents can place their children in schools according to personal preference (CAPS 2011). In reality however, given the lack of mother tongue education for African learners after the foundation phase (Grade 1-3) these learners have to complete their schooling in either English or Afrikaans. For most African learners, the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) typically becomes English from Grade 4 onwards, but in some cases, African learners opt to attend schools where the LOLT is Afrikaans. This means that most classes in schools, particularly at secondary level, consist of a combination of any of the eleven languages spoken by learners, for example, English and/or Afrikaans, and any combination of African languages. Teachers are thus faced with multilingual classes. Although economic empowerment and survival depends on proficiency in English, many learners enter secondary school without the required levels of English proficiency. Unfavourable socio-economic and complex sociolinguistic factors contribute to learners' poor English linguistic skills. Most South African children grow up in high-poverty, print-scarce environments, and attend overcrowded schools that are poorly resourced, and where teachers are not necessarily equipped to teach ESL, and/or where learners are not supported and motivated to learn English (Moodley, Kritzinger & Vinck 2016). This situation results in ill-prepared learners, which cause a stressful teaching and learning environment for ESL teachers and learners in the first year of secondary school. Ultimately, the preparation of learners for tertiary education or the working environment is also affected negatively.

ESL teachers in South Africa are under pressure to find alternative means of teaching and assessment and are forced to implement various interventions to assist learners in their struggle to become proficient in English. Learners typically experience problems with different aspects of English (e.g. grammar or vocabulary) at different stages of acquisition, and teachers have to deal with this problem despite large groups of learners (Pawlak 2012). It is therefore important to know how to teach particular aspects of ESL (e.g. grammar) so that it becomes permanent intake[1]. One way of addressing the problem is through focused intervention: a deliberate action taken on behalf of the teacher to focus on, for instance, difficult grammatical items in order to assist learners with intake. However, in-class intervention results in loss of teaching time, since teachers need to address gaps in proficiency before being able to commence with more advanced aspects of the curriculum. Learners' different levels of linguistic competence also make in-class intervention tricky.

Given the need in the South African context for effective ESL intervention programmes that could be combined with the prescribed syllables, the aim of this study is to assess the efficiency of an alternative type of intervention, namely a self-help intervention programme for secondary school ESL learners. The rationale for the current investigation is that if self-help intervention programmes are effective, ESL teachers could potentially spend less time on remediation in-class, which will enable them to continue with the intended curriculum. The premise of this study is further based on the notion that grammatical competence is vital for effective ESL learning and that grammar teaching, in particular, plays an important role in developing ESL learners' language skills. Of further importance, especially at secondary school level, is that ESL learners should not only able to recognise grammatical items, but that they should also be able to apply them in various contexts (Ellis 2006; Pawlak 2012). In particular, learners need to develop knowledge of the different Parts of Speech (POS) in English, as this forms the basis for producing grammatical sentences, especially in writing (Ellis 2006; Pawlak 2012). However, in the researcher's experience, this knowledge is not developed adequately in ESL learners. The current study will therefore focus on reinforcing intake of the POS (such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, determiners, prepositions, conjunctions and interjections) in English through a self-help intervention programme. The intervention programme will be based on the principles of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) – the underlying idea being that if ESL learners are sensitised to the fact that each part of a sentence *has a specific function*, their understanding of how to use the POS will improve. SFL and Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG – a sub-component of SFL) will be introduced briefly in section 1.6 in this chapter, and will be dealt with in detail in Chapter 3.

Not being proficient in English in the South African vocational and professional environment is a disadvantage (CAPS 2011). It is generally accepted that the official business language in South Africa is English, which means that interviews and work-related tasks need be conducted in English. Underperforming ESL users may find it difficult to cope with the

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[1] Corder (1967) made a distinction between 'input' and 'intake' in second language learning. Input is all the information available to the learner, while intake refers to the information that is actually internalised (acquired) by the learner and that becomes part of a learner's interlanguage system.

demands of the working environment, where problem-solving typically has to happen in English.

In the experience of the researcher, it seems to be the general perception that Afrikaans-speaking learners, as a group, perform better in ESL than learners who speak one of the other official African languages as home language. However, increasingly, learners from Afrikaans primary schools also fail ESL in the first year of secondary school. The required pass rate for ESL in Grade 8 is currently 40%. Approximately 50% of Afrikaans Grade 8 ESL learners fail the mid-year examinations, as reported by three schools in the immediate research area of this study (personal communication and informal school statistics 2012 – 2014).

In 2014, the South African DoE adapted the passing rate for English FAL from 30% to 40% for Grades 7-9. This adds additional pressure on learners and teachers to perform. The emphasis on intervention has been increased substantially and explanations are demanded constantly from the DoE as to how learners are being assisted and supported to overcome poor academic performance. The emphasis is not just on languages but includes all subject areas of learners. It is however, within the domain of language instruction that the problem is more serious because of the increased passing requirements and the growing number of learners who fail their language courses.

1.2 The research problem

The research problem of this study is the poor levels of proficiency achieved by Grade 8 ESL learners who use Afrikaans as LOLT. Unprepared learners create problems for ESL teachers in secondary schools, in terms of the delivery of the syllabus and achieving good ESL results. The school records where the research problem was identified indicated that an average of 62, 3% of the Grade 8 learners failed ESL in the mid-year examination over a period of six years (researcher's own records). Three secondary schools in the immediate area of the identified school confirmed that they experience similar results (researcher's personal communication). On average, these schools reported that at least 50% of Grade 8 ESL learners fail the mid-year examination every year and that ESL teachers felt frustrated and unsupported by the South African Department of Education (DoE) to deal with the low pass-rate.

The research problem was investigated in one particular secondary school in Gauteng (one of South Africa's nine provinces) where learners whose LOLT is Afrikaans are taught English as First Additional Language (FAL) – FAL is similar to second language (L2) in other parts of the world. The school offers parallel medium education, which means that approximately 50% of the learners use English as LOLT, with Afrikaans being instructed as FAL, while the other 50% of learners use Afrikaans as LOLT, and study English as FAL. English as FAL is comparable to ESL in other parts of the world, and thus the abbreviation ESL will be used throughout this thesis, as it is more widely known in the field of Applied Linguistics. At the time of this study, the researcher taught English as home language (comparable to L1 in other parts of the world) and as ESL at the school where the research was conducted. The researcher noticed, over the years, that the majority of ESL learners were not proficient in English grammar when they entered secondary school. The study therefore

focused specifically on Grade 8 ESL learners, who seemed to be less and less proficient in English each year. As mentioned before, this meant that teachers have to reteach grammatical concepts that learners were expected to have acquired in primary school before commencing with the actual Grade 8 syllabus. The re-teaching of grammatical concepts inevitably tended to extend to the grades following Grade 8, since the problem often could be remedied completely in one year. Teachers often spent so much time addressing gaps in ESL proficiency that the actual grade curriculum got compromised.

1.2.1 Contextualising the research problem

As mentioned previously, the South African Language Policy recognises 11 official languages. This creates multiracial, multicultural and inevitably, multilingual learning environments, which bring about unique challenges. Teachers have to cope with learners from different cultural, linguistic and racial backgrounds in the (limited) time available at school. Classes in the school where this study was conducted average between 30-43 learners and teaching time per period is 49 minutes. Time is of the essence but often has to be spent on sorting out homework, on disciplining learners and on attending to learners who were absent, all of which could add to the problem of poor academic performance, and in this case, poor ESL proficiency.

An important consideration in contextualising the research problem is the ESL teaching approach in South African schools. Following the first democratic South African election, educational reform was seen as a priority, and initially Outcomes Based Education was used as basis for the new Curriculum. With the introduction of Curriculum 2005 (DoE 2003), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was underlined as the recommended approach to teach ESL. The aim of CLT is to get learners to speak to each other, and to express their views (preferably based on their own experiences) in a coherent manner. Theoretically, CLT provides learners with opportunities to interact in groups, and to learn from each other. Furthermore, CLT creates opportunities for learners to use the L2 in informal classroom activities, and it provides teachers with opportunities to link classroom learning with learners' own experiences and prior knowledge (Marshall 2014). However, a potential problem with CLT in the South African context is that an overemphasis on 'conversational' language creates L2 learning contexts where learners only develop Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS), and fail to develop Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) skills. BICS are used in social situations, i.e. on a day-to-day basis, in conversations where we have to interact with others, and where there is contextual support for language delivery (Baker 2006). BICS is essential for learners to interact with peers and teachers, but is not profoundly cognitively demanding, and can develop within six months of being introduced to a L2. CALP, on the other hand, refers to higher-order skills that are essential for academic success, specifically reading and writing. Where higher order thinking skills (e.g. analysis, synthesis and evaluation) are required in the curriculum, language is often disembedded from a meaningful, supportive context – this situation is also referred to as "context reduced" (Baker 2006, 174). CALP is crucial for a learner's academic success, and takes time to develop (it can take between five and seven years for a learner to acquire appropriate language skills to use in an academic context).

The researcher in this study indeed experienced that ESL learners struggle to master CALP skills in a communicative language teaching approach. The acquisition of grammar skills, which learners need to produce cohesive and coherent texts, is (in practice) often underemphasised in CLT, even though it is theoretically understood to be an important component of communicative competence. In line with the current researcher's observations, several South African scholars have recently suggested that there is a need to focus more explicitly on grammar instruction in the South African context (Ayliff 2006; Ayliff 2010; Ollerhead & Oosthuizen 2006). In reaction to poor learner performance in ESL in annual national assessments conducted by the DoE, the most recent CAPS curriculum, (introduced in 2009), does highlight the role of explicit grammar teaching more prominently. However, CLT is still advocated (Ayliff 2012). In the current study, the role of explicit ESL grammar instruction will be an important factor, as the self-intervention programme will essentially be using an explicit instructional approach to teaching grammar concepts.

Another possible cause for poor ESL performance in the research setting could be socio-cultural factors such as negativity towards English, a lack of a learning culture among learners and low levels of parental motivation and involvement. The educational levels of parents and socio-economic status (SES) of learners also influence academic outcomes. SES refers to the social ranking of a person based on economic status, level of education, material possessions and power (Oakes 2017). SES is relevant, since it directly influences a person's position in the social hierarchy (Block 2012; Oakes 2017; Sapolsky 2005; Smith, Mulder, Bowles & Hilll. 2011; Van Leeuwen & Maas 2010). Society is prone to judge its members on their ability to have access to a prestigious education, which is seen as a means to increase SES (Oakes 2017). Ideally, learners' SES should not influence language learning (Yang Hansen, Rosen & Gustafsson 2011) and it would seem that the general lack of research on the effect of SES on ESL learning has created an impression that it does not play a significant role in ESL proficiency (Hofmann von Baltenau 2016). However, studies have indicated that learners' perception of English as a subject 'only for the elite' discourage them from performing well in ESL learning (Block 2012; 2013). Other factors associated with SES that influence ESL learners negatively are a lack of parental guidance and involvement in ESL learning (often due to language barriers or parents' inability to make time due to their occupations) and poverty (Hofman von Baltenau 2016). Hofman von Baltenau (2016) argues that teachers are at times to blame for negative effects of SES, because they practice 'colour-blindness', which means they do not acknowledge the needs of learners from diverse backgrounds. Learners who are at risk of being influenced by SES status should be monitored carefully; this entails that there should be a focus on contextualised learning, authentic literature, scaffolded learning, interactional sharing of ideas among learners and that learners should be encouraged to take responsibility for their own progress (Hofmann von Baltnau 2016). In short then, SES is viewed as important for education, since it is assumed the higher a person is on the SES hierarchy, the better the chances of succeeding academically (Oakes 2017; Sapolsky 2005; Smith *et al.* 2011). In the current study, given the researcher's experiences of dealing with parents in the particular research setting, SES will be considered as a potential factor that could affect the ESL intervention.

One of the biggest problems that teachers face in ESL classes is large variations in levels of learner proficiency. Possible reasons for this phenomenon might be poor primary school instruction and the progression of learners to secondary school even though they have not achieved the required levels of proficiency in Grade 7. Such learners seem to underperform in their L1 and L2 upon entering secondary school, meaning that they can often hardly put coherent sentences together in baseline assessments. Learners are subject to the same passing requirements in Grade 7 than in Grades 8-9. Despite this, Grade 8 performance in ESL and home languages (English and Afrikaans in this particular setting) drop significantly from primary school to secondary school. Such discrepancies are not dealt with by the DoE and secondary school teachers are left to deal with this complex problem, while attempting to prepare learners for the Further Education and Training (FET) phase (Grades 10-12). One particular issue that relates to poor ESL proficiency is assessment. Nazari (2012) posits that assessment has become a huge challenge for educationalists. This means that the typical summative assessment (end of course assessment) may attempt to summarise a learner's learning at a given point in time, but fails to provide the necessary and contextualised feedback of the learner's learning process before testing (Nazari 2012). In the present study, variation in learners' ESL proficiency will be considered as an important factor, as the goal is to design an intervention programme that would deal with varying levels of proficiency.

There are most certainly other factors that contribute to poor ESL proficiency levels in South African learners, including external factors such as unqualified ESL teachers, unavailability of sufficient culturally-appropriate teaching materials, loss of teaching time due to absenteeism or teacher union strikes, overcrowded classrooms; and internal factors, including the influence of learners' L1 and affective factors such as motivation and autonomy (see Lessing & Mahabeer 2006 and Moodley et al. 2016 for an overview). However, this study will not focus on these external and internal factors, the reason being that the main focus here is to test the suitability of a remedial intervention that would assist ESL learners in the contexts sketched above, rather than assessing all the factors that could negatively impact an intervention.

1.3   Aims and objectives of the research study

The aims and objectives of this study were:

     i)   to test whether gaps in ESL grammar proficiency in Grade 8 learners in South Africa could be closed by involving learners in their own rehabilitation through an SFL-based self-intervention programme that focuses on grammatical forms.

     ii)   to determine whether pro-active intervention might assist teachers and learners in the process of adapting to increased passing requirements for languages, as set by the DoE.

     iii)   to evaluate whether self-intervention has the potential to eliminate interruptions of the normal syllabus.

     iv)   to develop an SFL-based intervention programme that are slightly below the grade requirements for Grade 8, and that follows a step-by-step approach – the

objective being that learners should be able to follow instructions and complete easy and focused grammar activities on their own. The reason for this objective is that most learners (in the researcher's experience) are unable to follow the normal prescribed textbook-style explanation used for grade-appropriate instruction, and it would thus not serve any purpose to rely on formal textbooks for intervention.

v)   to ascertain whether learners can measure their own progress via a process of Dynamic Assessment.

vi)   to ascertain whether an alternative approach to SLA, such as Complexity Theory, provides a useful theoretical framework for conceptualising ESL intervention programmes.

vii)   to understand the role of socio-economic factors in ESL learning in this context, and to involve learners' parents in the programme. This was important since there was no time in class for in-depth group interventions. Learners thus had to complete the self-intervention programme at home. Parental support was regarded as vital to the success of the intervention programme.

The research questions following on these aims and objectives are presented in the section below.

1.4   The research questions

The main research question for this study is:

Does the ESL grammar proficiency, specifically knowledge of POS, of Grade 8 learners improve as a result of a self-instructing grammar intervention programme based on SFG?

Several sub-questions related to the main research question were also posed:

i.   *Will some aspects of ESL (specifically POS), be more affected by the intervention programme than others (including Tense, Active and Passive voice, reading comprehension and writing)?*

ii.   *Does competence in terms of POS influence other aspects of ESL proficiency (including Tense, Active and Passive voice, comprehension and writing)?*

iii.   *Are grammar skills such as POS, Tense and Active and Passive voice inter-correlated, and are these grammar skills associated with reading comprehension and writing?*

iv.   *Do socio-economic factors play a role in the ESL proficiency of the respondents?*

v.   *Can Dynamic Assessment be incorporated successfully in a self-help intervention programme at Grade 8 level?*

vi.   *Do alternative approaches to SLA, such as Complexity Theory, provide a useful framework for the design of ESL grammar interventions?*

Section 1.5 follows where a definition of Intervention is provided in order to seek whether intervention could be a possible solution to enhance ESL proficiency.

1.5   Intervention: A possible solution to enhance ESL proficiency

1.5.1   Definition of intervention

Although there are numerous definitions of academic intervention, Lee (2015) provides a suitable definition of intervention for the current study. According to Lee (2015), an educational intervention is a specific programme or steps to help an individual improve in areas of need, which should be designed to track progress of learners, either by parents and/or by the school. Such interventions comprise three key elements:

i)   They are intentional and aimed at a particular weakness, for example, knowledge of grammar.

ii)   Interventions are specific and formal, i.e. it lasts a certain number of weeks or months and is reviewed at set intervals, for example, via tests or formal examinations.

iii)   Interventions are flexible and can be adapted to learner specific needs, since different learners need different interventions (for example, in grammar, some learners may struggle with 'tense' while others struggle with 'passive voice').

Lee (2015) further holds that an intervention is more than a strategy. Strategies comprise methods/activities to teach learners something, but not all strategies are interventions. Interventions may however include certain strategies. Strategies are not always formal and monitored, as opposed to interventions which are always focused and monitored for progress. Lee states that 'accommodations' should not be confused with intervention. Accommodations may, for example, involve scribes and/or readers for children with reading and writing problems, but is not specifically aimed at improving a learner's problem. In the case of this study, the main objective of implementing the intervention was to improve learners' grammar proficiency.

Interventions are further conceptualised as either 'instructional intervention' or 'intensive intervention' (CAPELL 2012). Instructional intervention is the clear, deliberate and carefully planned instruction provided by trained teachers to meet identified needs of learners, while intensive intervention is the explicit and systematic instruction delivered by highly skilled teacher specialists (interventionists) that provide learners with increased opportunities for guided practice and teacher feedback (CAPELL 2012). Intensive intervention is targeted and tailored to meet the needs of struggling learners and is done in small groups. Intensive ESL intervention is typically regarded as a specialist project that does not fall within the language teacher's normal responsibilities.

The difference between the intervention programme in this study and ordinary classroom-based intervention is that the intervention is in the form of a self-help programme and guide. Learners will complete the specially designed grammar programme at their own pace over a period of five months. The next section discusses the concept 'self-intervention' in ESL.

1.5.2   Self- intervention in ESL

1.5.2.1 Defining self-intervention in ESL

Self-intervention/self-regulated learning is defined as the active and constructive process whereby learners set goals for learning and then attempt to monitor, regulate and control their cognition, motivation and behaviour within an educational context (Berger, Kofman, Liveh & Henik 2007; Butler 2002; El-Henawy, Dadour, Salem & El-Bassuony 2010; Nückles, Hübner & Renkl 2009; Wolters, Pintrich & Karabenick 2003). This definition also pertains to ESL learning (El-Henawy *et al.* 2010; Ruan 2005).

Self-regulation relates to students who are described as 'self-starters', who have strong self-esteems and engage in self-criticism (Harris, Santangelo & Graham 2008), meaning that they realise a problem and are intrinsically motivated to increase performance outcomes. In the case of the current study and intervention, the learners are not necessarily self-motivated and very often do not realise their existing problem with ESL. For this reason, the self-intervention programme will be regulated, to some extent, by the researcher (in this case also the teacher), and learners will initially be motivated externally to follow the intervention programme in their own time. However, the aim here is to also identify ways to improve self-regulated learning in ESL learners, and thus the researcher will scaffold the tasks (in the intervention programme) in a manner that promotes self-regulated learning. The expectation is that, even though the participants in this study will not have been instructed to self-regulate their ESL learning (which is prerequisite for self-regulated learning), the specific nature of the intervention programme will develop learners' self-regulating skills.

Hardly any research has been done in the field of ESL self-help intervention programmes. Some scholars, such as Wylie, Koedinger and Mitamura (2009) and VanBriesen (2015) have called for more research in this area. Several other terms, such as 'self-explanation' and 'self-regulated learning' are used in the literature, which seemingly refer more or less to the same concept. Such interventions mostly refer to the idea of studying English from a textbook or course guided for own enhancement. Self-directed/regulated learning is described by VanBriesen (2015) as the process of taking initiative and responsibility for learning, whereby learners select, manage and assess their own learning activities. Learners define what is worthwhile to learn, while teachers provide scaffolding, mentoring and advice. Roy and Chi (2005) describe self-explanation as a domain-general constructive activity that engages learners in active learning, which ensures that learners pay meaningful attention to the learning material, while effectively monitoring their own developing understanding of the material. Various cognitive mechanisms are involved in this process – learners generate inferences to fill in missing information, they integrate information within the study units, they integrate new knowledge with existing knowledge and they monitor and remedy faulty/incorrect knowledge.

Since there is no other reasonable definition available for self-help intervention (in the field of ESL) it seems as though the above general definitions of self-regulated learning and self-explanation suffice to define the process of self-help intervention as intended in this study. As such, the above description will be used as point of departure in describing and explaining

the process that will be conducted in this study. The main focus of the intervention programme will be improving learners' ESL grammar knowledge, using a process that would not only eliminate information gaps in aspects of ESL grammar (such as POS), but that would also teach learners to take command of their own learning process, and to monitor their own progress through the provided activities.

Given the scarcity of research on the impact of self-intervention in ESL learning, it is difficult to determine up-front whether a self-help intervention programme will be beneficial to ESL learning, which stresses the need for the current study. One study that did consider self-intervention in ESL, was conducted by Wylie, Koedinger and Mitamura (2009). Wylie et al. (2009) indicated that within the domain of ESL learning, there was no significant evidence that self-explanation was successful or that the learners in self-explanation groups performed any better than those in teacher-instructed groups. This was different from various studies that have demonstrated the benefits of self-intervention/explanation on well-defined subjects such as math, life-sciences and physics. Their study suggested that there are limitations to the benefits of self-explanation in the field of ESL, possibly because it is very challenging to explain why a certain answer was chosen by a student based on his/her existing knowledge of English grammar. Wylie et al. (2009) concluded that it would perhaps more beneficial to provide many practice opportunities with less reflectional opportunities, rather than the other way around. In other words, ESL learners could benefit more from practicing the aspects in question, rather than to explain exactly why they appear in English sentences the way they do. Wylie et al. (2009) posit that it may be due to the abstract nature of grammatical categories, such as 'articles' in English, that ESL learners struggle (especially if the category is absent in their L1). In other words, in subjects such as math and physics that contain well-defined principles and universal truths, it seems easier to self-explain and self-intervene than in languages, where principles vary from one language to another. Wylie et al. (2009) emphasised the need for further research into the field of self-explanation in ESL, as little to no research is available on this topic.

In light of this, the present study will hopefully shed some light on ESL intervention and specifically on self-help intervention.

1.5.3   *The current intervention*

The intervention (self-help programme) used in this study will be in the form of paper and pencil activities due to a lack of electronic equipment at the school and in learners' homes. A baseline assessment will be used to identify individual problems with grammar proficiency, so that learners can receive personalised self-help intervention programmes. The intervention will take place parallel to the instruction of the formal syllabus. The self-help intervention will be based on the seminal work of Halliday (2010) called Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and in particular its branch, SFG (since the focus of the study is on grammar). Larsen-Freeman's (2007) Complexity Theory (CT) also informed certain aspects of the intervention programme. A brief discussion of these key theories follows below, and an in-depth discussion of these theories is presented in Chapters two and in Chapter 3.

1.6   Key theories

As stated previously, this study's aim is to explore alternative methods of intervention and self-assessment to address gaps in the grammar proficiency of ESL learners, and to simultaneously monitor learners' progress and ability to self-regulate throughout the process of intervention. There is currently an outcry for Alternative Approaches to Second Language Acquisition/Learning, which includes Alternative methods of Assessment (Larsen-Freeman 2007). Halliday (1961) proposed an alternative view to language and language learning several decades ago. Halliday's framework, which is known as SFL, was presented as a contrasting framework to Chomsky's Generative Grammar Theory (1957). Rather than focusing on the cognitive nature of language, Halliday believe that it is in effect more important to focus on *the function* of language. How cognitive structures enable us to use language is less important to Halliday (Halliday 1961; O'Donnell 2012). Halliday posited that grammar does not only exist as classes and units, but rather exists in terms of functions that operate as part of a whole, not as constituent parts. SFG focuses on the functions of utterances (oral or written); this means that utterances that demand information serve as questions, while utterances providing information is known as statements and yet others serve the purpose of offering/promising action. Halliday sees texts as a whole, meaning that texts serve a distinct social function such as establishing/maintaining social relations. In SFL, language does not serve the sole purpose of conveying ideas, but conveys ideas as part of the notion of getting things done (O'Donnell 2012). Since its appearance in the 1960s, SFL has become widely used as an approach to language education world-wide.

SFG contrasts Generative Linguistics (a type of grammar that tries to describe and define all grammatical structures with rules) in the sense that SFG sees language as something shared by a speech community, that can best be studied through observation of such a community, rather than through considering internal mental processes and combinations of words that form grammatical sentences In other words, SFG allows linguists to observe the external manifestation of a language and to hypothesise about the influences of the context in which the language is used, rather than theorising about the mental state of each individual language learner.

This study will rely on SFL and in particular, SFG as main theoretical framework. In addition, Complexity Theory (CT) will be explored in the attempt to better understand why it is necessary to investigate and implement modern and alternative approaches to ESL grammar instruction. CT emanates from the natural sciences. The underlying hypothesis in CT is that all systematic behaviour in nature (including human language learning) is in essence complicated, dynamic and self-organising (Larsen-Freeman 2015; Atkinson 2011). Variation and change are the key principles of this theory, i.e. when complex systems dynamically change, and their behaviour therefore changes, the system will adapt by creating new behaviours to cope with the change. Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) hold that Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is more of a psycholinguistic process than linguistic, which paved the way for research into learning strategies, interlanguage processes and interaction effects. Larsen-Freeman (2007; 2011) came to view SLA as a complex, yet adaptive process within the language system (Ellis & Larsen-Freeman 2009), in which language emerges through bottom-up learning processes,

rather than through the static top-down learning of grammatical rules and principles. An emerging language system is viewed as adaptive, because it changes to accommodate new circumstances, which are in themselves ever-changing.

The self-help intervention programme introduced in for this study will be based on the principals of SFL/SFG, and will be supported by some of the ideas proposed in a CT approach to SLA to help ESL learners to understand that language is a complex but adaptive system which changes constantly to suit new circumstances.

1.7   Methodology

This study will utilise a quasi-experimental quantitative research design. There will be two groups of participants: the experimental group (E-group) will receive the self-help intervention programme, while the control group (C- group) will receive normal schooling as per curriculum and class intervention (done by the teacher). Participants in the E-group will receive their individualised intervention programmes and will be required to complete the programme in their own time, after school hours.

The ESL skills of all the Grade 8 learners will be assessed prior to commencement of the school year via a baseline assessment (which will also act as pre-test in the study).[2] The baseline assessment will be comprehensive in nature, and will focus on spelling, comprehension of texts, visual literacy skills, writing skills and grammar knowledge. The researcher will only use the test results on comprehension, grammar and writing as data for this study.

The participants will be divided into the two groups based on the results of the baseline assessment (the idea being that two groups need to be created that are balanced in terms of ESL proficiency at the start of the study). The researcher will compile a profile for each individual learner in the E-group, which described the learner's abilities and highlighted problem areas, which will assist the researcher in developing the self-help intervention grammar programme. The normal ESL curriculum will parallel to the intervention - the curriculum of learners will thus be supported by the intervention, rather than interrupted. The process of alternative assessment, in this case, Dynamic Assessment (DA), will be applied to the E-group, which means that summative assessment was not the focus of the intervention (although necessary to determine the ultimate results), but rather an on-going and procedural following of learner progress throughout the intervention. E-group participants will be required to hand in completed sections of the intervention programme for inspection by the researcher so that learner progression charts could be updated during the period of intervention. Parents will also be required to sign off completed sections of the programme to ensure that they are involved in the progress of the learners at all times.

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[2] The Department of Education (DoE) currently expects all schools to do a baseline assessment for all subject areas before commencing any formal instruction at the start of the academic school year. Baseline tests are however not provided by the DoE and the researcher therefore has to design a rather comprehensive ESL baseline test (used as pre-test), assessing mainly writing and reading skills of the new Gr8s.

The control group will not be monitored in the same manner, but will be assessed on the summative assessment as per the mid-year examinations of the DoE as well as the year-end examinations. A post-test and delayed post-test will be conducted for both groups – the mid-year examination was used as post-test and the year-end examination was used as delayed post-test for both groups. The methodology is discussed in detail in Chapter 4 of this study.

1.8   Contribution of this study

To the researcher's knowledge, there is currently no specialised grammar intervention programme available to ESL teachers in South Africa. The DoE however expects teachers to provide evidence in July and November of intervention for ESL learners who are underperforming and failing. ESL teachers regard 'intervention' mostly as revision of parts of the curriculum and extra lessons after school or an activity from a different textbook (own experience). The main contribution of this study is the development and assessment of an alternative type of ESL grammar intervention, which could potentially be used by secondary school teachers in various contexts. The type of ESL grammar intervention programme tested in this study is highly original, as it is i) based on the concept of self-intervention, and as it ii) incorporates the principles of SFG, which is not traditionally used for ESL grammar instruction in South Africa. As such, this study represents a novel attempt to introduce an alternative self-intervention programme to Grade 8 ESL learners in the South African context. The outcome of this intervention study could have a positive impact on ESL pedagogy (and grammar pedagogy in particular), as it has the potential to provide ESL teachers with an effective pedagogical tool to assist with improving ESL proficiency levels in learners at the start of secondary school. This will decrease teachers' sense of being overburdened by having to offer intervention in-class, while simultaneously teaching the prescribed curriculum.

In terms of the current study's contribution beyond the South African context, it was noted in this introductory chapter that there is, generally speaking, a paucity of research on the impact of self-intervention in ESL learning. Especially with regards to the use of self-intervention to enhance ESL learners' grammar proficiency, very little systematic research exists. Scholars like Wylie et al. (2009) have emphasised the need for more research into the field of self-explanation and self-regulation in ESL learning. In light of this, the present study will contribute to general knowledge about the use of ESL self-intervention programmes, and will enhance the general understanding of how such programmes could be used to assist struggling learners with ESL grammar acquisition. This study will thus contribute to current theories of ESL, in that it will investigate how/whether alternative intervention programmes can bring about the change in the mental states of learners (through self-assessment and self-monitoring) which will be conducive to successful ESL learning.

1.9   Limitations of this study

This study will reflect the results of implementing simplified self-help intervention programmes focused on improving English grammar among Grade 8 ESL learners of one secondary school in the Gauteng Province. The results will therefore be limited to this school only and further research will be required to test the generalisation of the research problem and

outcomes in other secondary schools in South Africa. Although the problem of poor English proficiency among the Grade 8 learners attending the school seems to be increasing, the results of the present study cannot be generalised to the entire Grade 8 population in South Africa.

The study will focus on the outcomes of the intervention programme as a possible means of addressing gaps in ESL grammar proficiency, but the programme may need refining for future interventions and different schools. A further limitation is that studies into Alternative Approaches to ESL instruction normally tend to collect data over extended periods of time, which was not possible for this study, since the intervention had to take place over a period of 6 months. This means that, ideally, more data should be collected over an even longer period of time to assess the effectiveness of the intervention programme developed for this study.

1.10   *Definitions of key terms*

In this section the definitions of some basic terminology commonly used in the SLA and ESL is provided. Other terms will be defined and explained as the text progresses.

English Second Language (ESL) refers to learning English as a second language after the native language has been acquired. ESL is also contrasted with English as a foreign language (EFL), where English is learned in a formal classroom setting, with limited or no opportunities for use outside the classroom, e.g. in countries where English plays an unimportant role in internal communication, such as Japan, Korea and China (Richards & Schmidt 2010). ESL is a compulsory subject in South African schools (for non-native speakers of the language) and is taught alongside the native languages of learners.

Native Language (NL): This term refers to the first language that a child is exposed to and learns, also known as the primary language or the mother tongue or the L1 (first language). I will use the abbreviation L1 in this thesis.

Target Language (TL): This refers to the second or additional language which is learned (in other words, the new language). In this thesis, TL refers to ESL.

Second Language Acquisition (SLA): In general, SLA refers to the acquisition of language in a natural context, i.e. the language is not formally instructed in a classroom environment, but acquired through mere exposure to it, for example, children playing with multilingual peers in Kindergarten.

Second Language (L2): This refers to any language learned after acquiring the NL. When compared with Foreign Language, the L2 refers more narrowly to a language that plays an important role in a particular country or region though it may not be the native language of many who use it (e.g. in South Africa, English is one of eleven official languages, but considered the language of commerce, and therefore becomes the L2 of many people).

Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT): This refers to the language in which the learner receives all education at school. It is not necessarily the L1 of the learner and in some South African contexts it may be the learner's third language.

Socio-economic Status (SES): Refers generally to the social class, level of education, measure of material goods and power (Oakes 2017). It is assumed that one's access to the mentioned constructs determine the level of one's SES.

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL): This is the Hallidayan theory that no language (text) can be understood outside the context it appears in. In other words, context contributes to the meaning of texts.

Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG): Is the branch of SFL that deals with and accounts for the grammar of a language.

Complexity Theory (CT): Refers to the theory of Larsen-Freeman that language is a complex and dynamic system, i.e. language is forever evolving and adapting to change.

1.11   Organisation of dissertation

The rest of the thesis will be structured as follows: Chapter 2 will contain a comprehensive literature review that will place the current study within a particular field of study (i.e. ESL learning and teaching) and within a particular theoretical framework (utilising SFL and exploring Complexity Theory to understand current views of ESL practice). Chapter 2 will also contain a contemporary overview of the importance of grammar instruction in the ESL classroom and the various approaches to teaching ESL that are currently being used. Chapter 2 will finally present opinions of various scientists on how to implement SFG in the ESL classroom, as well as the benefits of SFG for ESL. Chapter 3 will provide a brief overview of theories of SLA, and will present a discussion of the main theoretical framework for this thesis which is based on Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics and more specifically Systemic Functional Grammar. Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 form a unit, and in reality cannot be read separately. However, the information is presented over two chapters, as Chapter 2 focuses specifically on SLA practice, whereas Chapter 3 focuses on theory. Chapter 4 will explain the methodology of the study. Chapter 4 will also explain how the self-help intervention programme was designed based on explicit grammar instruction, incorporating SFG as alternative method of ESL instruction. Chapter 5 will present the statistical analyses and results of the study. Chapter 6 offers a discussion of the results and restates the significance, as well as the limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 2
THE IMPORTANCE OF GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

2.1   Introduction

Theorists have been debating the role of grammar in L2 learning and teaching generally, and in ESL learning and teaching specifically, for the last few decades (Dalil 2013). Grammar continues to be a key element in most language syllabi across the world and it is deemed vital for L2 proficiency (Anupama 2014; Dalil 2013; Halliday 2010; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014; Larsen-Freeman 2009; 2015; Saaristo 2015). Saaristo (2015) describes grammar as a 'practical tool' for effective language use and as a resource for adapting language to specific contexts. Many scholars agree that accuracy in grammar leads to greater fluency (Anupama 2014; Dalil 2013; Debata 2013; Myhill, Jones, Lines & Watson 2012; Nassaji & Fotos 2011; Pylvänäinen 2013). The referenced scholars all found a correlation between the correct application of grammatical concepts and greater fluency in the communicative and writing activities of L2 learners. The underlying argument is that accuracy in grammar and sentence structure lead to improved cohesion and coherence in the ideas communicated by learners. In other words, accuracy led to more successful and comprehensible speaking and writing in all these studies – learners who were focused on using grammatical rules correctly generally improved their scores in oral and writing tasks, opposed to students who were less focused on applying grammatical concepts correctly.

Despite this evidence, theorists and teachers have conflicting views on the teaching of grammar. Some believe that grammar is taught for at least two reasons: first to provide learners with meta-language and secondly, to enrich the minds of learners with all the different functions that language can perform (Anupama 2014). Others believe that teaching grammar facilitates the development of conscious language expertise (this might also entail that learners become aware of skills that they already acquired subconsciously in a more conscious manner) (Benjamin et al. 2006). Some teachers view grammar teaching as instruction that empowers their learners in terms of linguistic flexibility and expression (in that it assist them in creating meaningful utterances); others see grammar teaching as unnecessary and only teach grammar when learners seem to need more explanation about the use of a particular form (Benjamin et al. 2006). Even so, most teachers are in favour of teaching at least some grammar to enhance fluency and proficiency (Anupama 2014; Nassaji & Fotos 2011).

In essence then, the teaching of grammatical concepts cannot be ignored in L2 learning (Ellis 2006; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014; Larsen-Freeman 2015). Theorists like Halliday and Larsen–Freeman therefore do not discard grammar instruction, but rather embrace grammar instruction in their theories of SLA, applying alternative and modern thinking to instruct grammar in a L2 /additional language learning context. In order to embrace alternative approaches to L2 grammar instruction, it is important to investigate traditional and contemporary approaches to ESL grammar instruction. A discussion of L2 grammar approaches is presented in this chapter as part of the justification of the theoretical framework

for the intervention programme (which will be presented in the next chapter). However, before the importance and role of grammar instruction in L2 learning is discussed, the concept 'grammar' is explained, and a working definition for 'grammar' in this thesis is provided.

2.2   *Defining grammar: Traditional versus Contemporary definitions*

Grammar is traditionally defined as a system that describes how sentences are constructed in any given language via a combination of the linguistic units (i.e. the sounds, morphemes, words and phrases) of that language (Debata 2013; Larsen-Freeman 2009; Pylvänäinen 2013). Definitions of grammar have changed over the centuries, and Pylvänäinen (2013) states that it is particularly true for the 20th century. Traditionally, grammar was viewed as a set of language rules that have to be memorised, but contemporary views seem to be more diverse. Debata (2013) and Pylvänäinen (2013) postulate that there are basically seven different definitions/approaches to what constitutes 'grammar', and that the definition one adopts depends on the theoretical framework that one wishes to work in. A short description of the seven contemporary approaches to grammar follows below:

i)   Grammar as a set of rules: this is based on the traditional idea of analysing grammar through syntactic and sentence-level functions, including word class units, which often result in translation-type grammar activities. Larsen-Freeman (2003) describes this traditional view of grammar as the division of grammar into digestible portions that learners can learn and hold on to for static explanations of rules. Larsen-Freeman also views this approach to grammar teaching as prescriptive and one which may not ultimately be helpful to ESL learners since rules cannot account for more complex meta-language. Research shows that learners can memorise vast amounts of complex grammar rules, but are not always able to apply them in communication (Ellis 2006).

ii)   Grammar as structures: Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) define structuralism as seeing a language as a system with structurally related features, where grammarians try to list and identify all possible structures and patterns in a given language. They further state that the Audiolingual method of ESL teaching is based on this view, and hold that the assumption is that instead of memorising sets of rules, learners could master the TL through oral drilling of sentence patterns. There are views that this form of repetition does enhance fluency and lowers anxiety of using new structures in the TL (Folse 2009; Kjellin 2002).

iii)   Grammar as mathematics: Abrahamsson (2009) states that according to Chomsky, grammar consists of a set of universal core principles (common to all languages), and that language acquisition occurs when a child sets language-specific parameter (on an unconscious level and based on input). Principles refer to the universal features common to all natural languages; this was termed Universal Grammar (UG) by Chomsky. A principle is, for example, that all phrases in all languages must comprise a verb/noun + complement, while a parameter allows for variation in the positioning of the verb/noun, for example

in English the verb phrase *'wash your car'* varies from the Japanese verb phrase *'your car wash'*. According to proponents of the UG approach, for L2 acquisition to take place, a learner must reset parameters, should they differ from the L1. In other words, proponents of the UG approach postulate that all human beings are endowed with an innate set of universal grammar principles, which are set, using parameters, according to the first language a child is exposed to. This means that, for example, all humans are born with the principle of word order, which for English is Subject-Verb-Object, but for other languages may be Subject-Object-Verb as explained in the example above.

iv) Grammar as algorithms: VanPatten (2007) argue that the human brain acts much like a computer that processes linguistic information (input) through cognitive mechanisms, without any innate knowledge of the linguistic information. Larsen-Freeman (2003) explains that the brain refines the intake into self-organising networks, which represent all the linguistics patterns in the particular language. Self-organisation refers to the theory of Emergentism: self-organisation is characteristic of any dynamic system and takes place due to the interaction of all the subsystems (Lowie 2017). Learning is therefore regarded as the dynamic process of adaptation and self-organisation. Emergentism contrasts UG in that no innate knowledge of language is necessary to acquire or learn language. Anupama (2014) summarises grammar as algorithm by describing grammar as a set of production plans needed to process linguistic information (input and output), which is necessary for the grammar of a language to emerge over time.

v) Grammar as texture: Barton (1999), Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) and McCarthy (2008) state that grammar should be understood as a functional system. This implies that grammar can only be understood in its surrounding context, meaning that grammar can only be understood if *the text* it appears in is considered in the interpretation or creation of grammatical structures. Functional grammar is concerned with how a language is used (Bloor & Bloor 1995; Halliday 2010; McCarthy 2008), thus can serve as a tool in the investigation of how linguistic items are used to express meaning (McCarthy 2008). In short then, grammar as texture predicts that language learners who are aware of the contextual value of grammar will be better able to analyse and choose suitable grammatical structures to enhance communication. For example, ESL learners who only study de-contextualised grammatical items (e.g. POS), might not have a proper understanding of the role of POS compared to studying them in a contextualised text, such as a fairy tale.

vi) Grammar as collocation (likely co-occurrence of certain words): Byrd (2005) suggests that collocations in a language should be included in L2 grammar teaching, for example, in the following two expressions *is there any sugar?* and *I don't have any sugar* the word *any* indicates to a context where there is 'no sugar'. The use of such 'language chunks' is a normal phase of language learning/acquisition and can be viewed as sign of language competence Halliday 2014).

vii)   Grammar as emergent phenomenon: Larsen-Freeman (2006) claims that 'emergent grammar' conceptualises grammar in a similar, but even more far-reaching manner than the 'grammar as algorithms' theory. Larsen-Freeman postulates that, similar to the algorithms theory, the human brain organises linguistic information into patterns, but is emergent in the sense that language is dynamic and changes all the time. In other words, the language evolves constantly and organises itself from the bottom up (similar to a school of fish), according to the contextual or situational demands. This implies that language cannot always be predicted and will adapt and re-create itself constantly, for example, 'sms' grammar has emerged from technological development.

Our understanding of what grammar is may vary significantly, as illustrated by the seven conceptualisations of grammar above. A more contemporary definition of grammar as postulated in Larsen-Freeman's 'Grammar as emergent phenomenon' approach (based on the evolutionary qualities of language) and in the 'Grammar as texture approach' (particularly Halliday's 'SFG') will be used as working definitions of grammar in this thesis. Both these definitions are in line with a broader, more holistic view of grammar, because of their focus on text and context. Specifically, the focus in the present study is on the interplay between syntactic and semantic structure, as the intervention programme targets POS and the functions that individual POS perform in sentence construction and comprehension. As such, a 'Grammar as texture' definition of grammar is deemed most suitable for the current study, as a crucial aspect of the intervention programme will be to highlight the functions of POS to ESL learners. Exactly how this definition of grammar was used to inform the intervention programme in this study will be elaborated on in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 of this thesis.

2.3   Core approaches to ESL grammar instruction

Broadly speaking, there are two core approaches to ESL grammar instruction, namely the 'deductive approach' and the 'inductive approach' (Widodo 2006). In the following sub-sections, these approaches will be discussed in more detail.

2.3.1   The deductive approach

The deductive approach is based on the notion that reasoning works from the general to the specific (Widodo 2006). With regards to grammar instruction, it means that rules, principles, concepts and theories are presented to the learner first, and following this presentation there is a focus on their application, meaning that language learners are provided with specific tasks where the grammar rule is practised repeatedly. Deductive learning is therefore also regarded as 'rule-driven' learning.

For as long as languages have been studied as a subject, grammar has been studied as an integral part of the language (Dalil 2013; Millard 2000; Nassaji & Fotos 2011; Pylvänäinen 2013; Widodo 2006). Traditional grammar instruction focused on grammar rules – presenting isolated structures, forms and functions and patterns of a language and tying the constituent parts of a language by learning and teaching the applicable rules. This used to take place by

introducing one structure after the other, and practicing them with specific activities (Ellis 2006). Practice takes place when learners are introduced to an isolated feature of grammar for specific attention, e.g. adverbs. Learners are required to apply the feature correctly in sentences and are provided with opportunities to repeat the targeted feature. Learners are then provided immediate or delayed feedback on the correct/incorrect application of the feature (Ellis 2006).

Deductive instruction is teacher-centred and is typically associated with grammar teaching as practised in a 'Focus on Forms' approach. In Focus on Forms grammar instruction, the instructor isolates a specific feature of grammar, e.g. 'the English plural form', by first describing the grammar rule (i.e. 'add 's' to the noun'), and then practising it repeatedly. A Focus on Forms approach creates awareness of grammatical features in language learners (Ellis 2002). Learners are then expected to use intellectual effort to understand and reason about the rule, which is monitored by providing more detailed explanations. Learners are also required to articulate the rule.

Scholars have listed advantages and disadvantages associated with the deductive approach. Advantages include clear explanation of rules, learners are given clear examples and the role of cognitive processing in language acquisition is respected (Ellis 2002; 2006). Disadvantages, as stated by Widodo (2006), include grammar lessons that might bore learners, complex terminology, limited learner interaction and explanations that may not always be memorable. It is argued that deductive approaches may lead language learners to believe that knowing a language entails knowing only the grammar rules.

2.3.2 The inductive approach

An 'inductive approach' to teaching and learning involves reasoning that proceeds from particulars to generalities. Inductive instruction is learner-centred and therefore relies on the learner to infer the underlying grammar rule. This is also referred to as a 'bottom-up' approach, meaning that reasoning moves from specific observations towards broader and general theories. When induction is applied to grammar learning, a number of particular instances/examples of a rule are observed, and from these examples a general principle is inferred (Widodo 2006). This is often also referred to as 'rule-discovery' or 'noticing', where learners become aware of particular commonalities that examples share. Noticing was explored by researchers since the 1990s, and the consensus today is that language learners need to notice a structure in order to remember it and in order to acquire it (Masum 2014). Widodo states that the inductive approach aims at utilising order, clarity and meaning; in other words, learners' exposure to the TL grammar needs to be planned carefully, in order to provide them with meaningful input and clear examples, from which grammar rules can be induced.

As with the deductive approach to grammar instruction, scholars have identified advantages and disadvantages relating to inductive instruction. Some scholars favour the learner involvement of inductive teaching (Brckalo 2011; Masum 2014) and state that learners are more likely to remember rules they have discovered for themselves. It is further believed that learners also apply a greater degree and depth of cognitive functioning in the inductive process than in the deductive process of grammar learning. A disadvantage of inductive

approaches might be the time spent on inferring rules, which may lead learners to think that language learning is only concerned with rule discovery (Masum 2014). Of further concern is that learners may hypothesise the grammar rule incorrectly and it may take time to re-establish the correct concept.

Since it seems as though research findings into the benefits of both inductive and deductive approaches have been inconclusive (Masum 2014), the benefits of both deductive and inductive learning should be considered potential tools in self-directed learning. In the next section, some ideas on the use of deductive and inductive learning in contemporary grammar teaching is considered.

2.4   Contemporary approaches to L2 grammar instruction

Despite the popularity of contemporary views of grammar, and how grammar should be taught (or not), Ellis (1998; 2006) holds that teaching grammar in a traditional manner is still considered to be a type of intervention, where the exclusive aim is to promote explicit and implicit knowledge of the grammar of a language. Explicit knowledge of a language refers to the verbalisation or explanation of learned knowledge (Richards & Schmidt 2010). In other words, explicit knowledge results from explicit instruction, which mainly happens in formal classroom teaching environments and takes place under controlled circumstances. When grammar rules are taught explicitly to learners, the problem often is that the instructed rule can only be used in de-contextualised activities. Implicit knowledge (Brown 2000; Widodo 2006) refers to the 'intuitive' knowledge of a language a user possesses, for example, native users of English might not be able to explain the rule for 'past perfect tense' but apply it correctly intuitively.

With regards to the acquisition of both explicit and implicit grammar knowledge, three pertinent questions in the field of Applied Linguistics are *how to teach grammar*, *when to teach grammar* and *what structures to teach*. These questions will be discussed in the following sections.

2.4.1   How to teach grammar, when to teach grammar and what to teach

There are no clear guidelines as to how, when and what exactly to teach L2 learners to promote L2 grammar learning (Ellis 2006). Existing research supports the idea that attention to grammar instruction is important, provided that it happens in a meaningful and interactive manner (Ellis 2006; Masum 2014; Rodriguez 2009; Widodo 2006). In general, it is believed that L2 learning occurs when there is interaction that provides the learner with comprehensible input and output and that grammatical competence is developed through some explicit grammar instruction (Anupama 2014; Dalil 2013; Ellis 2006; Myhill *et al.* 2011; Nassaji & Fotos 2011; Pylvänäinen 2013). The aforementioned scholars further believe that explicit focus on grammar enhances correct language use and fluency in communication. Language instructors however need to decide how, when and what to teach in the L2 classroom, in order to arrive at optimal L2 proficiency. As this study centres on ESL grammar teaching and learning, the focus in the rest

of this section will be specifically on contemporary views of how, when and what to teach in terms of grammar in the ESL classroom.

2.4.1.1   When to teach grammar

The place of grammar teaching in the ESL curriculum has raised much debate among theorists (Batstone & Ellis 2009; Benati & Lee 2008; Bejamin 2006; Byrd 2005; Calderon et al. 2011; Coffin et al. 2009 Debata 2013; Ellis 2006; Flogenfeldt & Lund 2016; Millard 2017; Nassaji & Fotos 2011; Pylvanian 2013; Saaristo 2015). It seems that there exists disagreement about how to perceive grammar and whether it is at all necessary to teach grammar (Bentsen 2017; Burns & Richards 2012; Brown 2014; Ellis (2006; 2014; Flogenfeldt & Lund 2016).

It is argued that L2 learning starts with learning words and formulaic sequences (Ellis 2006; 2014), which does not require grammar rules, and so Ellis suggests that grammar instruction is not necessary until at least the intermediate stages of L2 learning. This view is supported by other researchers who argue that despite less time devoted to grammar, learners are still improving their oral and written skills through merely developing their ESL competency in general (Bentsen 2017; Flogenfeldt & Lundt 2016). The inconsistent results regarding the efficacy of grammar instruction for primary school learners, led many ESL scholars to believe that there should be a stronger focus on meaning and form than on grammar rules (Ellis 2006; Flogenfeldt & Lund 2016; Tomlinson 2008; van Lier 2001), particularly at the onset of instruction. According to both Tomlinson and van Lier, there should also be more focus on lexical growth than grammar rules in the beginning stages of ESL learning.

In contexts where learners study ESL in order to eventually use English as an academic and professional language (as in the present study), ESL learners are however required to answer higher order questions in assessments. This requires advanced knowledge of grammar constructs to understand higher order questions, and to produce comprehensible answers (CAPS 2011). Higher order questions (according to Bloom's Taxonomy) are those questions that require application, analysis, evaluation and synthesising of knowledge to critically respond to questions. Such questions focus on subject and personal understanding, experience and opinions of learners. Learners at secondary level are therefore expected to display proper command over the language in order to express themselves comprehensibly. This is especially important given that higher order questions carry more weight in ESL assessments once learners reach a more advanced level. Although the debate is currently inconclusive, most curricula for ESL instruction, especially at intermediate and advanced levels, contain a substantial focus on explicit grammar teaching, meaning that grammar is viewed important to ESL teaching (Bentsen 2017).

2.4.1.2   How to teach ESL grammar

A further pressing issue in ESL instruction is to determine 'how' to teach grammar. Although the syllabus prescribes 'what' to teach 'when', it is mostly up to the teacher to decide on the method of teaching grammar (Bentsen 2017). Ellis (2012) remarks that research has not been able to verify the 'superiority' of any particular approach to teaching grammar yet, and that the idea of a 'best method' to teach ESL grammar is probably an illusion, given the heterogeneity

of ESL learners over the world. Ellis states that teachers should pay attention to personal assumptions, the specific classroom context, teacher and learner functions and the nature of the language when deciding on a method for teaching grammar. Choosing a method that works in the specific context is important, as the teacher chooses activities, materials, how to respond to questions and how to deal with errors in the classroom based on the chosen method.

There is abundant (often older) research in favour of ESL instruction that includes an explicit focus on relevant grammatical items – this is typically associated with traditional grammar teaching methods such as Focus on Forms, drilling and rote learning (Myhill *et al.* 2012) However, many scholars have expressed concerns with regards to traditional grammar instruction practices (Brown 2014; Burns & Richards 2012; Myhill *et al.* 2013; Richards & Reppen 2014; Widodo 2006). These scholars argue that in traditional grammar instruction grammar rules are (i) taught in a manner that separates the rule from the actual speaking/writing task (e.g. the focus is on the rule and not the real world); (ii) taught via inappropriate materials (teachers rely on text books instead of re-designing the materials to support specific learner needs) and (iii) taught as separate decontexualised lessons to prepare learners for the grammar section of examination papers. This seems leads to frustration among learners (and their teachers), because learners who are used to decontexualised activities do not perform well when confronted by examination papers that require different skills. Given these frustrations, Widodo (2006) developed a five-step procedure for teaching grammar, and views this procedure as alternative and modern. According to Widodo, grammar should be taught by implementing the following steps[3]:

i)   Provide learners with sufficient knowledge about the rule that is about to be introduced in the lesson, for example, talking about events of the past if introducing the past tense.

ii)   Elicit functions of the rule from the learners. In other words, let the learners discover how the rule works and when to apply it appropriately and correctly.

iii) Familiarise learners with the new rule by practising the rule through appropriate and relevant activities.

iv)   Assess whether the learners have grasped the rule properly through a productive (preferably a writing) activity. This is normally regarded a task that learners perform individually.

v)   Create opportunities for learners to apply 'expert' knowledge of the new concept in activities that combine other known concepts plus the new rule; this might require that the learner has to use a new rule based on his cognitive capacity, and may include some analytical reasoning.

This five-step procedure takes ESL learners from 'form' to 'function', meaning that they should properly understand the relationship of the newly taught rule from word to phrase, clause and sentence and how the rule influences meaning if applied correctly or incorrectly.

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[3] Although not stated as such, Widodo's five-step procedure is essentially in line with a functional approach to L2 grammar instruction. This is mentioned as an aside here, but is a relevant point given the present study's focus on SFG as an 'alternative' approach to teaching ESL grammar.

This procedure is similar to how grammar is viewed in SFG, and the manner in which the intervention activities in this study were designed unintentionally resembles parts of Widodo's approach to teaching grammar.

The move away from decontextualised ESL grammar teaching and an increased focus on highlighting the functions of grammatical concepts to learners has gained momentum in the last few decades, and today, scholars agree that grammar should be taught as and when needed for specific purposes (Brown 2014; Flognfeldt & Lund 2016; Myhill *et al.* 2012). This is also evident in the L1 and L2 syllabi of several counties. For instance, the United Kingdom Literacy Association (UKLA 2010) advocates that grammar teaching should best be contextualised. This means that the grammar taught should impact the task at hand directly, for example, producing a 'thank you letter' should include a pre-discussion of the purpose of such a letter, the format (which includes punctuation), the tone, register, diction and formality to be applied. The UKLA further holds that grammar should neither be taught nor assessed outside of a purposeful context, which also relates to the underlying principles of SFG.

In South African, the current CAPS curriculum also supports the pre-discussion and purposeful teaching of grammar related to specific tasks. This particular view can also be linked to SFG where the emphasis is on context to create meaningful texts.

In summary, ESL teachers should be aware of the needs of the ESL learners when choosing a grammar instruction method, when producing tasks and when assisting learners with appropriate grammatical guidelines for the successful completion of a task. Despite some scepticism about the usefulness of traditional grammar teaching, recent studies (e.g. Mystkowska-Wiertelak and Pawlak 2012) indicated that input manipulation had beneficial effects on the development of interlanguage, but that traditional instruction led to frequent and successful output production. It would seem then that a combination of methods might lead to improved performance, suggesting that balanced instruction is needed to ensure that all learners are reached and that all learners' specific needs are addressed (Mystkowska-Wiertelak & Pawlak 2012). The position of scholars like Larsen-Freeman (2015) and VanPatten, Williams, Rot & Overstreet (2004), who maintain that connections between form and meaning/function are necessary and fundamental to language acquisition, is important in the current study, and was used as basis for the development of the intervention programme.

2.4.1.3 *What grammar to teach ESL learners*

The following point of discussion is 'what grammar' to teach? Pylvänäinen (2013) states that researchers tend to neglect this point. Ellis (2006) remarked that this might be because it seems so obvious – teachers tend to teach those items that cause problems for L2 learners (e.g. active and passive voice). However, Ellis indicates that there might be more complex issues to deal with than just deciding which difficult items to teach, and asks the following question: what kind of grammar should we base teaching on?

It is regarded normal practice for ESL teachers to follow the order of a text book or a set curriculum in grammar instruction, but a more reactive approach could be more effective (Nyqvist 2013; Pylvänäinen 2013; Salo 2007). In other words, grammatical items should be

taught based on learners' needs and the natural acquisition[4] order, instead of strictly following the curriculum (Salo 2007). Recent research has further confirmed that the order of grammatical items in ESL textbooks do not follow the natural order of acquisition, which causes ESL grammar instruction to be not as efficient as it could be (Austad 2009; Burner 2005; Nyqvist 2013; Reinholdt 2014). The aforementioned researchers found that most of the grammar textbooks used for school purposes in Norwegian schools was inconsistent in their respective presentation of types of grammar exercises and explanations. It was also found that teachers rarely used textbooks and relied on their own initiative for teaching grammar. The South African curriculum (CAPS 2011) instructs ESL teachers to follow the syllabus religiously, which does not leave the teacher with much room for adjustment in terms of what grammar to teach to learners. For this reason, the intervention in this study was designed specifically with the idea that the programme would not interfere with the prescribed syllabus.

Based on the discussion above, it is clear that applied linguists have given the topic of L2 grammar instruction in general, and ESL grammar instruction specifically, ample thought. However, applied linguistic research is only valuable if empirical findings actively inform L2 teaching practice. The following section offers a discussion on how grammar teaching and learning research could be applied in practice.

2.4.2 Grammar teaching in the South African context

Since the late 1990s, the South African department of Basic Education has followed international trends in ESL instruction, and in doing so has prescribed a CLT approach for ESL teaching. In a CLT approach, language teachers have to direct their learners *to the meaning* of a text/discourse – the rationale being that L2 learners will acquire the form, including the grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation mostly unconsciously, in much the same way as a child learning an L1. In the early 2000s, the whole drive of the South African National Curriculum Statement (NCS) with regards to ESL learning was to follow a hands-on, active approach to language learning that is embedded in meaningful situations. Teachers were instructed to use a wide variety of texts, and had to support learning in a natural, informal environment. At the same time, teachers were expected to raise learners' ESL levels to a standard that is acceptable in an academic environment, that is, to the standard associated with CALP. In theory then, and in line with the discussion in Hymes (1992), grammar skills are thought to form an important component of communicative competence in a CLT approach, as such skills allow learners to unlock the systemic meaning potential of a code (i.e. a language) in full. This is necessary for the development of CALP, as the ability to change style and register partly depends on grammatical competence.

In practice, however, the acquisition of grammar skills in a CLT approach is essentially a matter of implicit learning, and meaning is often favoured over form in a CLT approach (Ayliff 2010). It is not clear whether this type of instruction results in CALP in the South

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[4] Natural Order refers to Krashen's (1983) theory of language acquisition where language acquisition follows a natural order and some concepts are acquired earlier than others. It further holds that some concepts cannot be acquired prior to others. This theory is extended to second language acquisition.

African context. In the NCS, the ESL curriculum had six learning outcomes: the first four were linked to the basic language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), the fifth outcome was linked to using language in thinking and reasoning, while the sixth outcome was linked to language structure (specified as the sounds, words and grammar of the language that has to learned through the creation and interpretation of texts). The assessment standards given for these outcomes typically emphasised meaning over form, and little or no guidance was given in the syllables as to how to instruct grammar. For example, the assessment standard for 'interrogatives' for Grade 5 learners indicated that leaners should be able to understand and use some question forms, such as *Why couldn't ...?* and *What/How do you think ...?* Focus on Forms was not included in the syllabus; in fact, formal aspects of language were not to be taught "in an isolated way" (DoE 2003:15), and the assumption was that learners would implicitly acquire language structures, and apply them accurately in writing, if they received adequate exposure to the TL.

This assumption has, however, not materialised in the South African context. Scholars like Ayliff (2006, 2010, 2012) and Ollerhead and Oosthuizen (2005) have found that the way the CLT approach has been applied in South Africa "has generally not produced high levels of grammatical competence, nor has it produced learners who are able to operate in a cognitively demanding academic domain in their FAL" (Ayliff 2010, 3). This finding is more or less in line with those of researchers like and Basturkmen, Loewen and Ellis (2003, 253), who concluded that meaning-focused instruction "is not successful in enabling learners to achieve high levels of linguistic and sociolinguistic accuracy" and Laufer (2005, 223) who states that the "realization by applied linguists that second language learners cannot achieve high levels of grammatical competence from entirely meaning centred instruction has led them to propose that learners need to focus on form".

The latest ESL curriculum in South Africa (CAPS) has (albeit very slightly) moved away from a CLT approach and allocates more time to the systematic and explicit instruction of grammar. Formal aspects of language can now to be taught "also as part of a systematic language development programme" (CAPS 2011). However, a 'systematic grammar programme' is not included and the realisation of grammar in weekly lesson plans is highly unsystematic. Furthermore, teachers are still encouraged to teach language structures in and the suggested time allocation in the curriculum for 'language structure' is only 10%. The CAPS curriculum remains largely text-based, and the assumption still seems to be that learners at all levels can acquire a plethora of grammatical structures without much explicit focus on grammatical forms. CLT and text-based approaches may work well in contexts where learners (especially in the lower grades) receive lots of high-quality input. In the South African context though, this is not the case, and learners who struggle to acquire grammar may need to test their hypotheses about language structures actively against TL structures. Worldwide, there has been a lot of research into the benefits of a form-focused approach. In South Africa, with the exception of Ollerhead and Oosthuizen (2005), researchers have not paid much attention to a form focused approach. Form focused instruction is flexible and embraces various instructional models. As such, if implemented well, it could lead to more efficient L2 language teaching and improved learner outcomes. In the current study, the instructional approach of the

intervention programme is form-focused to a large extent, and the hope is that this study will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of a form-focused approach in the South African context.

2.5   Applying research to practice

According to Larsen-Freeman (2015) grammar instruction in practice remains relatively unaltered by research, despite an in-depth focus on alternative approaches to grammar instruction over the past three decades. Grammar instruction still happens in a very traditional manner in most L2 learning contexts, with the emphasis on accuracy of form and on rule learning. It seems that mechanical type activities continue to serve the purpose of introducing grammar learning. However, as discussed earlier, researchers have varied opinions as to how much grammar instruction should take place and what exactly about grammar should be taught.

Larsen-Freeman (2015) urges that it is crucial that researchers reflect on the impact of extensive research on grammar teaching, especially given how little it has impacted traditional teaching methods. Some of the reasons for the low impact of research on grammar instruction seem to include dormancy on the part of textbook companies, conservatism and resistance to change of teachers and educational systems promoting grammar-based examinations (Burgess & Etherington 2002; Larsen-Freeman 2015; Littlewood 2007; 2011; Skehan 2003; Thornbury 1999). Larsen-Freeman (2015) categorised research on grammar teaching into three categories, namely SLA research that had little impact on grammar instruction, SLA research that had a modest impact on grammar instruction and research that can potentially have a significant impact on grammar instruction. These categories are explored in more detail in the next sections.

2.5.1   SLA research that had little impact on grammar instruction

One position in SLA research that has had little impact is the 'non-interface position' (Krashen 1975; 2002; 2004). The non-interface position refers to an early period in the SLA research, when there were several calls for a discontinuation of formal grammar teaching. Krashen claimed a non-interface between explicit grammar teaching and the implicit knowledge of the language (which is necessary for developing fluency and competency). Technically, this means that there is a complete separation between implicit and explicit language knowledge in a L2 learners' mind, and that an individual could have both implicit and explicit knowledge about a language feature without these pockets of knowledge ever being connected. Krashen's views were criticised by several fellow SLA researchers, as they lacked clarity and falsifiability. According to Larsen-Freeman (2015), the problem with the non-interface position is that while SLA researchers seek to identify what is minimally required for explaining (second) language acquisition, it is very often the case that what is minimally needed for natural language acquisition, is not optimal for effective L2 classroom instruction and learning.

2.5.2   SLA research that had a modest impact on grammar instruction

SLA research that had a modest impact on SLA grammar instruction is associated with form-focused instruction (Larsen-Freeman 2015). Long (1991) recognised a less extreme stance on

excluding grammar form the L2 syllabus in its entirety, and suggested that grammar should be taught, but in a manner that does not interfere with natural acquisition. He suggested a form-focused approach, which led learners' attention to grammatical forms as they arose in communicative situations. This was in contrast with the focus-on-forms approach, where a strict syllabus focused on teaching specific grammatical concepts in a sequenced manner.

Larsen-Freeman (2015) further mentions that research into explicit rule teaching, input-based instruction and focused tasks also have had a modest impact on grammar teaching in classrooms. The modest (rather than strong) impact of research looking into these approaches is probably a result of the fact that most research studies are conducted on a small-scale (and thus lacks generalisability), and are often conducted as decontextualised experiments (Larsen-Freeman 2015). The investigation into modest impact research led Larsen-Freeman to believe that research made a modest impact on grammar instruction in contexts where teachers already relied on learners noticing certain grammatical forms in the classroom, and where explicit rule teaching were already used where and when necessary. Another final influence that Larsen-Freeman identified with regards to whether or not research had an impact was the modern-day dynamics of the ESL classroom, which dictates that teachers might reconsider the grammatical standards they should enforce in a world where the international lingua franca is English, but where not all students require accuracy in their day-to-day use of the language.

2.5.3   *Research that can potentially have a significant impact on grammar instruction*

In order for SLA research to be more impactful, it would be necessary to convince researchers and language practitioners that grammar is not only about form and meaning, but also about use in texts. Correct use of grammar in-text requires knowledge of pragmatics, for example, knowing when to use the past tense instead of the present perfect tense requires knowledge of the context (i.e. when an event took place in time). Such pragmatic knowledge seems to be neglected and might challenge even an advanced ESL learner (Larsen-Freeman 2014; 2015). New approaches to teaching grammar that could potentially have an impact in this regard are cognitive linguistics (Tyler 2012), concept grammar (Strauss, Lee & Ahn 2006), integrational linguistics (Lantolf 2006) and construction grammar (Hinkel 2012), but in this study the focus is on Halliday's SFL as an approach to teaching grammar (this will be discussed extensively in Chapter 3).

Finding and implementing a teaching strategy for ESL that works and meets the expectations of ESL teachers globally is an on-going and highly debated topic in linguistic circles (Afrin 2014; Al Hamnady 2010; Billah 2015; Biloon 2016; Kumar 2015; Samaranayake 2015; Taylor 2018). A modern and popular approach to ESL teaching seems to be the Eclectic Approach where the teacher decides what method of teaching is suitable for the students and their particular circumstances (Afrin 2014; Billah; Biloon 2016; 2015; Kumar 2013; Taylor 2018). Teachers are however required to have proper knowledge of all the various methods to optimally utilise the Eclectic Method (Billah 2015). It is stated by Al Hamnady (2010) that an understanding of how ESL teachers utilise their own knowledge of grammar to design activities for ESL teaching can in fact assist and inform all ESL teachers on the best practices. There seems to be a direct link between teaching methods and ESL performance (Al Hamnady 2010).

There is no denying that grammar consists of systematic rules, but researchers and practitioners need to remind themselves that the grammar system is not closed and static, but dynamic and reliant on the constant evolution of creating new meaning in the ever-changing world as viewed by CT. Halliday (2010) supports this view and claims that creating meaning in texts has endless options and that grammar should not be seen as mere rules to construct sentences but in fact, to create meaning relevant to various situations. It is therefore more important to challenge teachers into thinking differently about grammar teaching, than to enforce research findings on pedagogy.

2.6   Incorporating grammar in the ESL classroom: methods over the years

The varying definitions of what grammar is, and the different core approaches to grammar instruction (deductive versus inductive), have greatly impacted grammar instruction over the centuries (Barton 1999; Pylvänäinen 2013). Very traditional grammar teaching approaches, such as the Grammar Translation Method, and the Audiolingual Method, are deductive approaches to learning, and focus solely on teaching structures and rules at the sentence level (e.g. 'word order', 'past tense' or 'POS' would be the focus of a lesson). In the Grammar Translation Method, translation and grammar study are the main teaching and learning activities (Richards & Schmidt 2010). It mostly involves the presentation of a grammar rule, a study of lists of vocabulary followed by a translation activity from the L1 to the L2, or from the L2 to the L1. This method emphasises reading rather than communication and it became highly criticised during the twentieth century. The Audiolingual Method emphasises speaking and listening before reading and writing (Richards & Schmidt 2010). The method is based on dialogues and repetitive drills, where L2 learners are discouraged to use their L1 in the classroom. It was popular during the 1950s-1960s, where after it became highly criticised on the basis that it taught learners only decontexualised phrases, and fell into disuse.

What happens outside the classroom has an influence on what happens inside the classroom, which means that ESL teachers cannot afford to be unaware of social and cultural influences on language learning (in other words, the context in which the learning takes place). As the recognition that grew that meaningful communication is pivotal to successful progression in language learning, methods like the CLT blossomed, where the focus is on assisting learners to understand the context of a communicative event, and how to successfully use context in conveying messages, rather than on producing decontexualised utterances that are grammatically correct (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). In other words, a decontexualised classroom where the 'real' world experiences of ESL learners are excluded is not favoured: learners should experience authentic life in their various tasks in the ESL classroom. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) hold that context is the key to proper grammar development since the ESL learner is confronted with real-life situations where conveying the message incorrectly (through incorrect grammar) can have negative effects.

While it is arguably better that approaches such as CLT focuses on context, several practitioners feel that CLT does not focus sufficiently on grammar, and that L2 learners fail to properly acquire the rules and structural components of the TL. More and more, the focus is

shifting towards broader and more practical teaching methodologies, which recognise text and discourse levels in grammar teaching, but does not neglect the functionality of grammar in the construction of texts (Barton 1999; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014; Larsen-Freeman 2006, 2012; 2015). In addition, there is greater awareness ESL learning, including grammar learning, takes place at different stages and levels for different learners. Finch (2004) explains that the problem with the assumption that learning happens in a linear way (as is the case in most structured syllabi) is that if a learner does not fully grasp a lesson in one period, the learner may not be able to catch up in the following lessons, leading to anxiety and demotivation. This can be avoided by if the teacher follows the progress of each individual learner and focuses on specific problem areas when necessary. In other words, contemporary methods acknowledge that instructors should, at least in theory, allow for individual differences among ESL learners. The problem with this is that class numbers do not always allow for individual tracking of learner progress, hence the researcher's motivation for developing the self-regulating intervention programme to assist ESL teachers.

The idea that SLA should be viewed as a dynamic, complex, non-linear process, that is open to self-organisation and adaptive in nature has been embraced by Larsen-Freeman (2011) in a CT view of L2 instruction and learning. If language is seen as a dynamic system that changes every time it is used, it should also be understood that language use triggers a wave of changes that may even have a global impact (Alemi, Daftarifard & Patrut 2011; Larsen-Freeman & Cameron 2008; Weideman 2010). An example of such an impact is the emergence of SMS-language. While language is viewed as a static accumulation of units, the use of these units involves an active process (also referred to as performance or parole of language) (Larsen-Freeman 2002; Larsen-Freeman & Cameron 2008).

Halliday agrees that language learning is a process and not a state, and SFG views language as a whole and not as constituent parts. For this reason, there is a strong connection between SFG and CT as theoretical frameworks for explaining SLA. Although these theories are discussed in detail in Chapter 3, it suffices to note here that, in both theories, approaches to grammar instruction would allow ESL learners to interpret and respond to textual situations within their social and personal frames of reference, rather than focusing on what is grammatically expected correct responses.

Various researchers posit that SFG, like CT, supports the notion of non-linear development of grammatical competence in SLA (De Bot 2005; Larsen-Freeman 2015). It is agreed by Larsen-Freeman (2011) and Kramsch (2012) that SFG provides the most suitable basis for developing instructional tools for ESL, since it acknowledges the social context within which texts exist. It follows then that ESL teaching strategies should adapt to change in the real world. It is stated by Coffin (2010) that most educators in the field of ESL learning experience that poor L2 language proficiency hampers learners' scholastic achievement. Coffin further asserts that complicated issues such as 'what type of language support' to offer learners, 'when to support them' and 'how much' to support them are prominent. Another question is about the type of language to be used to talk about language. In other words, how will the ESL teacher explain English grammatical concepts in English? Coffin (2010) holds that SFL provide an

orientation language that many educators may find relevant and useful, since the focus of SFL is 'construction in interaction with others', meaning that learning and mental development is a social process and not only a cognitive process.

2.6.1 CT and SFG in the ESL classroom

Although CT and SFG are still not associated with mainstream ESL instructional practise, instructional methods based on these theories should ideally inform the design of grammar lesson plans, tasks and assessment, in order to overcome the weaknesses of other approaches such as the Grammar Translation Method, the Audiolingual Method and the CLT method (Seyyedrezae 2014). According to Seyyedrezae (2014), lesson plans should contain less meticulous explanations of activities and teaching techniques and more 'strategic planning' that serve as broad guidelines to teachers, which will allow them to make more situation-specific choices while teaching. Even though teachers are not necessarily acquainted with theories such as CT and SFG, Finch (2004) noted that, in general, a dramatic change towards the views of CT has occurred since the 21st century, and explains this change as follows:

ii) Acknowledgement of task-based language teaching including the communicative approach.
iii) Autonomy and effect have become pivotal concepts in ESL learning along with authenticity and learner-centeredness.
iv) Activities involved in language learning have now been recognised as teacher-centred/learner-centred, active/passive and authentic/non-authentic.
v) Language learning is now viewed as a highly complex and dynamic process, driven by affect.

Finch (2004) suggests it is helpful to view the ESL classroom as a room filled with individual systems, each subject to their own influences and needs. In other words, each learner is an independent, multi-faceted system that develops and changes through their interaction with parents, peers and others. This is on par with the notion that all of the learners are on different levels of ESL proficiency as stated in Chapter 1. Finch (2004) posits that the following conclusions can be drawn regarding a systems approach to teaching and learning ESL:

i) The learning of language should be viewed holistically rather than the sum of its constituent parts.
ii) Equifinality can be achieved in the ESL class by allowing each learner to work at their own speed, making learning achievements and goals appropriate to their current statuses and support from the teacher.
iii) Language learning should be seen as unpredictable and affected by its social environment.
iv) The ESL classroom should be viewed as an open system, subject to sudden change. This change may move the knowledge forward or even backward, depending on the influence at that point.

2.6.2   The value of SFL/SFG in the ESL classroom

Regarding the implementation of SFL in teaching methods, many scholars agree that implementing SFL in language teaching approaches can benefit natural language processing (Couchman & Whitelaw 2003; Matthiessen & Bateman 1991; Munro 2003). Some have argued that SFL is particularly suited to language instruction at secondary school level, since learners are required to produce more advanced tasks which require critical thinking skills (Baraceros 2013; Gebhard et al. 2013; Gebhard & Martin 2011; Slater & McCrocklin 2016). Critical thinking requires not only subject knowledge, but also what a person knows, and how the person interacts with the knowledge they hold (Baraceros 2013). Critical thinking in general involves:

i)   Logical thinking and the ability to successively reason about something to either prove its validity or falsity.

ii)   The process of assessing and evaluating present knowledge against new/other knowledge and to decide what is applicable in a given context.

iii)   The additional attainment of knowledge in order to broaden thinking and viewing the world.

iv)   Judging the quality of something not based on individual knowledge only, but on that of other cultures and societies.

v)   Individual outlook on and about the quality or value of things experienced in an extensive society

vi)   Deciding and perceiving the true value or worth of something based on the strength and constancy of arguments put forward.

vii)   Guiding a person to make the best and most informed decision amid several options based on personal knowledge, ideas of others and social / cultural standards (Baraceros 2013).

Baraceros (2013) postulates that SFG offers language features such as clauses or modes of discourse to express meanings of language that in fact portray and mirror social events and opinions that can support the opinions of individuals. In order to achieve this level of sophisticated reasoning, the individual needs to be able to define, analyse and compare events and other opinions. SFG supports dialogical activities which in turn supports and motivates cultural interaction. The real-life context conversations created by a SFG approach open the minds of interlocutors to situations in reality where they are able to generate reasons, arguments and solutions to situations.

SFG also offers an array of language features that supports the expression of multiple meanings of language, in other words, the use of bigger units of modes of discourse (narration, description and argumentation) results in deeper knowledge about things, which ultimately leads to better argumentation of views in a coherent and cohesive manner. SFG therefore involves the development of interactive language features that express three kinds of meanings: ideational (for the acquisition of knowledge), interpersonal (for initiating and developing human relations) and textual (for coherently and meaningfully conveying knowledge and opinions to others). The advantage of implementing a SFG approach in language teaching is

that while grammar is taught and developed in L2 learners, critical thinking skills are developed simultaneously (Baraceros 2013; Montes *et al.* 2014; Slater & McCroclin 2016).

2.6.3   Adopting SFG into grammar lessons

In secondary school, learners cannot succeed academically if they cannot make meaning of the content of the various subjects that they study – learners need to be able to identify key ideas and features of textual content in order to progress from one grade to the next (Coffin 2010; Gebhard 2011; Schleppegrell 2010; Schulze 2015).

It is suggested by Schulze (2015) that teachers could perform a pre-instructional linguistic analysis of the texts that their learners will encounter in class, in an attempt to identify potential linguistic problem areas. This pre-identification of possible challenges provides teachers with the opportunity to investigate features of the field of discourse, i.e. identifying participants and processes that might create stumble blocks in the learners' construction of meaning in texts. This will assist the teacher in pinpointing areas where explicit teaching might be required in order for learners to fully grasp the textual content at hand. For example, the first chapter of a new novel might introduce several characters who are all involved in different activities; this may be confusing to learners and if they do not understand the specific role of each character from the beginning of the novel, they might lose interest in the novel all together.

In a SFG approach, other forms of pre-instructional preparation of the lesson should focus on the mode of the text, and should identify particular structures (e.g. letter of complaint format) that learners might find problematic (Fisher & Frey 2012; Schulze 2015). Emphasis should be placed on the general organisation of a text, in other words, how the ideas are connected throughout, how ideas are developed and advanced, the use of transitions and of nominalisations. Learners should be made fully aware of these features that are at play in texts, in order to develop their academic writing skills. Pre-instructional preparation, according to (Fisher & Frey 2012; Schulze 2015), will create greater awareness of the academic language demands in the teacher and will subsequently lead to the designing of more language-focused lessons that will in turn scaffold learners' ability to make meaning of grade-level texts. In other words, while focusing on reading and comprehension of content-based texts, there are ample opportunities for the ESL teacher to facilitate and incorporate grammar lessons as the need arises, for example, the texts might be futuristic in nature, which provides an opportunity to revisit and teach aspects of the future tense.

The main obstacle in implementing SFG in grammar teaching programmes is a lack of resources (Al Hamnady 2010; Wang 2010). Teachers might want to implement SFG into their syllabus, but lack the knowhow and resources to do so. SFG is complex in nature and the seminal work (Halliday 1985) is rather voluminous (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014) – this may inhibit teachers from implementing it. Teachers that have no theoretical foundation in SFG might find it too intimidating and confusing to introduce it as an approach in the classroom (Halliday 2009). Furthermore, there is not much information available on how to implement SFG in the classroom, and extensive internet searches for resources (e.g. examples of lesson plans) by the researcher have rendered very little information for the current study. As such, it

might be challenging for a teacher to produce proper lesson plans using SFG to instruct ESL grammar.

2.6.4   *The role of transitivity in SFG-based ESL learning*

Teachers should ideally focus on the aspect of transitivity[5] in language systems as proposed in SFG (Cunanan 2011; Schleppegrell 2004; Zheng, Yang & Ge 2014). This will emphasise how the *doing, thinking, saying* and *being* verbs (including their *how, where and when*) operate in a language. In other words, the awareness of what is physically done; mentally thought and how experiences are related to concepts in clauses can assist ESL learners to organise textual development and creation. Explicit focus on transitivity will deepen ESL users' understanding of texts and will help learner to make effective language choices when performing productive tasks.

The aforementioned scholars also advocate the use and building of metalanguage as crucial in the process of understanding each stage of a genre/text, while providing learners with guidelines in peer evaluation of each other's work. In other words, when writing an essay, learners can edit each other's work in order to develop their own understanding of writing and producing texts. SFG focuses on texts as a whole and the messages they convey. The South African prescribed ESL syllabus shares this focus but with the difference that there is an explicit focus on teaching grammar constructs and a focus on forms. This means that teachers often focus on the grammar construct only, without addressing the context(s) in which the particular construct may appear. This problem can be addresses through reference to 'transitivity' in lessons. In other words, after introducing the grammatical construct, the teacher should refer to a suitable text where the grammatical construct can then be practised within its proper context and ESL learners are exposed to the choices transitivity offers. Research found that the aspect of SFG transitivity helped learners to unpack text and formulate proper responses to the text (Cunanan 2011; Schleppegrell 2014; Zheng *et al.* 2014)

2.6.5.   *Applying SFG beyond the technical feature of ESL tasks*

Other options for integrating SFG into classrooms are to focus on SFG only when assessing tasks and to provide learners with feedback that will lead to the development of their productive tasks; this means that corrections are not an option, but to ask questions that go beyond the technical features and register of the tasks in order to stimulate and support students in formulating the meaning relationships they need to make the text successful (Coffin 2010; Dare 2010; Derewianka & Jones 2010). Such feedback will create awareness of the relationships between register, meaning and context in the ESL learners (Coffin 2010).

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[5] Transitivity in SFG refers to the choice between the three main processes that can be presented in a sentence: a) a "material" process as in *I eat the pizza.*

  b) a "mental" process as in *I thought of Rosa.*

  c) a "relational" process as in *This food is delicious.*

Further choices related to transitivity are participants and circumstances involved in the processes. This concept will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

The collection and analysis of spoken and written work of learners may also assist teachers to design interventions based on SFG that will help learners in advance (before attempting the task) to create meaningful texts (Coffin 2010; Derewianka & Jones 2010). In other words, it is suggested that the teacher does not explicitly teach SFG to the learners, but apply it in her personal assessment of learner tasks, for example, applying the principles of 'transitivity' to the assessment of an essay by providing the learner comments that would implicitly lead the learner to make those choices in correcting the 'errors'. An example would be where a learner produced an essay about his dog and wrote an elementary sentence: *I love my dog.* In order to develop the writing creatively, the teacher can ask questions such as: *Why do you love your dog? What does your dog do that is cute? What does your dog look like?* In essence these types of questions refer to the utilisation of traditional POS, namely adjectives and adverbs, and thus support the grammar teaching process. Coffin and other scholars do not suggest discarding grammar teaching, instead there is a focus on grammar to produce more proficient tasks (Coffin 2010; Dare 2010; Derewianka & Jones 2010; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). A few of the advantages of integrating SFG into the ESL grammar class are presented below as reported by the aforementioned scholars:

i) Learners are required to think in 'meaningful chunks' in SFG and not in standard terms, which means that the traditional function of the grammatical class (verb, subject, noun etc.) must now be looked at as a functional chunk/group that represents not only one subject or action but points out that a noun group, for example, can have a number of different functions. It can have an experiential function (representing the participants in in events; people, places and things), it can have an interpersonal function (creating patterns of interaction among the participants) and it can have a textual function (indicating how a text is organised and developed).

ii) The usefulness of SFG lies in these real-life functions since the learner has a more immediate awareness and experience of the relevance of the texts to their everyday lives through personal experiences connected to the functional situations.

iii) Teachers who embrace SFG in certain areas of grammar teaching have found it manageable and useful opposed to those who take on everything at once. The current study followed this route and applied only certain aspects of SFG in order to improve ESL grammar proficiency.

iv) The purpose of SFG is to support and facilitate the grammatical categories that recognise the functions of texts and not to undermine traditional grammar and structure. SFG offers teachers other ways 'into' texts that focus on relevance first and gradually lead to the grammatical structures that underpin texts. Entering at the level of cultural context, students can become aware of how different cultures interact and how their cultural values and beliefs influence language choices, for example, folk lore belongs to a cultural community and should be viewed from the perspective of that particular cultural community.

v) Entering texts through genre, students are made aware of the specific purposes of various texts in society and how grammatical patterns assist and contribute to

meaning, for example, when dealing with a drama, learners should be aware of 'direct' speech.

vi) Entering texts through register, students become aware of relationships between various factors in different contexts and how such interactions and relationships influence the choices they make from the language system. Students may in this case investigate the same topic but written for different audiences; thus texts in which the field and mode are constant but the tenor varies, for example, an advertisement aimed at medical doctors and an advertisement aimed at the general public. Grammatically the students are required to know structuring such texts and the various choices of punctuation, parts of speech and tense to apply.

vii) Entering texts through metafunctions provides students the opportunity to experience how language is used to create meaning across the curriculum (all areas of study, e.g. mathematics, science, commerce etc.). This means that ESL learners are able to apply their linguistic knowledge in all fields of their content subjects.

viii) Entering texts through mode (type of text) provides students the opportunity to construct and interpret spoken, written, visual and digital texts through asking questions of purpose, genre, target audience and register, for example, to recognise the difference between the various forms that text can appear in. Mode also requires knowledge of grammar, since meaningful text is created through applying the grammar of the language correctly.

ix) Entering texts through grammar serves the purpose of showing students how the grammatical structures (clauses and phrases) work together to construct meaningful texts, for example, writing an essay.

2.7   The way forward with SFG in ESL classrooms

More studies on using SFG in ESL classrooms are needed (Al Hamnady 2012; Dare 2010, Derewianka & Jones 2010; Larsen-Freeman 2015), but existing research shows that learners take to SFG with ease (Dare 2010). Dare (2010) asserts that over a period of twenty years as educator, he has become convinced that grammar instruction based on the SFG model is the most effective tool for understanding how language works to create meaning. Dare further states that metalanguage underpins the success of 'talking about language'. In other words, learners need to develop a rich metalanguage, which according to Martin (2006) becomes scaffolding that, in turn, becomes permanent knowledge. Most researchers agree that the richer the metalanguage we provide to learners, the stronger and more enduring their scaffolding becomes (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014; Martin 2006; Slater & McCrocklin 2016).

2.8   Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher provided a working definition for the concept 'grammar' (i.e. 'Grammar as emergent phenomenon' and 'Grammar as texture approach'), and explored the importance of grammar instruction in the L2 classroom, as well as the various approaches to L2 grammar instruction and learning that have surfaced over the years. The impact of SLA research with regards to grammar instruction, or lack thereof, was discussed, and based on this it was suggested that instructional approaches based on less restrictive views of grammar (such

as in SFG and CT) should be considered more generally, since they might be more effective, given the non-linear development of L2 competence (grammar competence in particular) and the variability in the proficiency levels of individual L2 learners.

Weideman (2009) asserts that CT may offer relevance and solutions to the various language problems such as language usage, growth, acquisition and status in South Africa. Alemni, Daltarifard and Patrut (2011) state that the social participation view of L2 learning is strongly supported by CT, which in turn emphasises social influence on L2 learning and development, as proposed by Halliday's SFL. From the brief discussion of both SFL/SFG and CT in this chapter, it seems apparent that there is a link between CT and SFL, in that both CT and SFL view language as a two-fold concept: first language comprises a fixed set of units or rules, and secondly language is a functional tool for communicating ideas in an ever-changing world.

Based on these views, in the present study, SFG (supported by CT) will be investigated as a more suitable framework on which to base ESL instruction and intervention generally, and ESL grammar teaching in particular. The theories which were introduced towards the end of Chapter 2 (CT and SFG) will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 3, as these theories served as theoretical framework in the present study.

CHAPTER 3
SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS AND SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR AS THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Chapter 2 defined grammar as a concept for this study and presented a discussion on several traditional and contemporary approaches to L2 grammar learning and teaching. Towards the end of Chapter 2, it was argued that SFG and CT provide useful approaches for understanding language development generally, and grammar development specifically, in L2 learning, and it was suggested that instructional programmes would benefit from adopting the perspectives of grammar suggested by these frameworks. The connection between CT and SFG was discussed, and the advantages of implementing SFG in the ESL classroom were also introduced. Chapter 3 continues to build on this argument, by providing an in-depth discussion of Halliday's SFL, and more specifically of SFG, which was used to inform the design of the intervention programme in the present study. This chapter will further conceptualise the rationale for integrating certain aspects of SFG with more traditional ESL grammar teaching methods.

In order to position SFG and CT in the field of (second) language acquisition theory, this chapter will however start off with a brief overview of other prominent theories of SLA. Following this, CT and SFG will be unpacked. The process of developing the SFG-based intervention programme, as well as examples of the intervention programme, will be presented in Chapter 4.

3.1   An overview of (second) language acquisition theories

The period preceding the work of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) viewed morphology (the study of morphemes, which are the smallest units in a language) to be at the heart of language. In other words, the emphasis was on how words were formed rather than on how words worked together to produce language. According to Kemmer (2009), Saussure aimed to break away from studying language in isolation (as individual and unconnected sounds and morphemes), by viewing language as an expression of connected linguistic units which has real meaning in a speaker's mind. Saussure promoted the idea that language functions as a system and not as unrelated bits and pieces and claimed that language possesses both an individual and social dimension, meaning that language is not a random collection of naming by pointing at things. Saussure believed that humans have an instinctive capacity for the construction of languages, which he thought of as a system of distinct signs. The signs in the system are used to express distinct ideas, and knowledge of how to group words together in order to achieve successful communication is vital in this system. As will become clear in the section 3.2 of this chapter, Saussure's work inspired later theories such as SFL and SFG (Halliday 1967), which were utilised for the theoretical framework in the present study.

Saussure revolutionised theory-building in the field of language acquisition, and the quest to explain the faculties and processes related to language acquisition and learning led to various theories of L1 and L2 acquisition and learning in the 20th century. A brief overview of

the most prominent theories is presented in the following sections, in order to contextualise the development of CT and SFG.

3.1.1   *Structuralism and Behaviourism*

Structuralism evolved between 1930 and 1950, and was based on the ideas of the Prague School of Linguistics. Structuralism is defined as an approach that explores the relationships between fundamental elements in language, upon which other higher-order mental, linguistic and social structures are built (Assaiqeli 2013). Similar to Saussure, Structuralists viewed language as a patterned system composed of interdependent elements rather than a collection of unrelated, unconnected individual elements. In the United States, the development of Structuralism was led by Bloomfield, who investigated and described parole of speech (i.e. the observable and outward manifestation of language). Bloomfield felt that linguistics should deal objectively and systematically with observable language data and more or less ignored the psychological processes and pragmatic dimensions of language. In other words, Bloomfield was more interested the 'form' of a language than in 'meaning in context' ('what' is said rather than 'how' it is said) – the latter he regarded as beyond research. Based on the ideas of Structuralism, Bloomfield developed a L2 teaching programme in 1939 (the Audiolingual Method – cf. section 2.6). As mentioned in chapter 2, the Audiolingual Method was oral-based, and required L2 learners to produce imitations of the language produced by an informant (a L1 speaker). As such, the idea was that a L2 can be learned via intensive practice and drill.

In the 1950s and 1960s, it became popular to apply Behaviourism (the general theory proposed by John Watson that all actions of animals and humans are learnt behaviours) to all kinds of learning, including first and second language acquisition. B.F. Skinner is most associated with a Behaviourist Theory of language acquisition. Skinner (1957) also rejected the role of cognition in language acquisition, based on the fact that mental processes could not be measured or directly observed (Atkinson 2011). Skinner proposed the idea of 'operant conditioning' (an extension of classical conditioning), which explains how conditioning works in language acquisition. According to Skinner, young children mimic the language that they hear in their environment (produced by other humans). Through a process that involves imitation, rewards and habit formation, children eventually learn all the linguistic behaviours that are presented to them in a specific social environment (Kuhl 2004; Lightbown & Spada 1999; Stefansson 2013). When children attempt to speak, they are typically praised and given positive feedback for their efforts, which encourages further attempts. Assaiqeli (2013), Lightbown and Spada (2013) and Mitchell, Myles and Marsden (2013) all agree that, similar to Structuralism, Behaviourism also focuses on parole of language and ignores the abstract, inner and unobservable system of language. Behaviourism thus did not account for the inner processes involved in language acquisition, but provided, on some level, an indication of the intuitive processes at play in language acquisition (Kuhl 2004).

With regards to SLA, Behaviourists proposed that L2 learning happens in much the same way as L1 learning (i.e. via a process of imitation, repetition and feedback). However, the learner is thought to already have one set of learnt linguistic behaviour (the L1) which would interfere with the learning of a new set of behaviour (the L2). One prominent idea of the

Behaviourist period that greatly affected L2 instructional practise was that this interference needed to be countered, otherwise L2 learners would never reach accuracy in their L2 productions. It was commonly thought that drills and repetition of L2 patterns were necessary in order to ensure that habit formation (or rule learning) will be successful in the L2.

3.1.2 *Cognitivist theories of language acquisition*

After the 1960's, following a 'cognitive revolution' that was inspired by Noam Chomsky, language acquisition theory followed a mainly cognitivist approach. Cognitivist approaches to L1 and L2 learning were in direct contrast to Structuralism and Behaviourism (Chomsky 1959). Chomsky's negative view of these theories set the pace for cognitivist thinking and it is reported by Atkinson (2011) that psychologists widely started to study the mind instead of observable actions. Chomsky's objection with regards to Structuralism was that the rules of a linguistic system could not be retrieved from a mass of data comprising utterances which were merely a catalogue of what already happened, but could not predict what would still happen. In other words, Chomsky regarded Structuralism as a limited system that would not allow an individual to deduce a clear set of rules about how a particular language system (or a particular grammar) works. Chomsky claimed that Structuralism could not account for the non-linear, hierarchical and abstract organisation of syntax or for its creativity. In other words, Chomsky found Structuralism too rigid and incapable of explaining the flexibility of linguistic units within a language system, for example, how it is possible to create a vast number of novel sentences in a particular language system. Chomsky's aim was to explain the nature of the cognitive representation that native speakers have of a particular linguistic system. He held the idea that linguistic knowledge and language learning/acquisition was based on rule learning, and that corrective feedback played no role in the process of language learning.

Chomsky's main critique of Behaviourism was that it cannot account for the fact that children often produce utterances that could not have heard from parents or other speakers in the environment. From a very early age, children string words together in various combinations (often in an ungrammatical manner) which cannot all be repetitions of what they have heard. Chomsky argued that children have 'instinctive/innate knowledge' of language, which allows them to build sentences using the existing knowledge that they have of words. Theorists in favour of an Innatist approach to language acquisition, believe that language is 'learned' (Chomsky 1959, 1975), and that children are 'biologically programmed' for language acquisition. Aitchison (1999) concurs and mentions that adult language is highly confusing and often incomplete to children, which means that children must have some mechanism in place to construct a grammar from incomplete data. The main point of Innatism is thus that all children are born with an innate cognitive-biological capacity to acquire language, which is unique to human beings and which provides humans with a 'blue-print' of language. This innate knowledge became known as Universal Grammar (UG), and children activate UG via the Language Acquisition Device (LAD). The point here is that Chomsky and other Innatists proposed that children are born with the innate propensity for language acquisition and the social environment acts only as a trigger for in language acquisition.

Many current SLA researchers still maintain a strong cognitive orientation, which focuses on identifying the nature of the underlying L2 system, and has the (almost) exclusive aim to explain successes and failures in the L2 developmental process. Doughty and Long (2003a) hold that language learning follows the same pattern as any other learning and is ultimately underpinned by changes in the learner's internal mental state. According to Doughty and Long, this presumption secures SLA as a study field within cognitive science.

Chomsky positioned the study of linguistics exclusively as a mental process by excluding language in use as a dimension of linguistic research (Atkinson 2011). He claimed that language in use was so contaminated by human frailties that it was impossible to study language as a system (Chomsky 1957). However, many other scholars, for example Candlin and Mercer (2001), Doughty and Long 2003a), Halliday (1961; 1975, 2010), Hayes (2009), Larsen-Freeman (1997) and Wright (2000) maintain that social environmental influences are as crucial as Innateness in the process of language acquisition, which led to the formation of Socio-Constructivist and Functional theories of language acquisition.

3.1.3   Socio-Constructivist theories of language acquisition

A Socio-Constructivist view of SLA holds that language is not an isolated phenomenon, and that it cannot be understood outside of its social context (Gass & Selinker 2008; Halliday 2010; Larsen-Freeman 2015). Gass and Selinker (2008) argue that language acquisition does not only depend on the cognition of the learner, but also on social circumstances. All language acquisition, including SLA, is anchored in the social system (religion, beliefs, culture) that a learner is exposed to. L2 learning in a formal classroom context is thus unlikely to be representative of the true context in which the language is used. Gass and Selinker (2008) further claim that language is a tool that mediates between individuals and their environment. This view is based on Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory that language is the primary tool available to humans to physically and socially connect to their environment. Vygotsky (1986) describes learning as the result of interpersonal activity. In other words, individual functioning is dependent on interpersonal activity, meaning that humans learn from each other. According to Gass and Selinker (2008) and Larsen-Freeman (2015) this explains and embraces the social nature of learning which involves collaborative learning (e.g. the interaction between teacher and learners, or between peers), in a specific socio-cultural environment.

Another important idea in Socio-Constructivism is that language is not only shaped within a particular culture, but that the particular culture in which a language occurs is also shaped by that language (Halliday 1975). Halliday sees language as a social semiotic system, i.e. a system of signs used for the purpose of communication in specific social contexts, e.g. to request information such as directions (Halliday 1975). Halliday (1975) posed that when a child acquires his or her mother tongue, he or she also acquires the 'meaning potential' (i.e. the semantics)[6] of the particular language. Of importance to this study is the role that semantics

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[6]Semantics refer to the relationship between the words of a language, the persons using the language and the things in the world to which these words refer or relate to, for example, in a particular speech community there needs to be consensus about the names of 'things' such as *pig* to ensure that when people refer to a *pig* everyone

plays in grammatical analysis. Interpretive semantics is a theory about the 'place' of meaning in a model of Generative Grammar (a type of grammar that attempts to describe, define and generate all the 'grammatical' sentences of a language and no 'ungrammatical' sentences). Interpretive grammar studies how the words and sentence structure of sentences reveal meaning and sees meaning as part of the grammar, while Generative Grammar sees meaning as the most basic part of a grammar, which can only be revealed through the form of the sentence it appears in (Richards & Schmidt 2010). Halliday (1975) holds that a child will acquire a set of meanings and it then becomes the child's task to construct the system of meanings into a unique model, that fits he child's context. In other words, the child forms an idea of a concept based on a singular event (for example, thanking a parent for a sweet), but it becomes the child's task to expand and apply this concept (thanking) to other contexts (e.g. thanking a grandmother for a cookie). The child therefore needs to realise that one thanks others for various things in various contexts. Halliday (1975; 2004) claims that these meaning constructing processes depend on social interaction, although they happen in an individual's mind and are therefore also cognitive processes. In fact, it is stated by Halliday (1975) that language acquisition is a process (and not a capacity as proposed by Innatism), and that the system of meanings for each child progresses as the child matures cognitively and socially.

Some scholars working in the field of Socio-Constructivism, like Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), focus specifically on how language is used in a particular context to fulfill a particular function. Halliday (1975) became the main theorist in the development of Functional theories of language acquisition (his approach (SFL) will be the focus of the second part of this chapter). Functionalists explore language as complete texts constructed by language users to communicate a specific meaning and that serves a specific function. In Functionalist approaches to language acquisition, grammar is not understood as an isolated part of language, but as a functional system, that provides the user with some of the resources that are needed to construct meaningful messages, and thus contributes to the meaning-making process (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). Halliday states that is necessary to plot an overview of language that will guide the grammarian and enable him to pin-point his exact location along the exploration of systemic functionality. SFL adopts a comprehensive approach to language, i.e. any aspect of language should be understood within the totally of the context in which it is used. In other words, any aspect of language forms a part of the context and is in turn influenced by the context that it is forms part of.

3.1.4 A contemporary theory of SLA: Complexity Theory

Larsen-Freeman (2009; 2011) proposed that SLA and second language development is best understood by adopting a CT approach. Originally, Larsen-Freeman adhered to a Chomskyan approach to understand SLA, but more recently, she started viewing SLA as a psycholinguistic

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in the particular speech community understands what it is (Richards & Schmidt 2010). Semantics further involve the different types of meanings attached to words, i.e. *pig* carries a 'denotative meaning' (the true/literal pig in the world) or a 'connotative meaning' (figurative meaning). The connotative meaning is linked to personal experiences attached to a word and is mostly used to compare feelings or characteristics shared with a particular word, e.g. calling someone a *pig* does not refer to the individual but certain *pig*-like characteristics the person displays (e.g. bad table manners may remind of the messy manner pigs eat their food).

and social process, rather than merely a linguistic process (Larsen-Freeman & Long 1991) Larsen-Freeman (2011) states that Cognitivism is too restricting and narrow-focused, since research over the past thirty years clearly shows that factors other than cognition, such as aptitude, learning strategies, interaction effects, instructional approaches and socio-affective factors all play a significant role in SLA. Importantly, Larsen-Freeman (2009; 2011) acknowledges that these other factors influence achievement, and that learner variability in studies cannot be ignored or treated as static backdrops in the SLA process Critically, L2 teaching involves more than a simple process of transferring mental systems from head to head; and L2 development is neither unidirectional nor linear. Ellis and Larsen-Freeman (2009) assert that differences in language use among ESL learners are due to the regularity of language use and experience, which has a direct influence and impact on what emerges from the learners' cognitive systems. All in all, this means that alternative approaches need to be considered to explain SLA.

According to Larsen-Freeman (2011), one possible alternative approach lies in the tenets of CT. CT originated in the natural sciences (Weaver 1948) and deals with organised complexity, meaning that it deals with problems where the number of variables is not the defining factor, but rather that all of the factors are dealt with simultaneously in an organic whole, instead of looking at the influence of individual factors. Proponents of CT oppose reductionism that explain entities as the sum of their parts and instead promote a systems approach. Thus, instead of focusing on the individual functions of parts in a system, the focus is rather on the relationships among the parts that connect them to the whole. These relationships do however change continually, and some parts may be more important than others at certain points in time. Complex systems self-organise and re-organise via the interaction of their parts, e.g. a school of fish exists because of many individual fish interacting in a certain manner to form the whole. Mitchell (2003) describes self-organisation as the spontaneous creation of more complex order; without outside influence or any central plan, i.e. stabilities in a dynamic system become visible to bring order. Heylingen (2008) describes these dynamic processes as responsible for the patterns and organised arrangement of both the natural world and fields of the mind, culture and society.

Relating CT to SLA would mean that language acquisition is seen as a dynamic system, which is complex and adaptive, and which emerges bottom-up from interactions of multiple and various agents in the context of any given speech community (Larsen-Freeman 1997; 2006; Ellis & Larsen-Freeman 2009). Larsen-Freeman (2011) identified seven principles of CT that are could be applied to explain SLA. These principles are summarised below:

i)   Complex systems are open and dynamic, meaning that they have no boundaries and exist only because of the inflows feeding them (which means they disappear in the absence of these inflows). Osberg (2008) holds that unlike the interlanguage model of SLA, where the learner moves in a linear manner from a state of no knowledge to a state of knowledge, a complex system does not have a clear beginning or end state. CT views learning as the creation of one's own conditions for development, in an environment where all the factors influencing learning freely interacts

(Kramsch 2012; Larsen-Freeman 2011). Systems in CT are always susceptible to change, since the system is influenced by the environment. Changes might not always happen in a neat linear manner because unexpected interactions can take place at any point in time.

ii) Complex systems operate under conditions that are not in equilibrium. When applied to learning, this means that when new knowledge is added to the system, already acquired knowledge changes, resulting in the re-signifying and rearrangement of concepts (Kramsch 2012; Larsen-Freeman 2011). Newly acquired knowledge does not automatically add itself to existing knowledge of a concept. The equilibrium a learner had reached in a preceding state of knowledge thus gets disrupted and needs to be restored.

iii) Complex systems adjust through environmental interaction and internally through restructuring and self-organisation (Kramsch 2012; Larsen-Freeman 2011). Kramsch describes systems as systems because of the various components they comprise of and interact with. Self-organisation refers to any set of processes in which order arises through the interaction of all the components (Kramsch 2012; Larsen-Freeman 2011; Mitchell 2003). There are no external factors involved in the self-organisation of a system, and the arrangements become constant and convert within the system as further usage occurs.

iv) The strength of interactions between factors in a complex system changes over time: What this means is that there are often various courses possible between components, which can be facilitated in varied ways. In a complex learning system, a multitude of personality factors and learning styles interact with other components in the system, such as the learning environment and the learning materials. The strength of the interaction between any two factors in the system may vary at different time points.

v) The complexity of a complex system is evolving: all the components in a complex system work together and therefore the system is not built on one agent. Through soft-assembly and co-adaptation, patterns and/or rules emerge. This means that in terms of human learning, there is no linear causation between what is taught and what is learnt. Learning is not the result of any one factor but an appearance of the interaction among numerous components.

vi) The milieu in which the components of a system operate is part of a complex system of meaning-making: The milieu is not treated as a 'backdrop' to human learning in complex systems. Rather, the context in which learning takes place should be seen as the very object of learning.

vii) Complex systems demonstrate behaviour over a series of timescales: This principle has two consequences: i) variation in complex systems tend to be chaotic – this means that it is not always predictable what (previously learnt) knowledge will be available to the learner at a specific time point: past experiences may sometimes be blocked due to interacting factors, or contrariwise, a learner may be triggered to remember a specific learning experience, which might facilitate access to the knowledge associated with the experience; ii) complex systems rehearse – this means that they tend to revisit a learning area over and over. For example, if a

person first learns Spanish as a foreign language, and then attempts to learn Russian, the person is likely to revisit patterns that were learnt for the first system (Spanish), simply because of being in the acquainted schedule of 'learning a foreign language'.

According to Hensley (2010), researchers who have applied the above principles in their SLA research have confirmed that thinking about SLA as a complex system is a particularly helpful framework to understand variation in L2 learning and development.

For instance, Seedhouse (2010) described L2 learning as a dynamic process, and proposed that language learning should not be seen as a static process of acquiring grammar rules and principles, but rather as an adaptive system that changes constantly to fit new circumstances. Larsen-Freeman (2011) is of the view that a L2 learner does not merely learn the rule and then applies it, but that the rule in fact emerges from the interaction with other constituents in the system and then illuminates itself to the user. This characteristic of L2 learning means that the SLA system is unpredictable and non-linear. Despite the linear nature of grammar textbooks, and the sequential order in which concepts are presented in a syllabus, actual learning does not take place in an orderly manner. New knowledge technically relies on and relates to concepts learned earlier, and assists learners in restructuring concepts, but as predicted in CT, it is not the case that already acquired knowledge of the L2 exists in a perfect balance with newly introduced knowledge about the L2. Kramsch (2012) illustrates this point with the way in which learners acquire the 'present perfect' tense in ESL. The present perfect tense is a past tense form but is grammatically constructed by combining a present form of an auxiliary with a past participle (e.g. *She has been*). When learners encounter this 'new' past tense configuration, they often struggle to acquire it, even though they already know the present form of the auxiliary verb and merely have to add the past participle of the verb. This does not happen automatically though; learners first have to reconstruct their concept of the auxiliary *has* before being able to use this form to construct the present perfect tense (Kramsch 2012).

Scholars such as Halliday (2010), Larsen-Freeman and Camron (2008), Kramsch (2012), Toolan (2003) are all in favour of studying SLA as an integrated system of interactions and experiences that are continually created to meet new demands and circumstances as the world changes. They all argue that CT will help SLA scholars and teachers to avoid decontexualised instruction of additional languages. CT can easily account for the fact that language does not comprise self-governing concepts, and that learning a language cannot only entail working through examples in a textbook. Actual interaction and feedback from other users are necessary to negotiate and construct meaning in the use of the L2 in the real world. Language is not like content subjects, such as mathematics or history and therefore depends heavily on the interaction of the language user's interaction with the world.

It is well known that individual differences, including language aptitude, motivation, learning styles, anxiety and so on, add to the complexity of SLA. In a CT approach to SLA, these individual factors will be considered instead of ignored (Kramsch 2012), which will give further comprehension into the deviations observed in the interlanguages of individual learners, as well as the difference in proficiency levels among L2 learners who seemingly receive the

same input. Thus, although some innate cognitive processes may exist with regards to SLA, it is more accurate to say that interlanguage systems materialise from the use of language, in a real-life context (Ellis & Larsen-Freeman 2009). Hensley (2010) asserts that CT has the power to explain the uniqueness of L2 learners' interlanguages as a system that develops slowly towards a system that narrowly bears a resemblance to the system of a native user of the TL.

Larsen-Freeman (2011) identified eight well-known features of SLA, which have been reported by various scholars in the field, and that can be explained via the principles of CT. These features, and the CT principles that explain them, are presented in Table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1 SLA explained via Complexity Theory

SLA Feature	CT Principle
The interlanguage of L2 learners changes all the time (Ellis 2007).	Complex systems are dynamic
Both cognitive and functional linguists support non-linear development in L2 learning; fossilisation, as well as the fact that learners do not always acquire what they are taught, and sometimes learn things that they have not been taught which is evidence of non-linear development in L2 learning (De Bot 2005).	The complexity of a complex system is emergent which means that development is non-linear: the effect is disproportionate to the cause.
Language is a complex system comprising many interdependent components, including sounds, morphemes, words and sentences, as well as knowledge of how to combine these components to create meaningful utterances (Van Lier 2009).	Complex systems are chaotic in nature but have a deep, rational structure, where components interact systematically through self-organisation.
Smaller systems are always part of bigger systems (e.g. sounds form part of words; words form part of sentences, sentences form part of texts). (De Bot 2008).	Systems are part of a global pattern but unpredictable details (strange attractors) dictate how the system progresses.
Everything that happens in the language classroom may impact everything else, e.g. the teacher paying attention to just a few students may influence the motivation of other students in the class (De Bot 2005).	Complex systems are adaptive: the system organises itself according to specific factors that are present in the situation.
SLA is unpredictable. Teachers cannot foresee which learners will acquire knowledge about the L2 from planned lessons (Cvetek 2005; Finch 2004).	Complex systems are unpredictable: one cannot estimate future statuses of the system.
Language cannot be taught in constituent parts or in isolation, but depends on actual interaction with other speakers in the real world (Larsen-Freeman 1997).	The environment in which the constituents of a system operate is part of a complex system of meaning-making; the context in which learning

	takes place should be seen as the very objective of learning.
A problem in a certain area of language learning affects several other areas of language learning (the 'butterfly' effect) (De Bot 2007).	Complex systems are sensitive to primary conditions: a small change can lead to enormous effects.

One contemporary theory that connects very well with CT is SFL (Larsen-Freeman 2011). Both theories view language acquisition as a process that happens within a particular environment/context, and where all the relevant factors in the environment interact in a system that facilitates language learning. In the present study, specific tenets of CT were used to support the use of SFG in the self-intervention ESL grammar programme – this will be explained in more detail in Chapter 4. In the second part of this chapter, the focus will be on SFL, more specifically SFG, as a contemporary approach to ESL learning and teaching.

3.2   Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics

Halliday (1976; 2010; 2014) holds that text is produced whenever people speak or write. Text refers to any instance of language, which is produced in any medium that is sensible to a person who knows the language. In other words, an Italian speaking person will understand Italian text but might not understand German text. It is also text that listeners and readers engage with and interpret when communicating with each other (Halliday 2010; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). The most important fact about text is that it always functions within a context (Halliday & Hasan 1998; Halliday 2010). Halliday (2014) therefore views language as a resource for creating meaningful discourse within a given context. Two main viewpoints have been established for exploring text.

3.2.1   Exploring text as artefact or specimen

The first perspective is to focus on a text in its own right (as an artefact). This means that the focus is on questions such as *What does the text mean? What function does the text serve?* and *Why is the text valued as it is?* Some texts may carry more significance than others, because of the origin of the text, which renders the text more valuable in a specific context (e.g. the speeches of Winston Churchill's will be valued more in the United Kingdom than in South Africa).

The second perspective is to view text as a specimen. This relates to all texts being valued equally for what they reveal about the structure and grammar of the specific language in which they are presented. This perspective, promoted by Halliday, uses the text to gather more information about how a language is used for creating meaningful text. An obvious relationship between structure and meaning exists, in the sense that one cannot decide on the meaning of a text unless it is related to its linguistic system as a whole. Furthermore, a text cannot be used as window on the structure (system) of a language unless its meaning is clear (Halliday 1976; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). In other words, texts and their respective meanings can only become meaningful within its particular and intended contexts.

3.2.2 *The constituency of text*

Halliday (1961; 1966; 1976; 2010; 2014) holds that the most apparent dimension of language is its compositional structure. This refers to 'constituency' - meaning that larger units of language consist of smaller ones. These constituent parts of the language work together to form the meaningful text used for communication, for example, alphabet letters are strung together to form words which are then strung together to form phrases and clauses, which eventually form the spoken or written text. In order to understand a text however, what is said needs to be positioned into a particular role in the whole text; meaning that it is important to understand the constituent parts (POS) individually and how they fit into the system of language. Words and clauses cannot merely be strung together for the sake of producing text – the appropriate choice of words and how (using the grammar rules) to string words together to create meaningful text is very important.

3.2.3 *The importance of context in evolving language systems*

Halliday (1961; 2010) posits that context is pivotal in all meaningful communication. A SFL approach to language accommodates the fact that language evolves constantly (because the world changes constantly) and subscribes to the notion that natural languages (human language) are not designed but indeed evolved systems and can hence not be seen as the sum of its parts (Matthiessen 2007). The Hallidayan view on ever-evolving language systems correlates with Larsen-Freeman's Complexity Theory (2011), which holds that the structure of the language system will remain the same while it allows for changes within the structure. In other words, language evolves and adapts with the changes in its environment. Halliday (1985) sees text, in a broad sense, as 'language that is functional'. This means that Halliday considers texts (written or spoken), in any language, to be constructs that contain social meaning in a concrete situation, and which should thus be viewed as semantic units containing potential meanings, rather than random collaboration of words and sentences (Halliday 1976; 2010; Halliday and Hasan 1998).

3.2.4 *Social circumstances and text creation*

Halliday (1994) states that a communicator's linguistic and functional choices are direct results of social circumstances (the immediate social context) and its influence on the communicator's perceptions. Haratyan (2011) agrees that this would be the reason for highlighting linguistic choices at discourse level, meaning that language is seen as a social phenomenon and is functional in the sense that it is concerned with the mechanisms of text structure, function and meaning. In SFL, the context of a text provides the point of departure for understanding the true meaning and intention of the text. Importantly, text refers to any form of communication and should not be confused with printed language only. Text types in SFL and SFG refer to narratives, discussions, expositions, information reports, procedures, poetry, explanations and recounts, irrespective of whether their mode of communication is verbal, mental or written (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004; 2014).

SFL is concerned with how the users of language generate utterances or texts to convey their intended meanings through the generalised meta-functions (personal knowledge of the language) to the outside world, where specific interactants/communicators and their social functions matter. According to Halliday (1978; 1985) three aspects of context are relevant in understanding language. These include 'Field' (what the text is all about), 'Tenor' (the participants and their functions) and 'Mode' (type and orientation of text). Halliday posits that Field, Tenor and Mode further influence the three identified meta-functions of language: 'Ideational' (our experiences), 'Interpersonal' (encoding of interactions in terms of *who, what, where, when, to whom, for how long*) and 'Textual' (written, spoken or thoughts).

Halliday's SFL (1961) organises language into four strata – semantics, lexicogrammar, phonology and phonetics. These four strata are further grouped into two stratal planes: the 'content' plane and the 'expression' plane (Halliday 1961; 1995; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). The content plane refers to the thought behind the expression and the expression plane refers to the verbalisation of the thought. Both of these planes operate within a specific context – it is knowledge about a specific environment that enables language users to combine the four strata into meaningful texts. What is important to know about the stratification of language is that when children learn to speak, they make use of a type of 'protolanguage', where the content is mapped directly onto the expression and there is no splitting up of the two stratal planes – content and expression. In other words, the child would, for example, produce the sound *memememe* to indicate that it wants its mother to pick it up. Older children and adult language users split the two stratal planes into their constituent parts: content splits up into semantics and lexicogrammar, while expression splits into phonology and phonetics (Halliday 1995). In other words, adults are able to concretise their thoughts and map specific words and their meanings into intelligible utterances or writing, using the grammatical patterns of the language to make meaning.

The social environment thus possesses a particular 'lexicogrammar' (i.e. the grammatical rules) and 'lexicon' (words) of a specific language. Halliday (1961) believes that grammar and vocabulary cannot be viewed as two separate components of language, but are in fact the two ends of a single continuum. In other words, a language user will choose specific words (lexis) based on his personal experiences, in order to communicate an intended message (using the constructs of the grammar), and this message will carry traces of social and cultural experiences. Butt et al. (2003) also state that lexicogrammar is realised in the message production of language, where we make choices between systems of sounds (speech), gestures (sign language) or symbols (writing systems) to create messages. The next section explores lexicogrammar as resource for creating meaning in SFL.

3.2.5   Lexicogrammar

Halliday (1961)) refers to the lexicogrammar of a language system as the linguistic resources which users draw on to communicate meaningfully. These resources include both the grammar and the lexis of the language. Lexicogrammar further refers to the relationship between the grammar and the vocabulary of a language. Halliday states that these resources are normally studied separately, but that lexicogrammatical patterns are increasingly being viewed as central

to language description and learning. Haratyan (2011) supports Halliday's view that the relationship between vocabulary and grammar is central to language learning. The lexicogrammar cline (continuum) demonstrates the meaning potential of single words in collaboration with other words to form new meaning: –grammar and lexis are seen as the endpoints of this continuum, and in between them we find POS such as prepositions, adverbs and conjunctions which help us to combine the two ends of the continuum in a meaningful way. The lexicogrammar cline for the sentence *We take pleasure in singing* is illustrated in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2 Lexicogrammar cline (based on Halliday & Matthiessen 2010)

Lexicogrammar cline		
Grammaticalised (appears in a large and fuzzy closed system)	Semi-grammaticalised (could appear together with large closed systems or with determinate and limited open sets)	Lexicalised (appears as determinate and limited open sets)
We take + pleasure	in	Singing

At this point it becomes necessary to distinguish between a 'closed system' and 'open sets' The lexicogrammar as posited by Halliday (1961) accommodates the application of single words and the meaning they hold in open sets commonly referred to as 'collocation'. Collocation refers to the way in which words are used together, i.e. specific prepositions are used with specific verbs, specific nouns and verbs are used together and specific adjectives and nouns appear together (Richards & Schmidt 2010). In English, for example, the word *bright* collocates with *star*, but not with *glass*: a *bright star* but a *shiny glass.* Halliday & Matthiessen (2014) describes the lexis end of the continuum as open sets that are specific in meaning, such as the example of a *bright star* but *a shiny glass*. The open-endedness of the lexis allows for various senses (degrees of intensity) of specific words. A word such as *tell* can take on various degrees of intensity, e.g. *order* (toned up), *ask* (toned down) or *forbid* (negative).

The other end of the continuum is referred to as the grammar, which is a closed system and ultimately referred to as the structure of the language. Dictionaries and thesauruses describe lexis, while grammar text books typically describe syntax and morphology (the grammar). It is argued that a language would need billions of words if it were to lexicalise all concepts instead of 'grammaticalising' some meanings. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) therefore posit it a necessary condition of language to grammaticalise meanings.

A grammatical system is characterised by three properties, viz. 'closure', 'generality' and 'proportionality', which can be explained as follows: grammaticalisation confirms that meaning is organised in a particular language as a closed system of mutually exclusive terms, linked with a general grouping and lastly displayed consistently throughout. In other words, as a closed system, meaningful text will always be displayed as either: positive or negative; past/present/future and singular/plural. This means that for a text to be meaningful, it needs to

follow the grammatical pattern for positive/negative, tense and plurality consistently throughout. For example, *He arrives yesterday and they all will not enjoy their party tonight** is ungrammatical and meaningless, whereas *He arrived yesterday and will hopefully enjoy the party tonight* is grammatical and meaningful (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). The ungrammatical text does not adhere to the pattern for meaningful text and applies incorrect tense, negativity and plurality which create a confusing message, whereas meaning is clear in the grammatical text since the pattern for positive/negative, tense and plurality is adhered to throughout the utterance. Halliday (2014) states that grammaticalisation is not static but dynamic, in that it is subject to change in some instances, depending on how or where it appears in the text to create meaningful expressions. Grammaticalisation accommodates exceptions to the rule such as strong and weak verbs in English, but it does not influence the proportionality of the tense used in the text, i.e. the appropriate tense is carried consistently throughout the entire text. An example of the previous point is: *The man ate his food and washed his hands but did not care to drink his water*, where the verbs *ate, washed, did not care* and *to drink* all represent their appropriate past tense forms, while appearing in various positions and with various other POS in the text.

Similar to Halliday, McGregor (2009) describes language as a system. Both scholars agree that the units of human languages interrelate to form a coherent whole, and that this takes place on two dimensions, namely a 'syntagmatic' and a 'paradigmatic' dimension. Syntagmatic relations refer to the relationships that linguistic units (e.g. words, clauses) have with other units because they appear together in a particular arrangement, e.g. *I gave Liam a pencil*, where the reader understands the relationship between who gives what to whom clearly. Therefore, the syntagmatic relationship refers to the grammatical combination of the words to make sense. It can further be understood that there is, for example, no animosity in *I gave Liam a pencil*, since *gave* carries a rather neutral meaning.

The paradigmatic dimension of how words in a text interrelate concerns the choices that a user has to substitute a word in the text, in order to create a different sense or tone. For instance, while *I threw Liam a pencil* follows a similar structure as *I gave Liam a pencil,* the word *threw* carries a strong, negative tone, which changes the interpretation of the action. The linguistic units in the two example sentences both have syntagmatic relations because of the sequences they appear in, and have a paradigmatic relationship with all lexical units that can potentially be used as substitutes in the sequence. A more detailed discussion of syntagmatic and paradigmatic relationships is presented in the next section.

3.2.5.1   *Syntagmatic and paradigmatic relationships*

As mentioned above, words do not appear randomly in language but occur in combinations with other units. The term 'syntagm' refers to any coherent grouping of words that forms a unit of meaning (McGregor 2009). Halliday (1966) describes a sequence of word classes such as *the beautiful straw hat from Spain* as a syntagm (in this phrase: determiner + adjective + noun + noun + preposition + noun). This sequential description of word classes however says very little of how the syntagm is organised or what it means, but the significance of the syntagm in

this case is that it realises a structure. A structure refers to an organic conformation of components that allows for functional analysis. This means that *hat* signifies the general grouping referred to and its function is designated as 'Thing' in SFG. The word *straw* denotes the class within this general grouping and its designated function is 'Classifier'[7], while *the* serves a pointing-out function, namely referring to a specific member of this class and is called a 'Deictic'[8]. The word *beautiful* is called Post-Deictic[9] and one of a special set of adjectives that occurs straight after the Deictic but also contributes to the pointing function. It is then only after the Thing/Noun that we find out that the *hat* is *from Spain,* which acts as Qualifier[10]. The functional analysis of this syntagm is presented in Table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3 Illustration of a Syntagm

The	beautiful	straw	hat	from Spain
Deictic	Post-Deictic	Classifier	Thing	Qualifier

According to Halliday (1961; 2010) language structure (i.e. the syntagmatic order) depends on an ordering system in which units are ranked according to their relationship to the whole text and are organised as 'a part of' the whole. In SFL grammar (SFG), this ordering system could be portrayed as a horizontal pattern such as *clause ~ phrase/group ~ word ~ morpheme.* This means that clauses can be broken down into phrases or groups that are made up of words and of the morphemes that build words, thus all 'is a part of' the whole The second dimension (portrayed as a vertical pattern) that words interrelate on is the paradigmatic dimension. This refers to the relations among words, in other words, to the fact that a whole range of words can potentially substitute words in a syntagm – this could be done to create a different meaning or tone to an utterance.

There are however, restrictions on how words can be grouped together. McGregor (2009) sees this as evidence for the idea that syntagmatic relations exist among words. The meaning of words in a language is, in part, dependent on the surrounding words that exist in a close paradigmatic relationship with them. In other words, the word *I* in English refers to *me* alone and not to other persons, while the use of the word *girl* or *boy* refers to a difference in gender and not necessarily one specific boy or girl. Meaning is achieved through the distinct linguistic choices in paradigmatic and syntagmatic levels of discourse. In other words, the language user should be aware of the various meanings of words themselves and further has to know how these different meanings interrelate with each other when strung together in sentences. In short, an effective communicator knows that there are choices available when

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[7] The word in a Noun Phrase that indicates the sub-class to which a Noun belongs, e.g. *iced water/flowing water*.

[8] A term or word or phrase that directly links an utterance to a specific time, person or place, e.g. *here, there, the, he, she, it.*

[9] Belongs to a special set of Adjectives that occurs directly after the Deictic, but also contributes to linking the utterance to a specific person, place or time.

[10] In Traditional Grammar a Qualifier is any linguistic unit (adjective, phrase, clause) that is part of a NOUN PHRASE and provides extra information about the noun, e.g. *his cheap car from Egypt*, where *his, cheap, from Egypt* are all qualifiers. In SFG it is any linguistic unit that is part of a group, provides extra information about the HEAD (NOUN) of the group and follows the HEAD. E.g. *his cheap car from Egypt*, where *from Egypt* is the qualifier.

stringing units of language together, but also knows that the grouping of linguistic units (POS) is controlled by the social and cultural context. The diagram (own interpretation) below illustrates the paradigmatic and syntagmatic relationships of words/units of language in sentences:
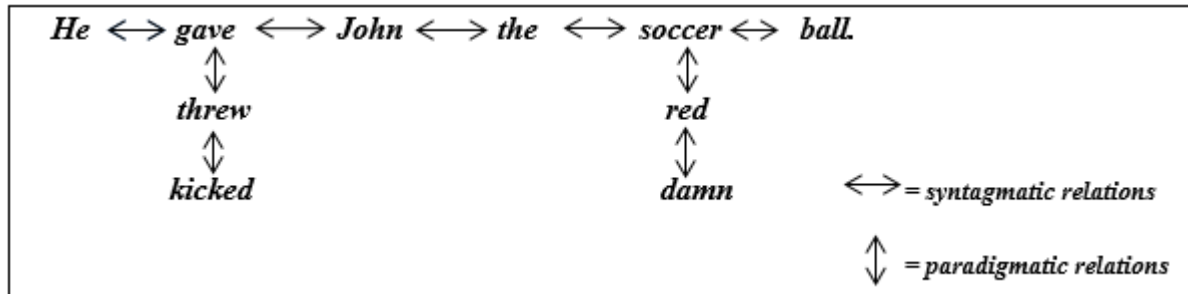
Figure 3.1 An illustration of paradigmatic and syntagmatic relationships

Figure 3.1 indicates the alternative options of only two of the words in the sentence (*gave* and *soccer*), but illustrates how the meaning of the sentence will change if these alternative options are selected. The verbs (*gave, threw, kicked)* appear in their past tense forms and all have the potential to mean that the ball was passed on to another person, while the adjectives (*soccer, red, damn*) all have the potential to describe the ball. Syntagmatically, in its horizontal construction, the sentence successfully conveys the message that the *soccer ball* was given to *John* by *him,* since all the words are grouped together correctly to form the intended message.

Paradigmatically (when considering the vertical alternative word choices), the meanings of the sentence change significantly if alternative words are chosen. The sentence *He gave John the soccer ball* is a mere statement of the actions that took place between two participants and the type of ball that was used. The sentence *He threw John the red ball* refers to a more specific type of exchange (*throwing)* taking place and it is no longer a soccer ball but a ball with a specific colour (red). The last sentence *He kicked John the damn ball* also refers to a specific way of exchanging the ball, but the adjective *damn* no longer refers to a type of ball but to a more emotional feeling of annoyance or anger attached to the ball and the process of exchange. In short then, the words we choose to convey meaning also carry our social and cultural experiences of what they represent in the world, based on how we group the words together in sentences.

The ability of language users to organise linguistic units (POS) in a meaningful manner is further explained by Halliday through the concept 'instantiation'. Instantiation will be the focus of the next section.

3.3   Instantiation

Instantiation refers to the simultaneous maintenance of two perspectives: system and text. The system of language is instantiated in the form of text (Halliday & Matthiessen 2010), which means that the text(s) in a language are instances of an underlying system, i.e. English texts have no semiotic value without the underlying system of English. The system is described as

the underlying 'meaning potential' of a language by Halliday (1961; 2004) and includes all the levels of all the strata in a language. Language is further viewed as both system and text simultaneously and this relationship between system and text is called a 'cline'. Cline of instantiation represents the two poles of the continuum, namely the overall potential at one end of the cline and a specific instance at the other end of the cline. If looked at from the 'instance' pole, we can look at a single text, then search for other texts with similar patterns and then group such texts together as a 'text type'. In doing so, one automatically moves further away from the pole of 'instance' towards the pole of 'system'. This brings about the use of functional language to produce specific types of texts (e.g. advertisements, news-bulletins) which refers to a specific type of language used in a specific context and for a specific purpose, known as 'registers' (Halliday 1978). Registers occur as particular settings of systemic prospects and are strictly related to human experience (Halliday & Matthiessen 2010).

Describing the grammar of a language requires instantiation: constantly moving between language as system and language as text. This means that humans do not only string words together, but in fact choose specific words to group together, instead of using possible alternative words. For example, in the sentence, *Susan wears a beautiful hat,* the specific choice of *hat* contrasts with other choices such as *dress, shoes, slippers* and *gown* but not with words such as *up, next, very* and *bright.* This implies then that users of a specific linguistic system need to have knowledge of and about many contexts and options in that system to be able to produce meaningful texts. In the following section, an example of one such system is presented, to better clarify how linguistic systems are defined by Halliday.

3.4   Defining a system in Hallidayan terms

Halliday (1961; 2010) defines a systemic grammar as one that is organised around the notion of 'grammaticalisation', as explained in section 3.3 above. In other words, Halliday views the systemic property of a language as the choices that are available to a language user when expressing meaning. Halliday & Matthiessen (2014) uses the concept POLARITY to illustrate how all the clauses in a system operate. In a POLARITY system, all the clauses would be either positive or negative, as illustrated in Figure 3.2.
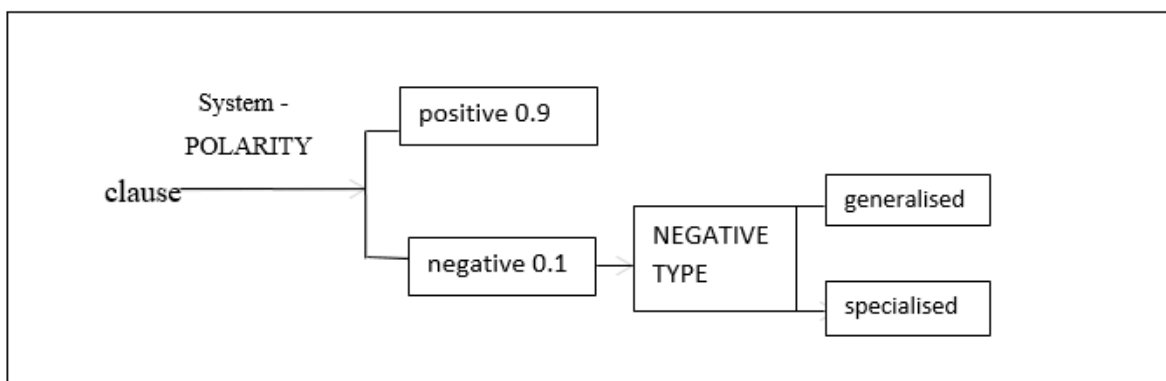
Figure 3.2 The system of POLARITY (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014)

The illustration of POLARITY in Figure 3.2 is an abstract representation of the structure within a system, because it does not depend on how the categories are expressed, but rather illustrates the contrasting features of the clause: positive and negative. In other words, the 'meaning potential' of the clause is 'positive'/'not positive', 'negative'/'not negative'. Thus, in the system of POLARITY, there is a potential (choice) for positive or negative. The user of the language determines entering the next system, NEGATIVE TYPE/POSITIVE TYPE, which can be either general in nature (*they did not understand / they understood*) or specialised in nature (*they never understood / they always understood).* The generalised and specialised choices represent a relationship of 'delicacy' between the two systems, meaning that the specialised meaning potential is more delicate (specific) than the generalised meaning. This illustration serves to demonstrate the notion of 'is a part of a part of…' in the overall system of language. Importantly, text represents the product of an on-going selection of possible options in a very large network of systems in SFL, since the grammar of a language is represented as a system of networks instead of an inventory of constituent structures (Halliday & Matthiessen 2010).

Even though context is paramount in SFL, Halliday (1961; 2010) does not disregard the role of grammar in a language in any way, but rather views grammar as part of a network of systems. In other words, Halliday's SFL does not view grammar as the defining characteristic of language, but rather as supporting the meaning potential of the language. In relation to English, Halliday (1961; 2010) described systems such as MOOD, AGENCY and THEME. Figure 3.3 below illustrates how system networks interrelate to give language its meaning potential.
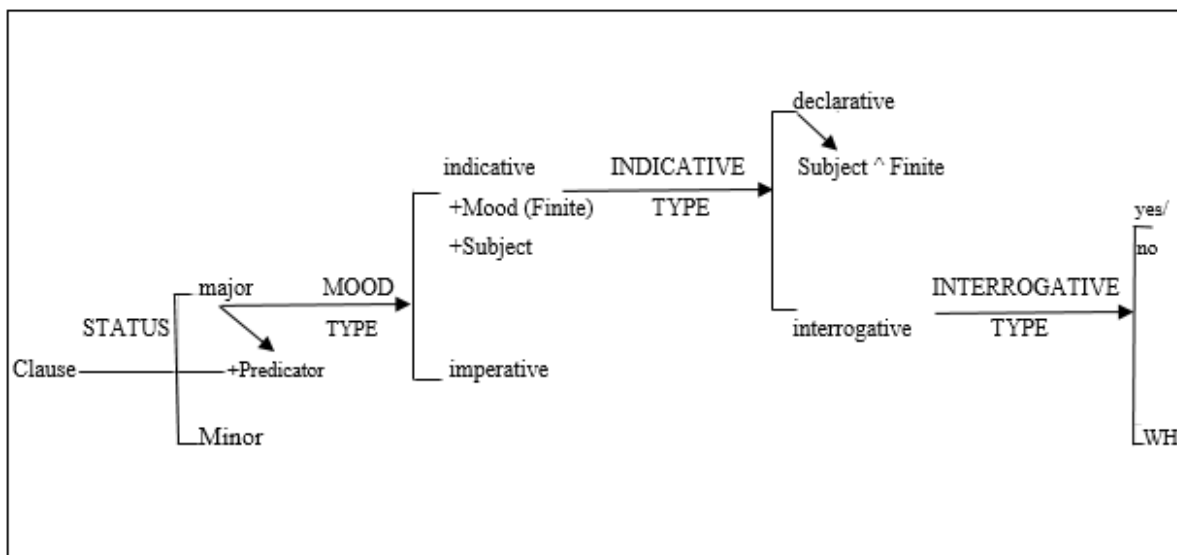
Figure 3.3 The MOOD system network (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014)

As can be seen in Figure 3.3., in the system STATUS, the clause is either *major* or *minor*. This means that a *major* clause contains a 'Predicator' (the part of the clause that states something about the subject and contains the verb) in its structure and is either 'indicative' or 'imperative' in the system MOOD TYPE. In the system, MOOD TYPE, a clause is indicative if it contains a Finite (complete verb) and a subject. An indicative clause is either 'declarative' or 'imperative'. If indicative, the system allows two choices, namely declarative and interrogative. If

declarative, the Subject appears before the Finite, while an interrogative clause is either a yes/no type or *WH*-type question. If yes/no type *Wh*-question, the Finite appears before the Subject in the clause. If the imperative clause is the *WH*-type, it has a *Wh* element in the clause. Figure 3.3 serves as illustration of the choices available in the system MOOD TYPE.

Important to understand about text is Halliday's notion that no text is random or mechanical, but it is indeed systematic and planned, meaning texts are created to relate to their social environments and the functional organisation of their languages (Halliday and Hasan 1989). Chapelle (1998) states that the objective of SFL is to be relevant to the kind of work performed by applied linguists and it is therefore not surprising that many of the SFL principles are used in various types of applied linguistic research, such as the investigation of language learning (L1 or L2) in classrooms. Creating and interpreting of text often causes problems for ESL learners, especially in communicative and writing activities (Halliday 1961; Schleppegrell 2010). ESL learners do not always realise the importance of the flow and logical connection of events in text through applying appropriate grammatical rules and are therefore sometimes incapable of producing coherent and meaningful texts (e.g. essays) (Schleppegrell 2010). In other words, incoherent and disorganised structuring of events in text will fail to deliver the intended message of the text, since meaning is derived from the way that information is structured (Christie & Derewianka 2008; Schleppegrell 2010). SFL is regarded a theory of language that links language forms with the meanings they represent, in a system that continuously changes depending on the context. There is some evidence that incorporating the metalanguage of SFL help ESL learners to understand the general nature of the language better than teaching formulaic sentence constructions (Schleppegrell 2010) – this study aims to add to such evidence.

Metalanguage is the language used to describe or analyse a language and refers to the knowledge of forms, structure and other aspects of a language a learner arrives at by reflecting on and analysing text (Richards & Schmidt 2010). Without sufficient metalanguage, users will fail to produce coherent and cohesive texts. Coherence refers to the relationships that link the meanings of utterances in discourse, or the meanings of sentences in a written text (Richards & Schmidt 2010). In written texts, coherence is created through the organisation of the content, through relevance and through transparency of the concepts. For example, a paragraph that comprises a topic sentence needs to be followed by a series of sentences that develop the topic. Cohesion refers to the grammatical and/or lexical relationships between the various components of a particular text. This means that there might be a relationship between different sentences appearing in a text or between different parts of a particular sentence, e.g. *I am happy at school because there are many friends,* where the link is between *school* and *there.* Although coherence and cohesion were not focused on explicitly in this study, it is mentioned here as the researcher will also consider the effect of the intervention programme on ESL learners' ability to produce coherent writing (in paragraph format). Thus, the possibility that increased knowledge of forms and structure affects coherence levels in text production is entertained.

In the next section, the focus will turn to SFG, which provides a more precise theoretical understanding of what language users need to know (about the grammatical system of a particular linguistic system), in order to produce meaningful texts. Since the focus of the

present study is on ESL grammar proficiency, and on whether teaching grammatical concepts via a programme that explains the meta-functions of grammatical concepts, it is imminent that SFG will be the focus for the remainder of this chapter.

3.5   Systemic Functional Grammar

Matthiessen and Halliday (1997) mention two traditional perspectives on grammar (in the West). In the first prominent perspective, language is seen as a set of rules to specify structures, for example, foregrounding the sentence as the basic unit of language, which is organised on a model of 'Subject'(doer) + *'Predicate'* (action and rest of sentence). In other words, since the sentence is seen as the basic unit of the language, it can be studied in isolation, thus 'out of context'. 'Out of context' refers to random clauses, for example, a text book activity that focuses on practising the past tense and requires that random and unrelated sentences are transformed into the past tense. When clauses appear in a contextualised form it refers to a text where the sentences of the text are all related to a particular topic. The second perspective of grammar regards language as a resource, foregrounding the text/discourse as basic unit of the language. In this perspective, rhetoric and ethnography are foregrounded, and since text is the basic unit of language, the sentence is studied in its context (discourse environment). The theory of SFG is based on this second perspective.

Halliday (1978; 1996; 2009) holds that it is not possible to understand grammar just by looking at it from its own level, but that one has to adopt a 'trinocular' stance (Halliday 1978; 1996) when looking at grammar. This means that lexicogrammar is dealt with at three levels: the level of 'wording', which means that the level above lexicogrammar represents 'semantics' and the level below lexicogrammar refers to 'phonology'. Grammar is therefore viewed as a network of interrelated meaningful choices, in which the paradigmatic axis is the dominant one. According to Halliday, traditional descriptions of grammar are random and unmotivated, while functional grammar offers a systematic and theoretically substantiated description of grammar. This means that functional grammar considers grammar holistically in the first instance (meaning that it views its potential for making meaning (semantic value) as point of departure), where traditional grammar is mostly one-dimensional in its description of grammar. Even so, the focus is still on the grammar (Halliday 1996; Halliday & Matthiessen 2010) in the sense that the theory does not compromise the important role of grammar, but it simply allows us to look at grammar as a system instead of constituent parts.

Halliday states that expressing a message does not rely on 'how' the message is structured but rather on its interrelatedness to other things, also referred to as its pattern of systemic relationships. Halliday further holds that every system has its point of origin at a particular rank: clause, phrase, group and their related complexes (Halliday 1996). The system is therefore the potential that lies behind the text and the choices exercised create the specific meaning of the intended text. SFG describes grammar as one of the sub-systems of a language (Halliday 1996; Matthiessen & Halliday 1997, 2004; 2014).

Matthiessen and Halliday (2004; 2014) hold that the grammar presented in schools is a diluted version of the 'grammar as rule' theoretical perspective, presenting the rules of the

grammar focusing on words in sentences (in the capacities of, for example, 'Subject'; 'Predicate'; 'Object'; 'Adverbial'; 'Adjectival' and 'Prepositional'). Matthiessen & Halliday (2014) support and also propose SFG as a possible solution to literacy demands in that it takes on the 'resource' viewpoint rather than the 'rule' viewpoint and is focused on displaying the overall system of grammar rather than fragments thereof. In other words, instead of focusing on teaching English grammar rules, the focus should be on whole texts, which offer cultural contexts rather than decontextualised fragments of the grammar. Whole language teaching will thus provide learners with the opportunity to look at the grammar of the language from within the text rather than from outside the text (Halliday 1996). Although SFG proposes a focus on the meaning of texts without emphasising grammar rules, it does not ignore grammar rules and the various constituent parts of the grammar (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). The following section will explore the essence of SFG as proposed by Halliday.

3.5.1 *Exploring the essence of SFG*

The traditional instruction of English grammar draws on grammatical categories for POS such as 'noun', 'pronoun', 'verb', 'adverb', 'preposition', 'adjective' and 'conjunction' with the mentioning of, for example, that a noun is a person, place or thing and that nouns act as subjects in sentences. On the extreme end of the instruction scale there is an emphasis on the notational-functional description of these aspects of grammar (Halliday 1997). In other words, the intent of the language user is emphasised, meaning that there is a focus on what is said, to whom it is said and how it is said (Halliday 1997).

Jones and Derewianka (2010) state that although notational-functional description is communicative in nature, it attempts to demonstrate how various functions and notions (intentions) of language can be expressed through various grammatical aspects. The notion of 'frequency', for example, is expressed through adverbs, present tense and adverbial phrases and clauses (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004; Jones & Derewianka 2010). Halliday's SFG positions itself in the middle of the traditional and notational-functional continuum to bridge form and function. Table 3.4 below is an illustration of the bridging between form and function.

Table3.4 Continuum of grammar instruction as interpreted by Jones and Derewianka (2010)

'form'	'relating form and function'	'function'
e.g. traditional grammar	e.g. SFG	e.g. notational-functional

SFG systematically and in detail maps the relationship between grammatical classes and the functions they perform. At the level of form, SFG makes use of standard terminology to describe grammatical forms (preposition, conjunction, noun, verb), but unlike in traditional grammar, SFG is double-layered, meaning there is a constant shift between form and function, i.e. between grammar and semantics (Halliday 1996; 1997; Jones & Derewinka 2010). This means that there is a constant focus on 'what is going on' (subject matter/Field); 'who is involved' (participants/ Tenor); and 'how is the message channelled' (type of text/Mode) in SFG. Together, these three relations form the register of the text and eventually the genre (social purpose) of the text (Halliday 1996; 2010).

SFG emphasises the ways in which language operates to assist meaning, but it also relies upon knowledge, understanding and the use of terms of traditional grammar (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). Halliday and Matthiessen (2004; 2014) suggest that in traditional grammar there are levels of language construction such as letters, words, sentences and paragraphs, but that SFG looks at such levels in a functional manner known as 'ranks'. SFG comprises three such ranks: CLAUSE, GROUP and WORD. Figure 3.4 illustrates these ranks.
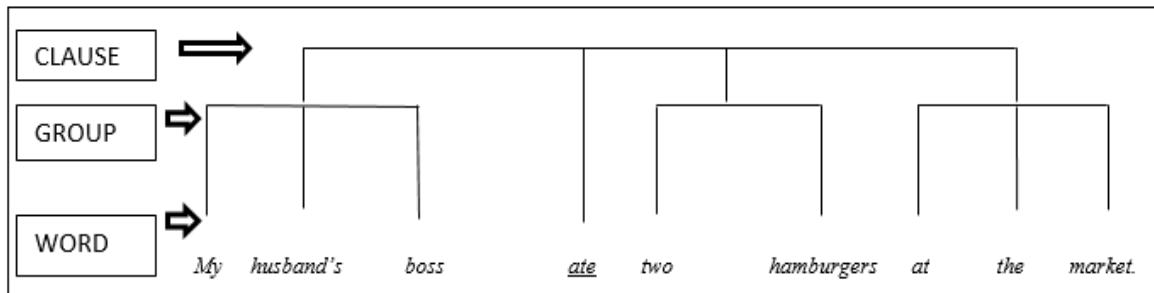
Figure 3.4 Ranking order in SFG

The above diagramme of ranks in SFG refer to *ate* as a process (action) at clause rank but at word rank *ate* is a verb. *My husband's boss / two hamburgers/ the market* are *noun groups*, while *at the market* is a *prepositional phrase*. In other words, clauses represent the top rank, made up of groups/phrases, which are made up of words at the lowest rank. Figure 3.4 confirms the 'part of…a part…' concept of SFL as well as its top-down approach to text analysis. SFG considers grammar as a top-down system, while traditional grammar looks at grammar from a bottom-up perspective (Halliday 1996; Halliday & Matthiessen 2004; 2014). What this means is that traditional grammar approaches first consider the rank of words, then phrases, followed by clauses and sentences and lastly at the text as a whole. SFG, however, considers the whole text first and then looks at the sentences (clauses) that create that text. Clause ranks and group/phrase ranks are considered next and the word rank is considered last (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004; 2014). Figure 3.5 below illustrates the top-down approach of SFG and the bottom-up approach of traditional grammar.
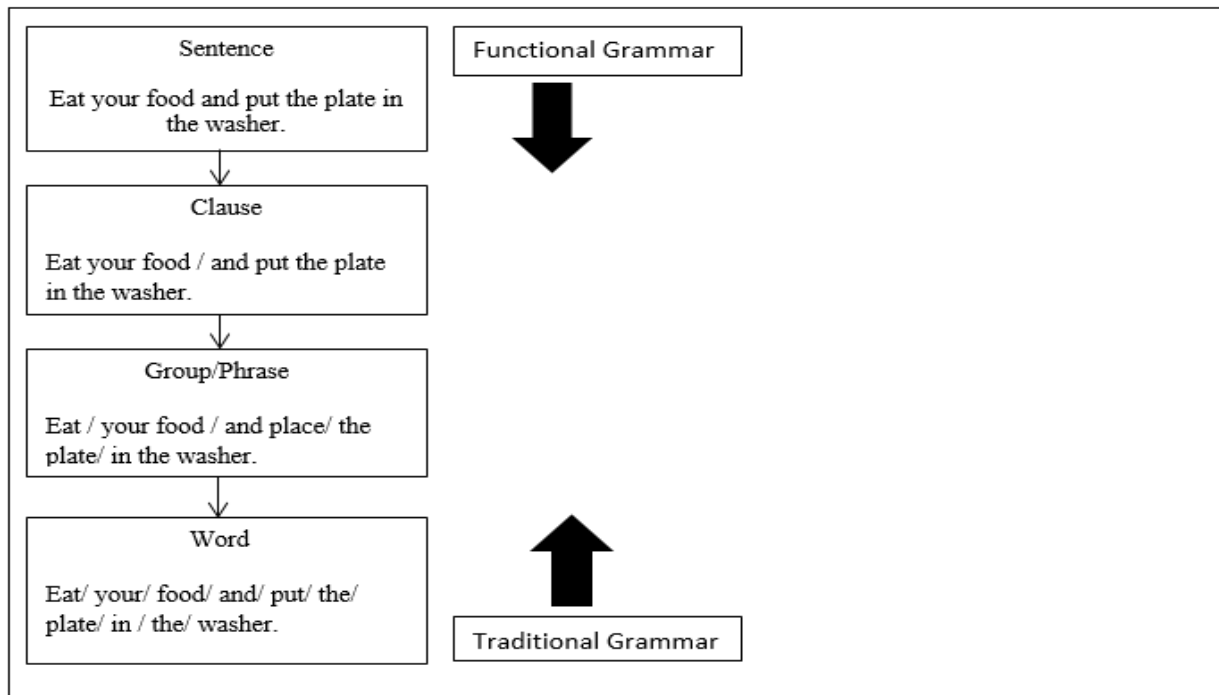
Figure 3.5 Top down meaning construction in SFG versus bottom-up meaning construction in traditional grammar

In traditional grammar there is an emphasis on how exactly sentences are structured, where the focus shifts in SFG to why the text came into being and has its specific meaning, rather than on the constituent parts of the text (Halliday 1996; 2010). As mentioned earlier Halliday (1997) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) state that communication comprises three aspects: 'Field', 'Tenor' and 'Mode'. The three meta-functions of language (ideational, interpersonal and textual) are influenced by the aspects of 'Field' (topic), 'Tenor' (participants and actions) and 'Mode' (how the message is conveyed) (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). It is important to understand that all three aspects and all three meta-functions appear simultaneously in texts, i.e. the meaning encrypted through the system of language exists because of the synchronised interrelation of Field, Tenor and Mode within all three meta-functions in any given text. In other words, through the question *who/what is doing what to whom/what?* we can determine what the topic (field) of the text is, who or what is performing the actions in the text and whom/what is affected by those actions (tenor) (Halliday 1997). Mode is however determined by whether a message is conveyed via a thought, spoken text or written text.

3.6   The meta-functions of SFG

The meta-functions and the aspects of Field, Tenor and Mode serve as point of departure when studying (English) grammar in a functional manner. The subsequent discussion will be presented in three stages in order to provide a comprehensive outline of the meta-functions in SFG. First, the 'Ideational meta-function' of language will be presented, which includes 'Participants', 'Processes' and 'Circumstances'. Secondly, the 'Interpersonal meta-function of language', including 'Mood' and 'Modality' will be discussed and finally 'Mode as meta-function' of language will be presented. An illustration of how the three different meta-

60

functions of language interrelate in order to form meaningful clauses and text is presented in Figure 3.6.
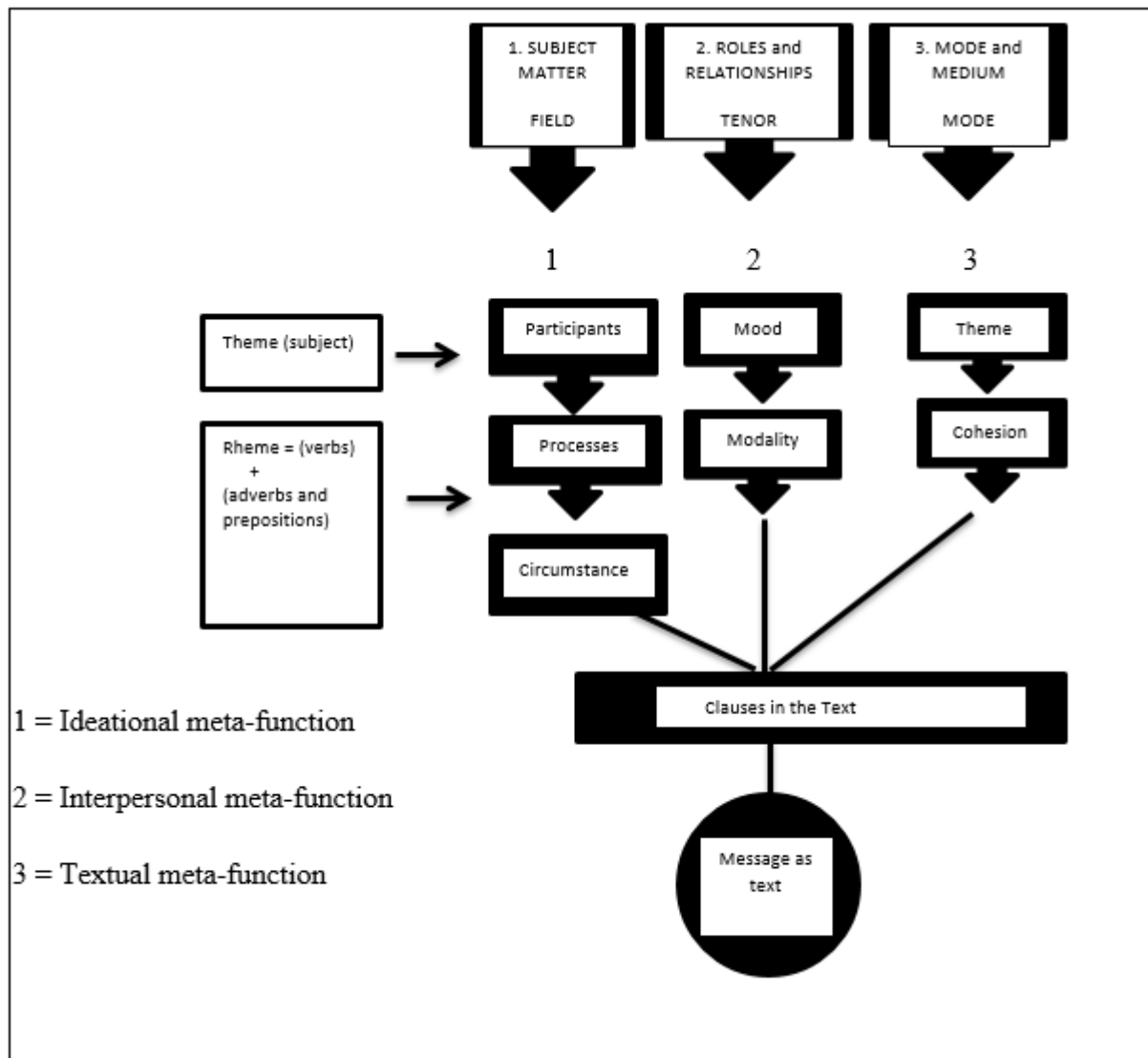
Figure 3.6 Systems of Choice in SFG (Walker & Conner 2015; adapted by the researcher)

Subject matter, Field and Ideational meta-function act as a unit, while functions/relationships, Tenor and Interpersonal meta-function act as unit. The last unit is formed by Mode, Medium and Textual meta-function. All of the abovementioned units influence each other simultaneously in their constituent units throughout the entire creation of a text. Thus, all of the aspects mentioned so far work together to create meaningful text. As such, in SFG, one does not focus on one aspect of the language in isolation. Field includes the subject matter as well as the Ideational meta-function as indicated on the lower left-hand corner of Figure 3.6. Field further includes Participants, Processes and Circumstances. Tenor represents the Mood and Modality of texts and relates to Interpersonal meta-function in the schema. Mode represents the type of text used to convey the message and includes theme and cohesion. Mode further includes Textual meta-function (number 3) in the schema. Figure 3.6 further indicates the concepts of 'Theme' and 'Rheme', which will be discussed later in the presentation. A

comprehensive discussion of the meta-functions underpinning SFG and illustrated in Figure 3.6 now follows.

3.6.1 *Ideational meta-function of language*

Ideational / The Field of Discourse: The ideational meta-function refers to our experiences in the world and involves the experiential encoding of events and the logical relationships between these events (Halliday & Matthiessen 2010). In other words, referring to what happens in the world and how such happenings are related. The Field of discourse refers to the type of discourse depicted (what is going on) in the text. This social aspect of text involves an understanding of the process being referred to, the participants in this process and all the influential circumstances such as 'time', 'place' and 'cause' that contextualise the process (Halliday and Hasan 1989). It can ultimately be described as the writer/speaker's experience of the world and conveying of information that can be tested or denied.

The ideational meta-function of language further represents our experiences in the world as humans. These experiences (events and circumstances) typically appear together in clauses with the centre of the clause being the event (process) and traditionally referred to as the verb. The term 'Process' will however be used throughout this dissertation to refer to events or actions. In other words, to describe the experiential function of language a set of terms are used to show how the clause can be broken down into three functional constituents: Participant, Process and Circumstance. This means that all clauses in English can be functionally described as having a constituent structure which involves the Participant (doer(s), Process (actions/events) and Circumstances (where/how/for how long). Participants include functions such as: Actor, Agent, Goal, Carrier and Sayer in texts. Participants are thus similar to the traditional POS 'nouns' (concrete /abstract). The traditional structure for an English statement (declarative) clause is Subject + Verb + Object (SVO). This structure can be described as follows in SFG:

Table 3.5 Example 1: Traditional sentence construction for sentences in English vs SFG

Traditional English sentence	He noun +	Eats verb +	Pizza noun
SFG clause	Participant 1 +	Process 1 +	Participant 2

Table 3.6 Example 2: Traditional sentence construction for sentences in English vs SFG with circumstance

Traditional English sentence	He Noun +	Eats Verb +	in the room preposition + determiner + noun (prepositional phrase)
SFG clause	Participant 1 +	Process 1 +	Participant 2 + Circumstances = (additional information /where?)

The linguistic examples above illustrate how the Participant (Subject/Noun), Process (Verb) and Circumstance (Adverb/Proposition) are positioned in English declarative clauses. In SFG, the Participant initiates the Process in clauses, and additional Participants and Circumstances

can be added to the typical 'SVO' declarative clause (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). In other words, SFG allows for multiple participants, processes and circumstances in clauses and when numerically numbered as per the above examples, can be grouped together for easier understanding.

Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) posit that there is a distinction between what Halliday calls Theme and Rheme at clause rank. In traditional grammar Theme refers to Subject and Rheme refers to Predicate as illustrated in the following example: *Most of my friends drive their own cars*. In traditional grammar, the phrase *Most of my friends* represents the Subject and *drive their own cars* is referred to as the Predicate of the clause (the predicate generally refers to the section of the sentence containing the verb). In SFG, the phrase *Most of my friends* is however called Theme and the rest of the clause that contains the verb is known as the Rheme (instead of Predicate). Theme indicates to the reader/listener what/who the rest of the clause is going to be about (the Theme represents participants / noun groups / nouns), while the Rheme contains all the processes (actions/verbs) and circumstances (how, where, when, why, how often, degree and prepositions) (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004; Walker & Conner 2015). Thus, in SFG, the Rheme represents all the processes and circumstances as opposed to the constituent POS. Table 3.7 provides an illustration of how Theme and Rheme works in SFG.

Table 3.7 Theme and Rheme versus Subject and Predicate in SFG

	Subject	Predicate
Traditional Grammar	John and Susan noun + noun	are doing their homework linking verb+ verb + pronoun + noun
	THEME	RHEME
SFG	John and Susan (participant 1 + participant 2)	are doing their homework (process 1 + participant 3)

Theme introduces the 'message' of the clause, in other words *what/who it is about* and is therefore more functional in its approach to identifying the *subject (doer)* of the actions in the clause (Halliday 2010). Hallidy and Matthiessen (2004) argues that it is more functional to determine *who* did *what* to *whom* in texts than referring to traditional aspects of English grammar such as *Subject* and *Object*. Participants refer to *people, places, things* and *ideas* since they all fall under the following categories: human, non-human, concrete, abstract, specific or non-specific (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004; Walker & Conner 2015). Participants are represented by single nouns or noun groups, for example, *Susan / the big hamburgers* where *Susan* is single and *big hamburgers* is regarded a group.

SFG acknowledges the functions of the constituent POS, but focuses on the functionality of those constituent parts rather than just identifying them as is a tendency in traditional ESL grammar teaching. In other words, only knowing what the various parts of speech are called does not necessarily mean that the user understands the functional role they play in clauses. In SFG (similar to traditional ESL grammar) the nouns in noun groups are also classified by determiners that query (***Whose*** *hamburger is it?*), that point out (***That*** *hamburger*

is stolen.) or declare ownership (***My** hamburger is big*.). 'Numeratives' in noun groups provide information about amount and quantity (two, many, thousand, few, first, last). 'Describers' provide information about the aspects of the noun groups, for example, size, quality, shape and colour. The word *very* may be inserted in front of a describer, e.g. *The dress was very elegant.* Describers are known as 'adjectives' in traditional grammar and is a POS constituent. The Participants (nouns) in clauses are responsible for the Processes (actions), which represent all the actions that take place in clauses and are used to connect all the participants and their circumstances (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004; Walker & Conner 2015). There are four main types of Processes in SFG:

i.   Material or doing processes, where a physical action takes place, e.g. *John pushed his friend over the wall. His friend fell down the other side and hurt his arm.* Material processes appear in narrative texts, texts explaining procedures, information reports, explanations and recounts of events.

ii. Mental or sensing processes, where mental actions take place, e.g. perceiving, thinking, reflecting and emotional responses. Mental processes are connected to texts such as poetry, music, narratives, discussions and expositions. An example of a mental process is: *The dog wondered why the cat was so sad or Sarah was feeling very happy about her birthday surprise.*

iii. Verbal or saying processes refer to instances where speech is projected or reported, e.g. *Sonja screamed at her mother. Her mother whispered to herself that she would ignore her though. The cat hissed at Sonja and she cried out her dismay.* Verbal processes are found in texts such as narratives, poetry, music, discussions and expositions.

iv. Relational or being processes establish the state of 'being' or 'having', meaning that relational processes are concerned with who or what somebody is or with what they have, e.g. *The bird is in its cage. It has white wings* or *I am a good girl and I have great manners.* Texts that usually contain relational processes are: information reports, discussions and explanations.

The third component of Field is circumstances, which refers to 'how', 'how long', 'how far', 'how often', 'when', 'where', 'with whom' and 'as what' in clauses. The test for Circumstance is: i) it can be moved ii) it can be left out and the sentence would still make sense iii) it contains no process. Circumstance is described by adverbial groups, noun groups or prepositional phrases/groups (all known as POS constituents) and is described as follows:

i)   'Prepositional phrases' refer to word groups introduced by a preposition and indicate 'space' (where); 'time' (when); 'means' (with what); 'cause' (why), 'extent' (how far/long); 'accompaniment' (with whom); 'matter' (about what) and 'role' (as what), for example, *in her room / twice a day / by her mom / to read a book / because she phoned him / for ten miles.*

ii) 'Adverbial groups' may contain more than one adverb. Adverbial groups relate to 'time' (when); 'place' (where); 'manner' (how); 'frequency' (how often) and degree of the processes in clauses, for example, *Mary throws the cloth in the basket*

every morning. Adverbial groups that contain the adverb *very,* is regarded as an adverbial group of manner (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004; 2014).

iii) 'Noun groups' can also represent circumstance of manner/participants, e.g. *The husband and wife next door* (where) or *Joan will fly tomorrow at ten* (when).

3.6.2 Interpersonal meta-function of language

'Mood' refers to the varieties of expression that reflect manner of intent by the participants in a text or clause. The variety of moods include declarative statements (stating general truths, e.g. *The world is round.)*, questions *(*seeking information, e.g. *Why are you late for school?)* and commands (to get something done e.g. *Close the door!).* Mood relates to the functions and relationships of the participants in a clause.

'Modality' refers to the type of language we use to communicate with others, for example, we add 'degrees of certainty' (*will today*), 'usuality' (*usually on Tuesdays*), 'obligation' (*must go today*), 'inclination' (*keen to go today*) and 'possibility' (*might go today*) to our statements, questions and commands. Modality adds to the cohesion of the message/text in that it provides more explicit information about the Processes among the Participants (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004; 2014; Walker & Conner 2015). Verbs such as *will*, *shall*, *might* and *can* are known as 'modal verbs' in traditional English grammar (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014).

3.6.3 Textual meta-function of language

'Mode' refers to how the message is conveyed and through what medium (i.e. story/SMS/newspaper)? Mode however includes all the meta-functions of the language that conveys the true and intended message. The participants, their functions and relationships carry through the theme of the message, in other words, what the message is about, for example, *Anna and Joan could be fighting over boyfriends via WhatsApp* as in the example sentence presented in Table 3.8 below. This sentence can be analysed as follows in SFG making use of the meta-functions that are contained within the given message. Mode therefore acts as the form of the message but encapsulates all the meanings and circumstances of the intended message.

Table 3.8 The meta-functions of clauses: an example analysis

Anna and Joan THEME	*could be fighting over boyfriends via WhatsApp.* RHEME
Analysis of clause	

Field	fighting over boyfriends (theme of message/text)
Process	Fighting
Tenor	friends – close/not close – friend to friend? relationships with boyfriends
Mode	cell phones; WhatsApp, physical and mental processes
Circumstance	via WhatsApp / cell phones/ over boyfriends
Mood	statements, questions and possibly commands
Modality	possibility, uncertainty, speculative

SFG seems to offer a more comprehensive analysis and understanding of the sentence/clause as a whole, rather than focusing on all the constituent POS, as is the case in traditional grammar analysis. Table 3.8 illustrates how SFG interprets the constituent POS in a different manner to traditional grammar. SFG does not only identify terms, but also meanings related to the terms, for example, modality/uncertainty about the process taking place: where possibility/uncertainty about what exactly *Anna* and *Joan* are fighting over is indicated by the modal verb *could*. Traditional grammar contrastingly focuses of the constituent POS of the sentence and not to the related meanings of the POS. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) further assert that it becomes easier to detect all the nuances involved in the text through SFG, for example, in the example presented in Table 3.8, the girls' personal relationship is questioned, the reason why they could be fighting over the boyfriends is unknown, the outcome of this conversation is unknown and can only be speculated when adopting a functional approach to sentence analysis.

SFG therefore inspires the reader to start thinking about and questioning the motives of the participants and may encourage users to look for answers or provide answers (in their own follow-up writing activities) to such questions, which in return promotes the overall cohesion of the text (Halliday 2010). In other words, traditional ESL sentence analysis may lead to a loss of intended meaning in messages, while a SFG clause analysis creates opportunity for deeper understanding of the intended message.

The ultimate purpose and function of SFG is to focus on the clause as unit of meaning (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004; 2014). In order to fully understand how SFG functions, it is now necessary to look into what Halliday calls "the mainspring of grammatical energy": the clause (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014).

3.7   The clause as perceived by SFG

The clause is described as the unit where experiential, interpersonal and textual meanings are integrated into a single syntagm (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014).

The concepts of 'grammatical class' and of 'grammatical function' need to be addressed first in order to understand the concept 'clause'. Halliday (1963c) defines a class as a set of items that are alike in some respects. Word classes are referred to as POS in traditional English

grammar include *nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and interjections*. When we refer to the word class 'noun', for example, a general definition of the word class involves grammatical as well as semantic characteristics. Table 3.9 describes the semantic and grammatical characteristics of the word class 'nouns'.

Table 3.9 Semantic and grammatical characteristics of nouns (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014)

Semantic:	Expresses a person, inanimate object, abstract thing
Grammatical:	Is either count or mass; if count, then may be singular/plural, plural usually inflected with –*s*; can appear as possessive (adding – *'s/-s'*); can appear as Subject in clause

Table 3.9 suggests that when we refer to something as a 'noun' in English, we believe it to possess some or most of the above characteristics. Figure 3.7 below presents the word classes that are all recognised in a functional grammar. In a functional grammar analysis, English has three words classes: the nominal group; the verbal group (including the preposition group) and the adverbial group (including the conjunction group). Figure 3.7 further illustrates that the traditional word classes (noun, adjective, numeral, determiner, verb, preposition, adverb and conjunction) all belong to the three mentioned word classes (nominal, verbal and adverbial). The traditional POS 'noun' can be a common noun, proper noun or pronoun, while a 'verb' is either a lexical verb, auxiliary verb or finite (temporal, modal) verb. Conjunctions possess the properties of conjunctive (structural or cohesive) or continuative conjunction.
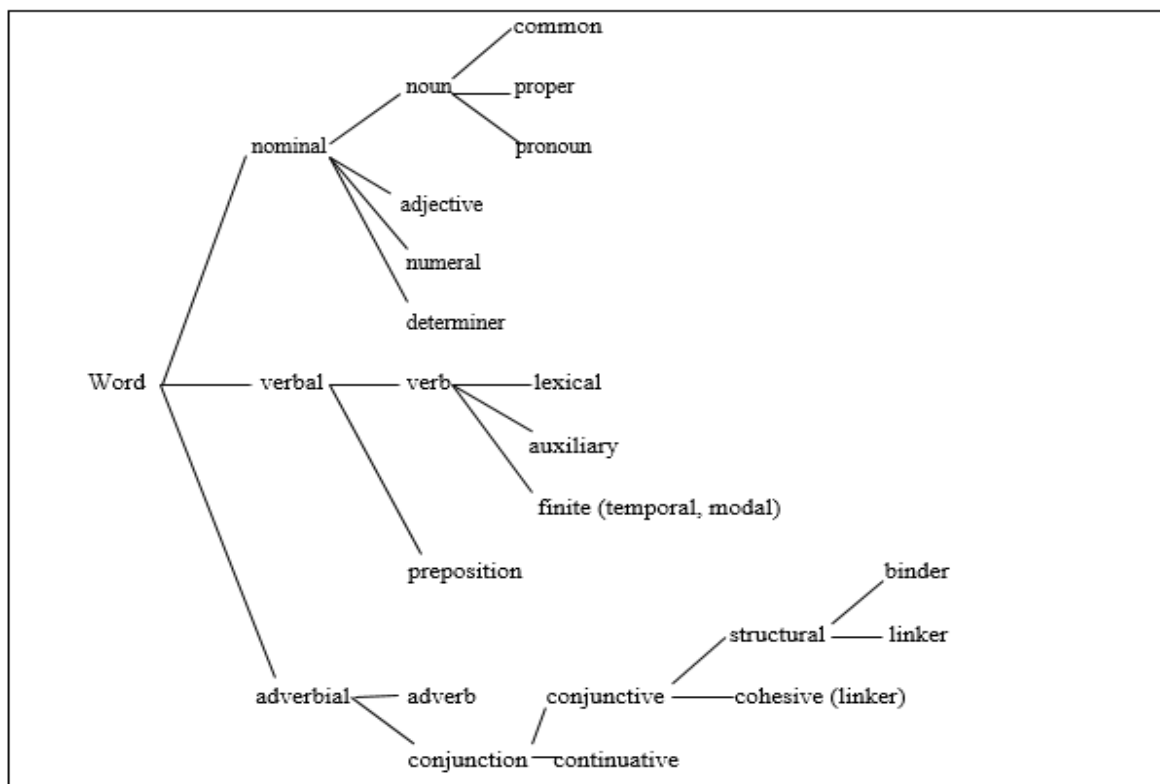
Figure 3.7 Word classes of English in SFG (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014)

The class of an item provides a general indication of its potential range in terms of grammatical functionality (Halliday 2010; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). Words can therefore be allocated to classes in dictionaries or vocabulary lists, but in a decontexualised capacity, thus not indicating what part the word plays in a structure such as a clause (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). This is typical of traditional grammar, but to determine word function in a structure using SFG, we need to indicate its function (role) in the structure, for example:

Table 3.10 Functions of traditional word classes

	All the learners in our ESL class	must pass	our tests, so that we may be promoted to Grade 10.
[function]	Actor	Process	Goal
[class]	nominal group	verbal group	nominal group

Table 3.10 illustrates the functions of the traditional word classes, in this case the nominal group (Subject), as the Actor in the clause structure, the verbal group as Process and lastly the next nominal group (Object) as Goal of the Process. It is claimed that most POS of a clausal structure perform more than one function in that same clause (Halliday 2010; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). This feature of POS in clausal structures led to the concept of 'meta-function', which Halliday prefers to explain in terms of the problematic Western concept of 'Subject'. According to English grammar rules, each clause contains one POS that can be identified as its Subject. The problem with Subject however is that it can fulfil various functions within the clausal structure and can be summarised as follows:

i)   the part that concerns the message of the clause
ii)   the part of which something is being predicated, i.e. on which the truth of the argument relies
iii)   the doer of the action

These three functions are all very different in terms of their functions and each denotes a different concept. Halliday states that the problem is whether the Subject can fulfil all three the above meanings simultaneously. In the sentence *the man gave the donkey that green apple* it is reasonable to claim that *the man* is the Subject in all three senses. In other words, *the man* as Subject represents the person with whom the message of the clause is concerned; the truth or falsehood of the statement relies on *the man,* and he also represents the person who performed the action of giving. It is however not the case that each clause has one element that fulfils all three functions since there are clauses that contain no element that fulfils all three functions simultaneously. The passive form of the same statement serves as example: *that green apple was given to the donkey by the man.* In this case the doer is still *the man*, but the message now concerns *that green apple* and the truth of the message now rests on the donkey. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) put forward the argument that there is no 'general concept of 'Subject' and presented the following terminology to deal with the three specific functions of 'Subject':

i)   the part concerning the message: Theme
ii)   the predicate of the clause: Subject
iii)   the doer of the action: Actor.

Using this terminology, the example sentence *That green apple the donkey was given by the man* can now be analysed as illustrated in Table 3.11:

Table 3.11 Theme, Subject and Actor

That green apple	the donkey	was given	by the man
Theme	Subject		Actor

A discussion of the role of Theme in clauses follows.

3.7.1 Theme in the clause as message

Theme functions in the structure of the "clause as message" and is the point of departure for the intended message, in other words, it introduces the reason for the intended message. Theme localises and positions the clause within the context it appears (Halliday 2010; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). The Theme further serves as guide to the recipient to process the message and to react to it. The remaining part of the message is referred to as the 'Rheme' and contains at least one verb. At a message structure, the clause therefore comprises a Theme accompanied by a Rheme. The Theme is put first in the order of the clause structure and the message therefore is introduced by the Theme from a position of importance. The Rheme however contains the prominence of 'news'.

In English, Theme is indicated only by its position in the clause: in spoken or written texts we signal the thematic status of an element by putting it first, for example:

Table 3.12 Theme and Rheme: prominence in clauses

Text (message) (type of text: food article)	1) It +	*Can be pork, chicken, beef or lamb.*
	2) Minced meat +	*Can be used in various dishes.*
	3) Most of the + dishes	*Contain tomato as basis*
	Theme +	*Rheme*

The above example illustrates that (for declarative clauses) Theme is always situated at the beginning and sets the scene for the clause and the rest of the text to follow. The Theme might not always be represented by a nominal group, but can also appear as another class or group or phrase such as an adverbial Theme: <u>Every now and then </u>*Susan* (Theme) + *visits her mother* (Rheme). Themes can also be announced by expressions such as: *as far as…; about…* and *with reference to* (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). It should further be noted that the Theme can also appear in the form of two or more groups of phrases forming a single structure, for example, when joining two nominal groups with *and* creating a 'nominal group complex' (e.g. *The Squirrel and the Fox*…). This nominal group complex is still just one constituent of the clause and is therefore regarded as one 'simple' Theme.

The next type of Theme identified by Halliday (1967) is that of 'Thematic equatives' also known as 'pseudo-cleft sentences' in traditional English grammar. Thematic equatives typically represent the formula Theme = Rheme, i.e. where the Theme begins with *that's why; that's what; that is; the ones; no one,* etc. The structure *The ones who screamed were the boys in the class* illustrates the Theme as *The ones* and the Rheme as *were the boys in the class* where the underlined part is equated with the Theme, meaning it identifies and specifies the Theme. In other words, the difference between a Thematic equative structure and a clause with an ordinary Theme-Rheme structure is that of identification or specification of the Theme that appears in the Rheme, as the example above illustrates. The Thematic equative is typically coupled with a verb 'to be' (Halliday 1967).

The Theme also involves MOOD. MOOD is considered the major interpersonal system of clauses because it provides the participants in text with resources to perform various actions with, for example, to give information, to ask questions and to command something. For the purposes of this study, only 'free' (also known as 'major') clauses were considered, meaning in other words, clauses that contain Thematic structure. Major clauses are either 'indicative' or 'imperative'. Indicative clauses giving information are called 'declaratives' and clauses demanding goods and services are called 'imperatives'. Indicative clauses can also be 'interrogative'; demanding information in the form of *yes/no* questions or *WH*-questions. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) regard the thematic organisation of clauses as the most significant factor in the development and flow of a text.

3.7.2   Subject in the clause as exchange

The Subject functions in the structure of the 'clause as exchange', i.e. the Subject is responsible for the exchange of a transaction between speaker/writer and listener, and is also the element responsible for the validity of the message. The organisation of a clause as message and collaborating event happens simultaneously (Halliday 1967; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). The interaction involves the speaker, writer and audience. In the discussion that follows, the term 'speaker' will refer to both speakers and writers of texts. The speaker adopts a specific role in the act of speaking and therefore assigns a complementary role of listener to the addressee.

When a question is asked, the speaker takes on the role of information seeker and anticipates the listener to provide that information. The listener has various options for responding to a question or command: the listener can either decide not to answer the question or to deliver the requested goods or service. The speaker however has access to 'mood tags' in order to prevent negative responses or to remind the listener of what is expected, for example, *Give me that file, will you?*, where *will you* acts as the mood tag. The mood tag typically appears at the end of the clause and serves the purpose of indicating explicitly that a response is required and what type of response is expected. In traditional English grammar, mood tags are known as question tags and no focus is given to the function of the response. It is simply instructed as either the positive or negative tag to a question (Halliday 2010; Hurford 2004). Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) hold that the Subject in declarative clauses can be identified/located by

adding a tag, which will in turn then refer to the Subject in the clause. In other words, in order to identify and locate the Subject, add a tag, for example, *My brother broke the cup, didn't he?* In this clause the tag takes up the pronoun *he* which refers back to *My brother* identifying *My brother* as the Subject of the clause. The Subject is also the element preceding the Finite in a declarative clause, but follows it in a *yes/no* interrogative clause. It is stated by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) that the functional criterion for identifying the Subject (the nominal group that is repeated in pronoun form in the tag) is present in all declarative clauses when dealing with English functional grammar. Subject is that noun or pronoun that is in person and number concord with the verb in the clause. In SFG, Subject and Finite are closely concomitant and forms one constituent that is called the MOOD. The presence of the MOOD element (Subject + Finite), realises the 'indicative' feature of a clause. Of further significance is the order of Subject and Finite within the indicative: i) the order Subject before Finite realises 'declarative' ii) the order Finite before Subject realises 'yes/no interrogative' iii) in 'WH- interrogatives' the order is Subject before Finite if the 'WH- element' is the Subject, otherwise it takes the order of Finite before Subject. The remainder of the clause after determining the MOOD is called 'Residue'. Table 3.13 and Table 3.14 illustrate the declarative and 'yes/no' interrogative forms of indicative clauses.

Table 3.13 Structure of declarative clauses (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014)

My sister	has	eaten all the food in the fridge
Subject	Finite	
MOOD		Residue

Table 3.14 Structure of yes / no interrogative clauses (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014)

Has	my sister	eaten all the food in the fridge
Finite	Subject	
MOOD		Residue

Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) describe the significance of the Subject and Finite separately, since both are semantically motivated but contribute differently to the clause. The Finite element serves to make the 'proposition' finite. The 'proposition' refers to the basic meaning expressed by a clause and comprises of something that is named or talked about (argument), and a prediction about the argument (Richards & Smith 2010). The function of the Finite is to make something arguable, i.e. to give the argument a point of reference in the here and now (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014), in other words to add 'tense' to a context. This is achieved in two ways: reference to the time of speaking (primary tense) and secondly by reference to the judgement of the speaker (modality). In the clause *the blind dog chewed the bone*, primary tense is indicated by *chewed* (past) and in the clause *can't be imagined* modality is indicated by *can't*. Primary tense refers to past, present or future as at the moment of speaking, hence time that is relative to 'now'. Modality refers to likely/unlikely or desirable/undesirable.

Finiteness and modality share a common feature: interpersonal deixis, which is the semantic space that is opened up between speaker and listener. Primary tense further refers to the dimension of time, meaning what is 'present' to speaker and listener at the time of speaking, while modality refers to the element of assessment. This means that the listener has the opportunity to assess the validity of what is said (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). Halliday further posits that for something to be 'arguable' it has to have the element of 'polarity'. In other words, the choice between positive and negative, which in grammatical terms refer to something being 'is' or 'isn't'; 'do' or 'don't'. The Finite thus expresses not only primary tense and modality but also realises either positive or negative polarity. Finiteness constitutes the verbal element in the MOOD, but there has to be a nominal element present, which is the function of the Subject. The Subject provides the rest of the clause that is necessary to form a proposition (basic meaning of clause) that can either be affirmed or denied by the listener (Halliday 1984; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). For example, in the clause *my sister has eaten all the food in the fridge, hasn't she?* the Finite *has* signals polarity and present time, while the Subject *my sister* specifies the POS on which the validity of the clause rests. It is therefore *my sister* (Noun) that can be held responsible for the process that functions in the clause. The speaker rests his assertion on *my sister + has,* while the listener has to assess the validity of the assertion on the same two segments in the sentence.

The structuralist tradition claimed the Subject to be merely a grammatical element, operating on the syntactic level only and void of semantic properties (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014), but SFG asserts that a linguistic element that is only grammatical and without semantic properties, is inconsistent (Halliday 1984; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). SFG therefore adopts a trinocular perspective as previously discussed in this chapter, and indicates that the Subject carries a very distinct function in English grammar: i) viewed from below, it is the nominal element identified in the mood tag; ii) a surrounding view holds Subject as the element that combines with the Finite to form the MOOD element in the clause and furthermore indicates whether the MOOD is declarative. iii) viewed from above, Subject also carries modal responsibility, meaning that it is the determining property for the validity of what is predicated (stated, questioned, commanded or offered) in the clause (Halliday 1984; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). According to Halliday (1984) it is the aforementioned point that informed the pre-structuralist interpretation of Subject function as Subject + Predicate, but Halliday states the problem with that interpretation is that when predication is interpreted for truth value instead of Subject, truth value cannot be determined since commands and offers do not carry truth value. This error arose in the pre-structuralist theory because predication was assumed to carry experiential meaning.

According to Halliday, predication is an interpersonal relation that enacts the form of exchange between speaker and listener. This means that Subjects, which are also interpersonal in nature, relates to other interpersonal POS in the clause and are treated differently from Complements and Adjuncts. Adverbials may be classified as Adjuncts; Conjuncts or Disjuncts. Adjuncts are seen as part of basic structures of clauses or sentences and modify the verb (time, place, manner, frequency and degree) (Hurford 2004; Richards & Schmidt 2010). Conjuncts are not part of basic structures of clauses or sentences and indicate how what is said in the

sentence containing the conjunct is related to what is said in another sentence(s), e.g. <u>however</u> the results were positive. Disjuncts are described as adverbs that indicate the speaker's attitude towards or evaluation of what is expressed in the rest of the clause or sentence, e.g. *<u>unfortunately,</u> we arrived late for the party* (Richards & Schmidt 2010). Complements are defined as the sections of clauses or sentences which follow the verb and therefore complete the clauses or sentences (Hurford 2004; Richards & Schmidt 2010). Complements are regarded obligatory sections of sentences and contrast Adjuncts, which are regarded optional (Richards & Schmidt 2010). The most common Complements are:

i) 'Subject Complement' (linked to the subject by *be* or a linking verb, e.g. *<u>he is a mechanic</u>*

ii) 'Adjective Complement' (linked to an Adjective, e.g. *she is <u>happy that she can Sing</u>*

iii) 'Prepositional Complement' (linked to a Preposition, e.g. *we talked <u>under the bridge</u>*).

The Residue comprises of the following three functional components: Predicator, Complement and Adjunct (Halliday 1984). The Predicator is present in all major clauses and performs a fourfold function:

i) it indicates secondary tense comparative to the primary tense

ii) it postulates other aspects and phases such as seeming, hoping or trying

iii) it indicates voice: active or passive

iv) it postulates the action (process) that is predicated of the Subject

A finite verbal group serves as both Finite and Predicate when fused by an Adjunct. When there is no fusion of the Finite and Predicate the Predicate follows the Finite, however, other elements (e.g. Adjunct) may come between them as illustrated by Table 3.15 below.

Table 3.15 Discontinuous verbal group (based on Halliday & Matthiessen 2014)

The learners	had	eventually	decided to report	the incident	to the teacher
Subject	Finite	Adjunct	Predicator	Complement	Adjunct
MOOD		Residue			
nominal group	verbal group	adverbial group		nominal group	prepositional phrase

Table 3.15 illustrates how the verbal group *had* (Finite) *decided to report (*Predicate) is discontinued by inserting the Adjunct between the Finite and Predicator. The Complement as illustrated in Table 3.15 is regarded an element within the Residue that contains the potential to be Subject (having the ability to be elevated to the interpersonal status of modal responsibility) but is not. The implication is that any nominal group not functioning as Subject will be a Complement (with the exception of certain circumstantial Adjuncts of Extension' without the preposition, e.g. *10 centimetres into the wall the screw was found*. Adjuncts

however do not have the potential to be Subject in a clause as illustrated by Table 3.15 above. Adjuncts are typically realised by an adverbial group or prepositional phrase, for example, *the teacher was eventually informed by the learners*, where *eventually* acts as adverbial group and *by the learners* as prepositional phrase. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) describe the typical order of components in the Residue as: Predicator + Complement(s) + Adjunct(s), as illustrated in Table 3.15. The concepts of Conjuncts and Disjuncts have to do with the cohesion of the textual features of text and will therefore not be discussed in depth here since the focus of this study was on grammar proficiency.

According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) there is great scope and variation in the choice of Subject in true discourse. Some nominal groups contain embedded prepositional phrases or clauses, or even both and are therefore identified as 'nominal group complexes'. In the sentence *the children who want to eat with the forks that have red handles,* the nominal group complex acting as Subject contains an embedded prepositional phrase *with the forks*, as well as two relative clauses *who want to eat* and *that have red handles*. There are instances where the Subject appears at the end of the clause in which it is embedded accompanied by an anticipatory *it* occurring in the normal Subject position, for example, *it worries me that Susan is crying,* where Susan would normally appear at the beginning of the clause as Subject.

Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) conclude that the on-going selection of Subjects in clauses as they appear in texts adds to the specific layers of depth in texts. In other words, Subjects are not merely nouns, but carry specific meaning and reference within intended messages and should therefore not be regarded as constituent POS, but rather as units of specific meaning which are utilised to create meaningful texts.

3.7.3   Actor in the clause as representation

The 'clause as representation' construes experience as third mode of meaning (experiential meta-function of language) in a clause (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). The third line of meaning refers to the Actor in the clause. The Actor functions in the 'clause as representation'. In other words, the clause has meaning as the process of some event or happening in the world and the Actor is the doer of this process (Halliday 2010; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). The discussion that follows is on this third mode of meaning in clausal organisation: the experiential meaning. The three meta-functional dimensions (textual, interpersonal and experiential) appear simultaneously in clauses so that Theme = Subject = Actor. The simultaneous functioning of the three meta-functions can be illustrated in the following example of dialogue:

Text 3.1 Dialogue: argumentative conversation (not authentic text):

Susan:	Please, Mom, I really need new shoes.
Mother:	What do you not understand about NO?
Susan:	Perhaps next month, Mom?
Mother:	Well, no means 'not happening', doesn't it, Mary?
Susan:	It means you are refusing to buy me new shoes!

Text 3.1 represents a conversation between a mother and daughter where the daughter tries to convince the mother to buy her new shoes. Textually, the clause *Well, no means 'not happening'!* presents a message as part of the answer to a query concerned with the word *no* and therefore is essentially the theme of the message (a negative response). The Theme (*It)* is maintained in the following clause and further elaborated within the Rheme (*means you are refusing to buy me new shoes?*). In other words, *It* does not appear without specific meaning but should be understood in terms of the preceding clauses, hence referring to *saying no*. On the interpersonal level the clause represents a 'proposition' (a consultative statement that is realised by a tagged declarative: *(...means 'not happening' ... doesn't it*) that is directly expressed to a specific person (*Mary*) and is referred to as the 'vocative'. The statement is prompted by the query (*perhaps next month?*) and elicits a response from the mother that adjusts the proposition by specifying *no* means *not happening*. The essence of the argument is therefore realised by the Subject of the clause and fixed by the Finite in the 'present' (*means ... doesn't it*).

Experientially the clause accommodates change in the flow of communication, participants involved in the process, the arrangement of the process and any related circumstances. This constant movement of events and changes in events are revealed by the grammar in the clauses, i.e. the changes are demonstrated as 'figures' (i.e. experiences of doing, happening, sensing, saying, being or having) (Halliday & Matthiessen 1999; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). Halliday and Matthiessen further hold that all the figures comprise of at least one process occurring at a particular time and with participant(s) involved in the process. The process may also include circumstances of time, space, manner, frequency or cause and are not directly involved to the process but rather attendant on it (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). All of these figures are tended to by the grammar in the clause through the grammatical system of TRANSITIVITY (Halliday 1967; 2010). The system of TRANSITIVITY provides the lexico-grammatical resources that reflect changes in the movement of events as figures (experiences). The use of SFG terminology such as 'figures' will be avoided in the development of the SFG-based intervention programme, since the level of complexity of the programme does not require the ESL learners to use such terms. Nevertheless, for the sake of giving a complete overview of SFG, transitivity is briefly discussed in the next section.

3.7.3.1 Transitivity in SFG

Transitivity in SFG refers to the choice between the three main processes that can be represented in a sentence: physical (material/doing); mental (projecting/sensing) or relational

(being words e.g. is/was) (Butt et al 2003; Halliday 1967; 2010; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014; Richards & Schmidt 2010). Related to this choice of processes is the choice of participants and choice of circumstances. All further choices related to TRANSITIVITY are then based on the functions that Participants play in the Processes and how the Processes, Participants and Circumstances combine to form meaning. Phrases are thus construed into manageable sets of PROCESS TYPES and each PROCESS TYPE is typical of a particular kind of figure (experience) (Halliday 2010; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). The different types of processes interpreted by the transitivity system reflect both our 'inner' (what happens in our inside: emotion, imagination and perception) and 'outer' (actions and events and the participants in those events) experiences.

Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) describe the inner process as difficult to define, but hold that it reflects a replay of the outer experiences. In other words, humans anticipate the outer events they experience inside themselves. Grammar however distinguishes clearly between inner and outer experiences (Halliday 2004) and sets a disjointedness between the processes of the outer world (material processes) and that of the inner world (mental processes). Table 3.16 below illustrates the various types of processes.

Table 3.16 Examples of various process types

PROCESS TYPE	Example (Process + participants underlined; Process in bold; Circumstances in italics)
Material	John **lost** his equipment *during the search for wales*.
behavioural	Everybody **was searching**.
Mental	They **thought it was lost** *forever*.
Verbal	And they **called** the search off. **Can** you **believe** it *of them*?
Relational	John **was** part *of the research team*.
Existential	Well, *now* there **is** resentment *towards John*.

In addition to the material and the mental processes, a third process is needed, namely the 'relational process', which identifies and classifies the components of the clause. In other words, the relational processes provide more information about the processes and in some cases qualify the processes. Although it does not matter where the point of entrance is in the grammar of experience, it is easier explained from the point of the material process since this point is the most accessible to our conscious reflection (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014)

Material processes seem to have been at the centre of linguistic attention because they also provide the traditional distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). The concept of transitive/intransitive verbs is typically instructed as direct and indirect objects in the ESL classroom. A transitive verb is a verb that takes an Object, e.g. *I wrote a letter to my mom* where the Verb *wrote* takes a Direct object (*a letter*) and an Indirect object (*my mom*). Direct objects are typically defined as the noun, noun phrase/clause or pronoun in clauses with transitive verbs (Richards & Schmidt 2010). The Direct object is directly affected by the action of the *verb* e.g. *I kick the rock*. The indirect object is defined as the receiver of the Direct object or the beneficiary of the action, e.g. *I kick the rock to Mary* (Richards & Schmidt 2010). An intransitive verb takes no object in a clause, e.g. *The cat*

jumped. In English grammar, the direct object (including some indirect objects) become Subjects when clauses in the active voice are changed into the passive voice, e.g. *I kick the rock (active) = The rock is kicked by me (passive).*

In SFG however, there is always one participant namely the Actor, which brings about the unfolding of a particular process in time (e.g. *Susan eats)*, where *Susan* is the Actor and *eats* is the Process (present tense). The Process leads to an outcome that is different from the onset of the Process. When this outcome is confined to the Actor only, there is only one Participant in the initial Process which represents such a happening in the material clause and is traditionally referred to as intransitive. In other instances, the Process may extend to another participant (Goal) and impacts the Goal rather than the Actor, e.g. *Susan eats pizza* where *Susan* (Actor) does something *(eats)* to the second Participant *pizza* (Goal). In this clause the unfolding of the Process affects the Goal directly which represents a doing and is traditionally called transitive. In other words, in SFG there is reference to happening and doing as a process rather than direct/indirect object as in traditional English grammar where the emphasis is mostly on one verb only (Halliday 1967; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). For the purpose of simplifying the SFG-based concept of active and passive voice for the intervention, the term Actor will be referred to as Participant. All nouns in the intervention programme will be marked as Participants in order to create a clearer understanding of *who does what to whom*.

Halliday (1967) holds that transitive refers to the verb extending to another object, and intransitive means that the action is confined to the Actor. Halliday views this as an accurate description of transitivity, meaning that transitivity is a system of the clause which affects the participants and circumstances and not only the verb as in traditional English grammar. Material clauses are therefore regarded interpreting figures of doing-and-happening, i.e. we can ask the questions *what does Susan do?* and *what does Susan do to the pizza?* Consequently, if there is a Goal of the process as well as an Actor, the clause may be represented in two forms: 'operative' (active: *Susan eats pizza*) or 'receptive' (passive: *Pizza is eaten by Susan*). The contrast between operative and receptive is a contrast in voice and is open to transitive clauses only (Halliday 2010; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). In traditional English grammar, reference is made to 'active' and 'passive' voice, meaning that only transitive verbs carrying a direct object can be formed into passive voice. In SFG, in the operative state, the Actor is mapped onto the Subject in a declarative clause, and given modal responsibility where it also acts as Theme. The Goal is mapped onto the Complement (that obligatory part of the sentence which follows the verb and thus completes the sentence) and forms part of the Rheme. In the receptive representation of the clause, the Goal is now recorded onto the Subject where it is given modal responsibility and becomes the Theme. The Actor has the status of Adjunct (an optional part of a sentence) in the receptive clause and may therefore be left out, for example, *the seeds were eaten by the dove: the seeds were eaten* (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014).

It should be further noted that SFG also distinguishes between sub-types of transitive/intransitive clauses: creative clauses and transformative clauses. Creative clauses are where the Actor or Goal is interpreted as being brought into existence by the unfolding Process and transformative clauses are viewed as clauses where a pre-existing Actor or Goal is

construed as being changed by the unfolding Process (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). Table 3.17 illustrates creative and transformative clauses in terms of "happening/doing".

Table 3.17 Creative / transformative clauses (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014)

	Creative		Transformative	
	intransitive	transitive	intransitive	transitive
What **happened**?	Cocoa paste formed.	The grinder formed cocoa paste.	The cocoa paste melted into a liquid.	The heat melted the cocoa paste into a liquid.
What did X **do** to **Y?**		What did the grinder **do to** the cocoa paste? – (It formed it)		What did the heat **do** to the cocoa paste? (It melted it into a liquid).

Table 3.17 illustrates the difference between creative and transformative transitive and intransitive verbs. In the creative (intransitive clause) *cocoa paste formed* the Actor comes into existence because of the unfolding process (action). In the creative (transitive clause) *the grinder formed cocoa paste* the Goal (*cocoa paste)* came into existence because of the process unfolding, namely forming through grinding and are therefore creative in nature. The transformative doing processes in *the cocoa paste melted into a liquid/ the heat melted the cocoa paste into a liquid* contain pre-existing Actors and Goals which are transformed as the process unfolds (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). In other words, in transformative transitive /intransitive clauses there is an alteration of the already existing Actor (intransitive) and Goal (transitive). This then means that unlike creative clauses, transformative clauses mostly contain a separate element (Attribute) that specifies the new state of the Goal, for example, *we built the model car* is creative in nature since the outcome is the creation of the car, while *we re-sprayed the car blue* is transformative in nature because the outcome is the transformation of the colour of the car. The colour blue is therefore the Attribute specifying the change in the Goal.

Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) state that transformative ultimately means that there is an existing Actor and Goal prior to the onset of the describing process and that there is change in the form of elaboration, extension or enhancement of the Actor or Goal (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). In traditional ESL grammar instruction teachers will normally refer to elaboration, extension and enhancement through identifying adverbs/adverbial phrases; adjectives/adjectival phrases and prepositions/propositional phrases. SFG again in this instance, does not disregard the functions of the traditional POS but refer to them as processes where information is added to contexts through elaboration, extension or enhancement. It is thus necessary that the ESL learner still knows that adjectives, adverbs and prepositions play their respective functions in achieving transformation, but Halliday (2010) claims that referring to these processes as proposed in SFG provides a clearer understanding of what is required to create meaning in clauses. For purposes of the SFG-based intervention programme, transformation will be regarded as 'additional information' rather than extension, elaboration or enhancement. Table 3.18 below illustrates the possible outcomes of transformation as proposed by Halliday's SFG:

Table 3.18 Possible outcomes of transformation in clauses

Example of transformation (The Actor/Goal is printed in bold and the transformation is underlined)	
Elaboration	Mix **the ingredients** _into a stiff dough ball._
Extension	When she sees **red roses** _bunched together_, she becomes emotional.
Enhancement	**He** squirted _red tomato sauce_ on the chips before eating it.

Elaboration refers to the transformed state of the existing ingredients after mixing them _into a stiff dough ball_. In other words, offering information on what will happen to the _ingredients_ after mixing. Extension refers to offering extra information about the Actor or Goal. The information is not necessarily needed but adds extra facts about how the roses are presented. Enhancement adds extra information about what the Actor squirted onto the chips in the example clause.

In all three examples of transformation it is clear that the process unfolds around the pre-existing Actor/Goal which is changed in some or other manner through the unfolding process. In the examples in Table 3.18, the processes are represented by the verbs: _mix, sees_ and _squirts_. The transformation of the Actor/Goal is then determined through the type of elaboration, extension or enhancement added to the process. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) however state that there are more participants involved in the process of clauses, namely: 'Scope', 'Recipient' and 'Client'.

3.8   Scope, Recipient and Client as participants in clauses

The most important participant function would be of Scope, which is the most general across various types of clauses (Halliday 2010). Scope refers to the extent of the range in which activities can take place in clauses. Scope is more restricted than Actor/Goal and is not influenced by the unfolding process in a clause; for example, _follow the straight line that splits up in two_ determines the domain over which the process will take place but no transformation. In other words, there is no extension or elaboration of what happens up to the point of reaching the point _the line splits up in two_. Client and Recipient are both found in the capacity of benefactor in clauses. The Recipient is the one that goods are given to, for example; _He sent a gift (to) Reggie_ where _Reggie_ is the Recipient. Client is the one that services are done for, for example, _She knitted a scarf (for) her sister_.

Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) hold that the appropriate preposition for recognising Recipient is _to_ and to identify Client is _for_. While there is no priority of one process over another, processes are ordered. This means that metaphorically, processes form a circle and not a line, creating the flow and continuity within a continuous space and not between two distinct poles (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). Important for SFG is the underpinning concept of integratedness and unity of all grammatical components in a given text. This means that all the processes taking place in texts create meaning that provides the reader of the text with insight into the _where_, _when_ and _how_, _frequency_ and additional _circumstances_ of the processes (Halliday 2010). A discussion on 'Process' as proposed by Halliday follows.

3.9   Process in SFG

A Process is viewed as a semiotic space in which there are various sections that represent
different types of processes, meaning that the sections are constant and blending gradually into
one another. This gradual blending of one section into another illustrates the preciseness of the
prototypical categories of each section as well as the respective sections. Halliday and
Matthiessen (2014) illustrate the grammar of experience (as processes) in Figure 3.8 below.
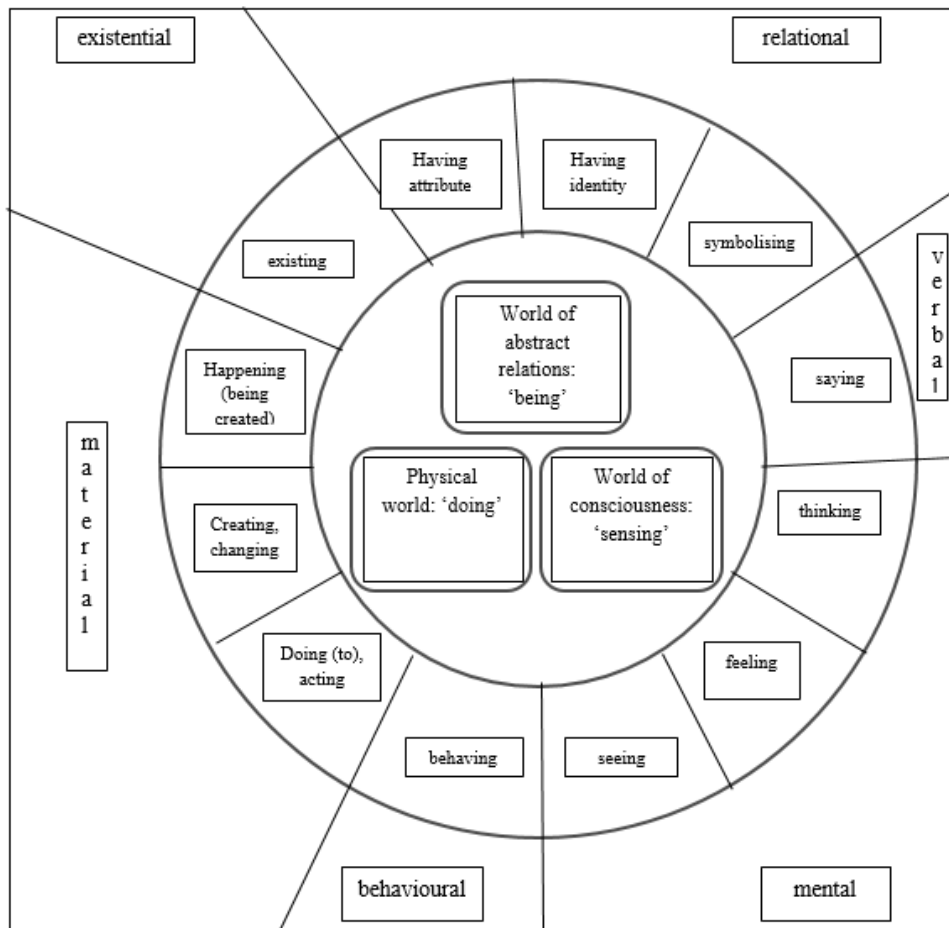
Figure 3.8 The grammar of experience (types of process in English) (Halliday & Matthiessen (2014)

Figure 3.8 summarises the types of processes in English by illustrating them as a metaphorical
circle where all the regions merge into one another. The system of PROCESS TYPE represents
the overall space: behavioural; material; existential; relational; verbal and mental. From the
illustration it is indicated that each TYPE OF PROCESS further consists of prototypical members
(figures) of the process type, e.g. MENTAL: seeing – feeling - thinking. Each TYPE OF PROCESS
represents an entry condition to a subtler part of the grammatical network of that particular
process type (Halliday 1999; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). Halliday and Matthiessen state
that our world of experience is exceptionally indeterminate and that the system TYPE OF
PROCESS interprets the principle of systemic indeterminacy precisely as illustrated in Figure3.9
(Halliday & Matthiessen 1999; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). In other words, the same text
may offer alternative models of what seems to belong to one field of experience, for example,

interpreting the field of mental experience as both mental and relational: *he liked it raw – it thrilled him* where there is an emotional experience (*liked it*) and a relational experience (*it thrilled him*). Both experiences seem to belong to the mental field, but when interpreting it as follows, *he was happy about [it]*, in other words [*it*] – rawness of [*it*], then it becomes clear that the process has a quality serving as participant in the relational field as well as in the mental. Figure 3.9 below illustrates how the experiential structure of a clause in English is interpreted.
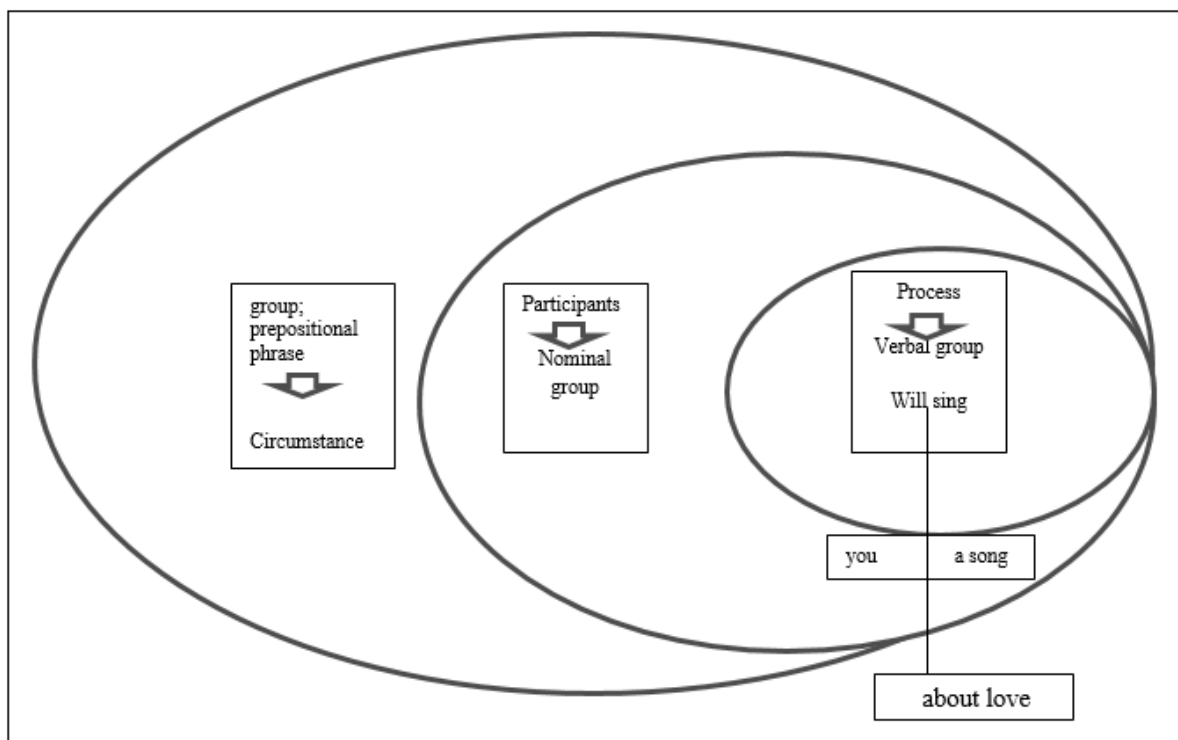
Figure 3.9 The central and peripheral elements of an experiential clause (based on Halliday & Matthiessen 2014)

In the clause *will you sing a song about love* the process is identified as *will you sing* and the participants (nominal groups) are *you sing a song,* while *about love* is identified as prepositional phrase. Halliday (1999; 2006) further holds that the process is the most central element of configuration in clauses. While all clauses have at least one participant it is also true that only some clauses are augmented circumstantially. Halliday explains the difference in status between participants and circumstances in terms of appearance: the process at the centre of a configuration followed by the participant closest to the process (and therefore directly involved in the process), while circumstances expand the centre in some manner (e.g. causally, spatially and temporally). The typical structure of an experiential clause in English can therefore be illustrated as follows: process + participant = experiential centre of a clause'.

The rank of the circumstances is more marginal in nature (furthest away from the centre) and unlike participants it is not directly involved in the process. Figure 3.9 illustrates this by indicating the process as centre (*will sing*), the participants (*you/a song*) closest to the process and the circumstance, in this case a prepositional phrase (*about love)* the furthest away

from the centre process. It should be noted however that all of the components of the clause are connected in some manner: The process tells what action is taking place, the participants tell who is involved in the action and the circumstance provides additional information about the process and participants. In other words, in the example *will you sing a song about love?* the listener is told that there is a request to sing (process), someone is requested to sing a song (participants) and finally what type of song the participants have to sing (circumstance: prepositional phrase).

The complementary aspects are known as 'transience' (a phenomenon is presented as unfolding through time by the verbal group serving as the process) and permanence (a phenomenon presented as continuous through time and located in space by nominal groups serving as participants in a clause) (Halliday & Matthiessen 2009, 2014). This means that participants are viewed as relatively stable throughout time and can participate in numerous processes, for example, in narrative where there is a constant reference to the participant throughout the narrative by means of proper nouns, pronouns or reflexive pronouns, for example, *There was* (the participant is introduced into the narrative in a process of existence) *a boy who went to Sunday school* (here the participant is maintained in other processes) *and he was most obedient. He was told by the pastor* (Every *he* in the narrative is directly related to the boy who is seen as participant in other processes throughout the narrative unless indicated otherwise). Every *was,* however refers to a different *process of being* that the participant is involved in. In other words, the participant remains stable, while the processes are ephemeral in nature (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014).

Halliday and Matthiessen further state that nominal groups (participants) have developed the system of DETERMINATION (specific [*the/this/that/it*] and non-specific [*a/some/any/everything*]), while verbal groups (processes) have developed the system of TENSE to locate an event in time. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) hold that change involves both transience and permanence and that the phenomena of experience are projected as either transient processes or as permanent participants, for example, *they started to eat again* (transient process) versus *their eating started again* (permanent participant). In other words, the clause *they started to eat again* refers to a transitory action that is of a passing nature, but the clause *their eating started again* refers to a more permanent characteristic of the participants rather than the process.

3.10   Conclusion

The general tenets and concepts of SFG were explored in this chapter to provide the required background information to grasp SFG as a suitable theoretical framework for developing an alternative ESL grammar teaching approach. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) emphasise that it is the trinocular interpretation of texts that determines the grammatical distinction of word classes into the typical POS (e.g. verbs, nouns, adverbs etc.). Applying a SFG framework, entails that, in any given utterance/clause/text, Processes are realised by verbal groups, Participants are realised by nominal groups and Circumstance is realised by an adverbial group or a prepositional phrase. The linguistic units that realise process, participant and circumstance are responsible for indicating change in distinct manners within the clause, and enables

language users to analyse text as a whole, rather as constituent POS. In other words, in contrast to traditional ESL grammar teaching, SFG focuses on the participants and circumstances surrounding the actions that are described in a text. Traditional ESL grammar focuses on identifying the POS involved in clauses rather than on the experience itself. In SFG, the concepts of Process, Participants and Circumstance carry semantic value and generally explain how phenomena of experience are construed as linguistic structures. SFG therefore presents itself as a more accessible and functional approach, by looking at participants, circumstances and the action (process) itself, rather than restricting the focus to the identification of POS in a decontexualised manner.

Chapter 4 presents a discussion of the methodology followed in this study, and provides a detailed explanation of how exactly SFG was incorporated in the self-help intervention programme. More specifically, the discussion will focus on how SFG was incorporated in the intervention programme, alongside the traditional ESL grammar syllabus that ESL learners have to work through in South African schools.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN OF INTERVENTION PROGRAMME

4.1 Introduction

Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005) state that research methodology considers and explains the logic behind the research methods and techniques chosen by researchers in order to conduct studies that expand knowledge in particular fields of study. Knowledge has been classified as scientific or non-scientific (Welman et al. 2005). Non-scientific knowledge refers to knowledge obtained through authority (what experts say), opinions of peers, traditions, debating and accidental observations. In other words, information about something that is not scientifically tested and validated. Scientific knowledge comprises three main features, namely systematic observation (not accidental), replication (it must be possible for other researchers to obtain similar results if they were to repeat the study) and control (any alternative explanations for the data obtained should be eliminated systematically). In other words, scientific research can be defined as the organised and systematic search for answers to questions asked (Dörnyei 2007), opposed to answers derived from random assumptions and conclusions based on accidental occurrences. Welman et al. (2005) describe research as obtaining scientific knowledge by means of objective methods and procedures, where objectivity implies conducting research without personal feelings and opinions and where the observations can be agreed upon by other researchers. The research process should follow a specific procedure/method and every stage of the research should adhere to this specific method (or methods).

Scholars agree that the research process comprises at least the following 6 phases: problem statement and research questions, research method, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of data and finally writing the research report (Babbie & Mouton 2009; Lune et al. 2010); Monette et al. 2011; Royce et al. 2010; Rubin & Babbie 2010; Thyer 2010). The present study carefully followed the abovementioned research process in conducting research in the domain of L2. The goal of this chapter is to provide the reader with a description of the research design and methods that were used in the present study.

Chapter 4 first provides a discussion of the research philosophy (paradigm) that underpins the research design and methodology followed in the study. Thereafter follows a discussion of the specific methodological issues relevant to this study, including an overview of the qualitative and quantitative approaches in human sciences, sample selection, the data collection procedures as well as the research instruments. Following this, issues pertaining to validity and reliability in this study will be discussed, and the procedures followed by the researcher to ensure ethical conduct will be explained. Finally, the nature of the intervention programme will be discussed in detail where after the results of the pilot study concludes the chapter.

4.2 Research design and research methods

A pivotal part of a successful research study is the identification of a clear, articulate and meaningful research problem, which acts as the focus of the study (Ellis & Levy 2010; Pallant

2011; Richey & Klein 2007; van den Akker 2000). The research problem is pivotal since it assists the researcher in the selection of a well-suited research design and research tools. It is paramount that the research design should be scientifically grounded and reliable (Churchill & Iacobucci 2005; Cooper & Schindler 2011; Drew 2008; Iacobucci & Churchill 2014).

Research can be seen as fulfilling one of the following purposes: exploring, describing, explaining and evaluating (Engel & Schutte 2010; Neuman 2006; Strydom 2011). According to Pierson and Thomas (2010), more than one of these purposes can be delineated for the same study, but one of the purposes will normally dominate a specific study. The explorative purpose usually focuses on '*what questions*' (e.g. *What interferes with the proficiency of ESL learners?*), while descriptive studies focus on '*how-*' and '*who questions'* (e.g. *Who is battling with ESL proficiency* and *How many learners are battling with ESL proficiency?*). The explanatory purpose of a study focuses on why the problem exists and attempts to find answers as to causes and effects of behaviour and is normally experimental in nature. The evaluative purpose focuses on practice evaluation and looks at identifying the effects of social programmes and interventions, which actually encompasses all the other three purposes (Rubin & Babbie 2010). This study is experimental in nature but evaluates the effect of the intervention as well by means of pre-testing, post-testing and delayed post-testing.

There are different types of research designs but only two main types of research methods: quantitative and qualitative (Sunday & Van Wyk 2015). Each of the approaches aims at fulfilling specific research aims and functions and therefore each of the approaches prescribe specific methodological styles and conventions. Sunday and Van Wyk (2015) describe research design as the overall plan for connecting the research problem to the empirical research, thus articulating the specific data required, the methods for collecting and analysing the data and how this data will answer the research question(s). Babbie and Mouton (2009) defines research design as the planning of a scientific inquiry. This means that the researcher must clearly explain what it is she sets out to establish, including determining the best way to do so.

Brown (1988, 2004a, 2005) distinguishes between 'secondary research', which involves looking at what others have said about particular issues, e.g. reading articles or books published by other scientists; and 'primary research', which is known as empirical research and is conducted by gathering one's own data. This study included both secondary and primary research in its quest to finding answers to the research problem. An in-depth literature study was conducted to investigate what other scholars say about the issues and focus of this study, but the emphasis remained on the primary research conducted for this research.

Driscoll (2011) states that primary research is mostly based on principles of the scientific method, i.e. identifying a research problem, developing a research question, collecting data that is observable, measurable and replicable, and analysing the data. Primary research thus serves the purpose of learning something new about a phenomenon that can be confirmed by other researchers, in order to enhance our understanding of the phenomenon.

Leavitt (2004) and Driscoll (2011) argue that primary research only involves questions that can be answered, tested and observed. In other words, hypotheses that cannot be tested,

for example, whether or not an afterlife exists, cannot be the topic of an empirical study. Leavitt (2004) further states that primary research is useful when investigating how a larger issue plays out at local level, although it can also be useful for national or wider research purposes, as long as the data is measurable, thus quantifiable in nature. Primary data is described as the data collected for a specific research project (Saunders *et al.* 2007). The present study is empirical in nature and collected primary data to address its research objectives. Furthermore, the data in this study is measurable and can be quantified and therefore qualifies as empirical data.

In order to fully understand the process of a research study it is essential to comprehend the philosophy behind the process as a whole. The next section will provide an overview of the most prominent research philosophies.

4.2.1   Research philosophies

The term 'research philosophy' refers to the development and nature of knowledge in a particular field (Olckers 2011). Research philosophies (also referred to as research paradigms) differ significantly from each other, and influence the nature of research designs and the specific research methods used for collecting and analysing data. Paradigms thus play a fundamental role in science (Vosloo 2014). Paradigms have been described as a "whole system of thinking", i.e. a paradigm includes the accepted theories, traditions, models, frame of reference, approaches and body of research methodologies in a specific discipline (Neuman 2011: 8-9), as the established research traditions in a philosophical framework (Collis & Hussey 2009) and as a model or framework for observation and understanding that guide the research action (Babbie 2011; Rubin & Babbie 2010). Paradigms are, however, also assigned different meanings, for example, Saunders et al. (2007) refer to paradigms as a term relating to the developing of knowledge in a particular field, whereas Creswell (2014), assigned it the term 'worldview', meaning that the researcher is informed by his or her own assumptions based on personal experience, knowledge and preferences.

Creswell (2014) distinguishes four different paradigms: 'post-positivism', 'constructivism', 'transformativism' and 'pragmatism'. It should be noted however that other research philosophies also exist, including 'positivism', 'interpretivism', 'realism' and 'humanism' (Creswell & Plano 2011). A brief discussion of the most prominent paradigms follows, after which the present study will be situated in the paradigm 'positivism'.

4.2.1.1   Positivism and Post-positivism

Positivism is described as a paradigm that involved systematic observation and description of phenomena contextualised within a specific theory or model. The research process typically entails stating a hypothesis and conducting a controlled experimental study. Data is analysed using inferential statistics to test the hypothesis and the results are interpreted against the original theory (Ponterotto 2005). Post-positivists are, however, sceptical of positivism and believe that researchers can never fully capture a true and objective reality, for example, thoughts and attitudes that are deemed 'abstract' and therefore not measurable are deemed

relevant and important to a research problem by post-positivist, whereas rigid positivists believe that valid knowledge must be measurable and hence that that which is not observable cannot be regarded as valid evidence and knowledge (Bryman 2006). Creswell and Plano-Clark (2009) regards post-positivism as an extension of positivism and not as a distinct philosophical tradition, since it only challenges the positivist notion of 'absolute and objective truth of knowledge' in the social sciences. Gratton and Jones (2010) hold the view that it is not possible to gain understanding from measurement only, which in accordance with post-positivist beliefs, allows for development of more alternative research strategies to obtain information. Positivism is typically associated with quantitative research – quantitative research methods will be discussed in section 4.4.1 of this chapter.

4.2.1.2   The Constructivist worldview

The Constructivist worldview holds that individuals seek understanding of the world they live and work in and that individuals develop subjective interpretations of their experiences. The challenge for researchers working within the constructivist paradigm is to narrow these individual experiences and interpretations down to a few categories or ideas (Creswell 2014). This forces the researcher to search for 'complexity' rather than categories, e.g. open-ended questions in discussions rather than closed questions. Constructivism is typically associated with a qualitative research approach – qualitative research methods will be the focus of section 4.4.2.

4.2.1.3   The Transformative worldview

The Transformative worldview is followed by researchers who feel that post-positivist assumptions impose structural restrictions and theories that do not address social issues such as feminism, Marxism, racial and ethnic minorities, disabilities and gender discrimination (Creswell 2014). Transformative research requires politicised views intertwined with the research theory and aims at changing the lives of participants.

4.2.1.4   The Pragmatist worldview

The pragmatic worldview takes on many forms, meaning that actions, situations and consequences inspire pragmatism, rather than existing conditions (as is the case with post-positivism) (Creswell 2014). Pragmatism often underpins mixed methods research (when researchers draw on both quantitative and qualitative methods). Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) emphasise the importance of focusing on the research problem in social science research, by applying a pluralistic approach to obtain knowledge about the problem, which entails considering a mixed-method approach rather than following a strictly quantitative or qualitative approach for a particular study.

Pragmatism is thus not committed to any one approach or philosophy but draw widely from both quantitative and qualitative paradigms (Creswell 2014; Tashakkori and Teddlie 2010). It allows researchers to choose the most applicable and suitable research methods, techniques and procedures for their studies. Pragmatists do not view the world as absolute unity

but focus on the individuality and variety in data. Pragmatism acknowledges that research occurs in social, political and historical contexts and may thus reflect the specific context in its theory. Although this study does acknowledge the social, political and historical contexts in which the participants of the study exist, it did not rely on these contexts for the development of the intervention. As such, the present study is established in the positivist philosophy, in the sense that a research problem was identified, a hypothesis was formulated, quantitative data was collected and analysed using statistical methods, after which the results were interpreted within a particular theory.

Apart from considering underlying research paradigms that influence research designs, it is also useful to shed light on the difference between inductive and deductive research approaches, as this also influences a researcher's methodological choices.

4.3   Inductive versus Deductive research approach

An inductive approach entail that the researcher attempts to gain more insight and understanding into the nature of the research problem (Olckers 2011). This means that the researcher tries to gain an understanding of meaning attached by individuals to certain experiences, rather than testing the effects of interventions or remedies in quantifiable numbers. Deduction, on the other hand, entails the development of a theory that is subjected to thorough testing. Theory presents the basis of explanation, allows and anticipates the occurrence of phenomena and predicts the occurrence of such phenomena, therefore allowing phenomena to be controlled (Saunders et al. 2007; Olckers 2011). In an inductive approach, data collection is often less structured in nature and more contextualised than in a deductive approach. Inductive approaches also allow for smaller samples and a variety of ways to collect data (Saunders *et al.* 2007). Hinkin (1998) suggests that induction may be advisable when it is difficult to identify the conceptual basis of constructs.

In deductive studies, researchers collect data in a highly structured manner in order to test hypotheses. The idea is to collect data in a controlled environment, where variables are manipulated or kept constant, so that the results can be used to confirm, adjust or reject a particular theory.

The main difference between inductive and deductive research approaches is that the researcher following a deductive approach formulates a hypothesis (based on existing theory) and designs a research strategy to test this hypothesis. In contrast, in an inductive approach, the researcher collects data and develops a theory based on the data analysis and its findings (McLaughlin, McLaughlin & Muffo 2001).

The current study clearly fits into the deductive approach, since the hypothesis of the study (a self-help ESL intervention grammar programme will positively affect ESL grammar proficiency) was subjected to thorough testing under controlled circumstances (as far as possible). The participants were in a classroom context and the instruction was monitored by the teachers, parents and the researcher. The hypothesis for this study was formulated based on existing theories of ESL instruction. Prior to data collection, ESL grammar proficiency levels

were identified, following this an experimental group underwent the intervention while a control group received only normal classroom instruction, and finally the effect of the intervention was assessed via post-testing and delayed post-testing. In section 4.5, it will be explained in more detail how the above deductive process was operationalised in this study. General aspects of research methodology (i.e. quantitative vs. qualitative vs. mixed methods as well as sampling procedures and timelines) will however first be discussed, in the next section.

4.4   Research Methodologies

Leedy and Ormrod (2010) defines research methodology as the general approach the researcher follows when conducting a study. Babbie and Mouton (2008) continues to state that research methodology focuses on the research process and the kind of tools used to conduct a study. A natural point of departure in the research process would be to collect data in the most objective and suitable way for a specific study (Carter & Little 2007: 1317, 1320). A description and discussion of the three broad approaches to research methodology follows.

4.4.1   Quantitative approach to research

Quantitative research refers to the systematic measurement of characteristics displayed by living beings or phenomena (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995; Oyetunji 2011; Punch 3002; Taylor & Trumbull 2000) Quantitative data is typically numerical, i.e. the measurements (e.g. tests scores or experimental data) are presented in numbers. The data is analysed using statistical methods. Preparing for quantitative research is labour-intensive, since it requires careful planning and testing of research instruments before administering the final instrument. Quantitative researchers are often perceived as being preoccupied with testing theory, as their objective is to understand how and why variables are associated with each other. Oyetunji (2011) further holds that quantitative researchers are rather objective in the sense that they don't engage in research activities where they may influence the opinions of participants.

Quantitative researchers use methods that are adopted from the physical sciences and that are designed to ensure generalisability and objectivity (Thomas 2003). The most frequent question asked by researchers conducting quantitative research involves the size of the sample. An important consideration is how the researcher ensures that the sample of participants and the results of the research will be generalisable. Dörnyei (2007) states that the participant sample can determine the success of a study, and emphasises that sampling decisions should be made early in the planning process of a quantitative study. Typically, quantitative research is associated with larger samples.

Lancy (2001) holds that quantitative studies can be conducted within a short period of time such as a few hours or a few days. This is known as cross-sectional research. On the other hand, longitudinal studies within a quantitative framework refer to the measuring of the same skills over a period of time. Dörnyei (2007) puts forwards that experimental or quasi-experimental studies, where there is some type of intervention, and where the same variables are measured before and after the intervention, could be categorised as a prospective longitudinal (or panel) study. The research for this particular study was conducted over a period

of ten months where the intervention took place between the pre-test and the post-test. A delayed post-test was included in the data collection process (measuring the same skills that were measured in the pre-test and post-test). As such, the present study qualifies as a longitudinal study.

4.4.2 *Qualitative approach to research*

Qualitative research focuses mainly on understanding, describing or clarifying the behaviour, interaction, beliefs, experiences and attitudes of people (Oyetunji 2011), with the aim to report aspects that reflect individual/idiosyncratic experiences (Polkinghorne 2005). Willis (2008) describes qualitative research as research that yield data in word form instead of as numbers. Qualitative research is often rich with quotation, and is descriptive and narrative in nature because researchers attempt to capture the true nature of conversations, experiences, perspectives and meaning interpretations of people (Vosloo 2014). Qualitative data include documented observations, transcriptions of interviews, natural data, and personal notes of researchers. Qualitative research allows researchers to adapt data-collecting procedures during the study to accommodate new-found data. Because of this, qualitative research appears to be more circular and overlapping in nature, compared to quantitative research which is normally divided into two linear phases – data collection and data analysis (Dörnyei 2007; Taylor & Trumbull 2000).

Qualitative data is sometimes described as 'bulky', given its mostly textual format. Richards (2005) notes that the volume of data gathered in qualitative research is not a problem, but rather the collection of useful information. In other words, qualitative research naturally leads to large volumes of data collected, but what is important is that the data should be useful and appropriate to the particular study. Dörnyei (2007) further suggests that the bulkiness of qualitative data represents the real-life complexity of situations researched in applied linguistics, for example, when recordings of language are transcribed in order to establish the occurrence of specific linguistic phenomena. The analysis of this type of data is non-statistical, e.g. interviews in the form of transcribed recordings that is analysed via qualitative content analysis and interpreted by the researcher. Qualitative data analysis is more interpretive than statistical, and usually excludes experimental designs. The data of qualitative research cannot be easily quantified, for example, observing the interactions of students in a foreign language classroom (Mackey & Gass 2005; Polkinghorne 2005) cannot easily be linked to numbers, due to the nature of the data.

Qualitative research favours emergent designs, meaning that no particular research design is decided prior to data collection (Welman et al. 2009). Even so, sample size, specific settings, events and processes should be planned and outlined before attempting any data gathering. Most researchers conform to the process of 'iteration' in qualitative research. Iteration refers to the 'openness' in the selection of participants in a qualitative study, i.e. the adding of additional participants during or after the initial gathering of data. Iteration, according to Dörnyei (2007), is key to qualitative studies, but it should be understood that iteration can only continue until saturation is reached. Saturation is the point in gathering data where the

data answers the research question sufficiently and additional data does not change or challenge the revealed data (Glaser & Strauss 1967).

In reality, many research problems are best solved when investigated with a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. As such, it has become acceptable to utilise both quantitative and qualitative research methods in a study, which has resulted in the 'mixed methods research'. A brief description of this approach follows.

4.4.3   Mixed-method approach to research

Scholars agree that quantitative and qualitative research methods should not be regarded a clear-cut dichotomy, but should rather be viewed as existing on a continuum (Brown 2004a; Dörnyei 2007; Duff 2006). In other words, quantitative research can transgress into qualitative research methods and vice versa. It should be noted that a mixed method approach to research does not only refer to data collection methods (Creswell & Plano Clarke 2011). Mixed methods thus refers to a possible combination of research paradigms, a combination of deductive and inductive arguing, a combination of data collection tools and a combination of quantitative and qualitative data, which thus requires a combination of quantitative and qualitative analytical tools. Bergman (2008a) and Bryman (2009) both suggest that researchers should orientate themselves to the differences between quantitative and qualitative approaches before deciding whether a mixed method approach is appropriate.

Human sciences research often includes a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods (Fouche & De Vos 2011; Vosloo 2014). However, for this study the researcher chose to rely on a distinctly quantitative design, as this was deemed most appropriate to answer the research questions posed at the outset. In both quantitative and qualitative research (in the human sciences), the identification of an appropriate target population from which the sample will be drawn is of paramount importance (Olckers 2011). A general discussion of sampling, population and representativeness follows, after which a description of the population and sample for this study is presented.

4.5   Sampling

Sampling involves three main concepts: sample, population and representativeness. Sampling entails the selection of a subset of participants or things from a larger population (also referred to as the sampling frame), that will be examined or studied by the researcher (Black 2002; Driscoll 2011; Field 2009; Gall et al. 2007; Monette et al. 2011; Neuman 2011; Scott & Morrison 2006; 2007; Vosloo 2014). Sampling is further defined as the selection of some part of a totality – on the basis of the sample inferences are made (in other words information about an entire population may be obtained by examining only a sample of the population) (Haque 2017). Selecting a sample is necessitated by the fact that it is (almost always) impossible to study the entire population (Vosloo 2014). Sample size (n) should be determined bearing in mind the size of the population (N). Welman et al. (2005) explains that the general rule for

sampling dictates that the smaller the total population, the relatively larger the sample should be in order to yield reliable results.

The more representative the sample is of the population, the more generalisable the results of the study (Vosloo 2014). The sample must therefore have the intention to represent the particular population (Gall et al. 2007; Hittleman & Simon 2002; Babbie & Mouton 2008; Babbie 2010; Rubin & Babbie, 2010; 2011; Neuman 2011; Vosloo 2014). A good sample is defined as one that is very similar to the target population in its most general characteristics (e.g. gender, age) and in how well the sample represents the larger population that is researched for a specific reason (Dörnyei 2007). Chatuvedi (2016) indicates that there are three factors that influence sample representativeness: sampling procedure, sample size and the participation of participants. These factors refer to how the sample is taken, the appropriate size that will be representative of the population and whether the participants will sustain participation throughout the study. The sampling process may encounter problems in the area of 'systematic errors' and 'sampling biases'. Such errors refer to incorrect or false representations of the sample, in other words, the sample is not a true representation of the whole target population (Chatuvedi 2016; Drost 2015). It is agreed that sampling errors occur through overrepresentation of one characteristic and/or underrepresentation of the others, e.g. only selecting and including learners with diagnosed and confirmed learning problems in the experimental group of a study (Alvi 2016; Barreiro & Albandoz 2001; McLeod 2014). Conversely, the sample included in a control group might be compromised if there are learners in the group who have learning problems, and that have not been diagnosed.

Samples are categorised as either 'homogenous' or 'heterogeneous' (Barreiro & Albandoz 2001). In homogenous sampling, all the people (or items) in the sample are chosen because they share similar or identical traits. For example, people in a homogeneous sample might have the same age, location or employment in common. In a heterogeneous sample, all the people (or items) are chosen because they do not share similar or identical traits, for example, they vary in age, employment and location. Common variables responsible for heterogeneity are gender, age, socio-economic status and ethnicity (Barreiro & Albandoz 2001). Sampling is divided into two types: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. This will be the focus of the next sections.

4.5.1. *Probability sampling*

Probability sampling refers to sampling methods such as random sampling. Random sampling refers to a sampling process where random members of the population are included to create a representative sample and to decrease subjectivity). Random sampling is almost always more representative than non-random sampling and is based on selecting people based on a true random procedure rather than selectively choosing participants (Dörnyei 2007; Olckers 2011). Probability sampling requires the population to be very precisely defined and cannot be used for populations that are too general in description.

Other types of probability sampling include stratified random sampling (the random selection of people in predetermined groups, systematic random sampling, (every 'n'th' person is selected – this is also known as quasi-random sampling) and clustering (which refers to taking multistage random samples in each of several levels, in other words the people are not necessarily connected to one another) (Olkers 2011). Probability sampling is regarded as costly and time consuming and Dörnyei (2007) states that it is, in fact, unrealistic, too painstaking and probably too costly to achieve in most applied linguistic research studies. Probability sampling was not used in this study, since the learners who participated were selected from pre-existing classrooms. Thus, the sampling used in this study is 'convenient sampling', which will be discussed under non-probability sampling.

4.5.2 *Non-probability sampling*

Non-probability sampling refers to the selection of a sample where every unit of the population does not get an equal chance of participating in the research study. The selected sample is based on the subjective judgement of the researcher (Alvi 2016). In non-probability sampling, the sample is selected on the basis of a very precise description of the population (McLeod 2014). Non-probability sampling is regarded as the sampling method for most research in applied linguistics (Dörnyei 2007).

Dörnyei (2007) describes non-probability sampling as a 'less-than-perfect compromise' enforced on researchers by reality. This type of sampling is economical and convenient (selecting participants that are convenient means that they suit the purposes of the researcher, and are available and easy to research) (Alvi 2016; Gass & Mackey 2005; McLeod 2014; Olckers 2011). The most important type of non-probability sampling is convenience/opportunity sampling. Convenience sampling is regarded as the most commonly used sampling technique in L2 research and entails that the sampling procedure is determined by what is convenient for the researcher. For example, geographical proximity and participant willingness to participate might be reasons why it is convenient to include specific people in a sample. The main problem with convenience sampling, is that it is likely to be biased and therefore not representative of the population (Alvi 2016; Gass & Mackey 2005; McLeod 2014). Even so, it is still possible for the researcher to select an accessible sample that is representative of an entire population. Importantly though, due to the compromised nature of non-probability sampling, it is necessary that its limitations are described in detail when research results are presented and reported (Alvi 2016; Gass & Mackey 2005; McLeod 2014).

Gass and Mackey (2005) holds that for most L2 studies, the population is the group of all language learners at a particular level, but that the researcher is unlikely to have access to the entire population (in the context of this study all Gr8 ESL learners in South Africa). In line with this sampling challenge, the sample in the current study consisted only of all the Grade 8 ESL learners in one secondary school in Gauteng. In other words, the sample for this study does not represent all the Grade 8 ESL learners in South Africa or elsewhere, and the study will not set out to generalise its findings, given that the sample was not selected randomly. The sample in the present study can be described as a convenience sample, as the researcher taught at the school where the study was conducted. Throughout the sampling process the researcher

took the utmost care to behave in an ethical manner selecting the sample. More specific details (e.g. biographical details) about the sample of this study will be presented in section 4.8 below.

The sampling procedure is one element of research that determines the reliability and validity of a study. Other aspects that ensured the reliability and validity of this study, such as the reliability of the measuring instruments, will be discussed in section 4.11. The next part of this chapter (section 4.6), will present specific details with regards to the research design and participants of the current study.

4.6   Research design for this study

The research design utilised for this study was longitudinal and experimental in nature. Olckers (2011) holds that while longitudinal studies have the advantage of accommodating changes over a period of time, and offers better insight into developmental patterns, it can also be costly, time-consuming and attrition might be a high. Despite these challenges associated with longitudinal research, the researcher deemed it important to include not only a post-test but also a delayed post-test (three months after the post-test) in an attempt to measure the long-term effectiveness of the intervention programme. Generally speaking, intervention studies tend to only include a post-test to measure changes after an intervention, but including a delayed post-test strengthens the reliability of an experiment (Oyetunji 2011), in the sense that it provides the researcher with more robust results. Adding a delayed post-test to the research design also contributed to the unique nature of the study in the South African context, where longitudinal studies of this nature hardly exist. The data collection for the main study was completed over a period of 9 months.

The main constructs that were included in the present research design were the *intervention programme* (which was the main independent variable in the study) and *grammar proficiency* (which was main dependent variable in the study). By measuring grammar proficiency over a period of time in a controlled study, which included an experimental and a control group, the effect of the self-help intervention programme on the ESL proficiency of the participants was assessed. A discussion of the experimental nature (more specifically quasi-experimental nature) of this study will now follow.

4.6.1   Experimental and quasi-experimental research

Most types of experimental research in the field of Applied Linguistics involves some sort of 'remedy' or 'treatment'; i.e. participants are exposed to something they would under normal circumstances not have been subjected to (Cook & Campbell 1979; Griffee 2012; Shadish & Luellen 2006; Shadish, Cook & Campbell 2002; Welman et al. 2005). Treatment refers to the innovation or in the case of the present study, the intervention that a researcher implements to evaluate the impact of the intervention. All experiments involve at least a treatment, units of assignment, measurement of results and some sort of comparison (typically with a control group) to measure the effect of the treatment (Cook & Campbell 1979; Griffee 2012). Consequently, Griffee (2012) describes L2 classroom intervention research as follows: the

intervention is the 'treatment', the 'unit of assignment' is the concept studied by the researcher and the 'measurement' is seen as the test(s) providing quantifiable data.

A true experiment requires random sampling (and random assignment of the participants in a study to a control group as well as to the experimental group (also known as treatment group) (Griffee 2012; Mark 2008). When random assignment is not possible, as was the case in this study, the design applied is regarded as a 'quasi-experimental design'. Quasi-experimental research takes place in natural environments, for example, in classrooms or offices (Kaplan 2011; Lee & Lemieux 2009; Shadish *et al.* 2002). Quasi-experimental designs are usually built on constructions that already exist in the real world, which means that the researcher does not have full control over the setting of the experiment and the selection of the participant groups.

Quasi-experimental research designs are often used in the educational settings, where it impossible to rigidly follow the principals guiding experimental research, and where intact groups are used as sample (Broota 2006; Campbell & Stanley 2005, 23; Shuttleworth 2008). It is accepted in the field if Applied Linguistics that quantitative educational research has to be quasi-experimental in nature, because of the unique complexities of teaching and learning in classrooms, which makes it difficult to control for all potentially contributing variables (Richards & Schmidt 2010; Schanzenbach 2012; Stuart & Rubin 2007) It is also accepted that the researcher does not have complete control over the intervention that is implemented (Welman et al. 2005), as factors such as the presence of researcher in the classroom, participants trying to please the researcher, or the teacher acting as researcher may influence the results of a study. In sum then, although a quasi-experimental design in a natural environment such as the classroom (applicable to this study) prohibits total control over nuisance variables such as L1 competence, aptitude, intelligence, SES, age and gender, it offers the next best alternative to true experimental research.

As in a true experimental design, a control group is included in a quasi-experimental design to afford credibility to the results of the experiment (Griffee 2012; Lodico et al. 2006; Vockell 1983). The control group is not exposed to the intervention but is compared to the experimental group in order to control nuisance variables (any variable not mentioned in the research hypothesis that may influence the dependent variable). Shadish et al. (2002) and White and Sabarwal (2014) state that the comparison group in any study should be identified through baseline characteristics, meaning that the group must be identified before any intervention or treatment takes place. The comparison group therefore represents what the outcome would have been had no intervention taken place. The effect(s) of the treatment or intervention that occurs in the treatment group is then seen as the cause of the treatment.

Welman et al. (2005) emphatically pose that quasi-experimental designs do not allow conclusions about causal relationships with as much conviction as true experimental research, but that one should focus on the fact that it allows rather confident conclusions. Important to all experimental designs is the shared commonality of 'change' that either occurs naturally or is introduced by an agent (treatment) (Taylor 2017). Michael (2017) reasons that quasi-experimental designs are very suitable when: i) it is difficult to apply true experimental

methods to social science ii) there is an over emphasis on theory testing and development (theoretical vs. applied research) iii) the high cost of experimental research would prohibit the research from taking place and iv) when statistical tools that enable statistical control can be used to analyse the data.

Considering the above it is clear that the best design for the current study was a quasi-experimental design. The study is more applied research rather than theoretical, which according to Michael (2017), allows for prevention of an over-emphasis on theory, and in the case of this study seems applicable since the study is conducted within the confinements of a particular theoretical framework, but requires the freedom to test this theory in reality, for which quasi-experimental research design allows. Quasi-experimentation is suitable when it is not possible to control all potential variables, such as in the case of this study, where age, grade repetition, gender, social standing and personal motivation were not controlled for. It is generally agreed that causal explanations are possible with quasi-experimentation, but only if the researcher collects data that demonstrate that any plausible rival explanations are unlikely (Barnes, Hauser, Heikes, Hernandes, Richard, Ross, Yang, Palmquist, 2012; Michael 2017; Taylor 2017; Shadish, Cook & Campbell 2002). The implication for this study is that the researcher had to eliminate all possible other explanations for the results obtained. Such rival explanations could have been due to maturation of participants, non-equivalence of experimental and control groups or cross contamination among groups - meaning, they could have discussed and shared information about the intervention programme. In Chapter 5, it will be explained how the researcher statistically controlled for some nuisance variables, including maturation, L1 proficiency and SES, but as mentioned already, it was not possible to control for all such variables, as is typically the case in educational research.

Even though the researcher worked with existing participants in a school context, there were ethical issues that needed to be adhered to. A discussion on the relevant ethical issues for longitudinal quasi-experimental research, such as the present study, follows.

4.7   Ethics

Research ethics can be seen as the principles which underlie appropriate researcher behaviour with regards to the rights of participants in a research study, and with regards to the collection, storage, analyses and report of data (Jacob 2005; Olckers 2011; Saunders et al. 2007; Sojourner 2011). For a research study to be ethical, the researcher should follow sound methodological principles and morally acceptable guidelines (such as getting consent from participants and obtaining ethical clearance from relevant authorities). Generally speaking, this means that a researcher should guard against manipulating participants and/or research results. According to Barnes et al. (2012), researchers might be looking for specific results and therefore might ask questions and look at data that support only the desired conclusions. In such cases, conflicting results are ignored and only those findings which support the researcher's goal are considered. Needless to say, such conduct would be unethical.

Numerous scholars, including Babbie and Mouton (2001), Makey and Gass (2005) and Olckers (2011) have addressed the issue of ethics when conducting research in the field of

humanities. Central to their work is the issue of behaving ethically when collecting data from humans. The notion of 'informed consent' is pivotal to ensure that research involving human participants is conducted in an ethical manner (Makey & Gass 2005; Olckers 2011). Informed consent requires that participants, to the degree that they are capable, should have the opportunity to choose what shall or shall not happen to them during a research study. Informed consent is only possible when the following three conditions are met:

i) Adequate material about the experiment is supplied
ii) The partaker fully understands the experiment and his role in it
iii) Partaking is voluntary and there is no pressure or pressure from the researcher's side.

In other words, informed consent entails that participants in a study must be informed properly, understand fully and be willing to willingly participate in a study. Mackey and Gass (2005) state that adequate disclosure of the research involves:

i) The processes and drives of the study
ii) The latent perils and benefits of the study
iii) The means by which participants will be allocated to groups and what conduct the groups will experience or not
iv) Information about the researcher (contact details)
v) The precise steps in place to ensure total confidentiality and anonymity (e.g. using numbers instead of names, no use of identifying information and safeguarding the location of all information with regard to the study)
vi) Consider the sensitivity of refugee information and for other parties participating in the study
vii) Make sure the subsequent sharing of data is permissible by institutional regulations and the informed consent from participants.

For the purpose of the current study, all documentation involved was set up, printed, collected and analysed by the researcher only, in order to maintain confidentiality. Ethical clearance for this research study was granted by the Department of Basic Education (Gauteng) and by the College of Human Sciences of the University of South Africa given that the normal instruction as per formal syllabus was not manner interrupted and that no participants received less instruction than others (see Appendix 4 for ethical clearance certificates). Parents were handed consent forms (Appendix 5) and learners were handed assent forms (Appendix 6) on the day of the pre-test, which explained the purpose of the baseline assessment and the intended research in full. Participants were allowed to ask questions about the study and all answers were supplied by the researcher. Learners were assured that numbers will be allocated instead of using names and that no sections of any written answers would be quoted, which might lead to identification of any participant. The researcher informed all participants that the data will be kept and safeguarded on the school premises and or at the researcher's study. All participants were satisfied with the explanation of the research and understood the purpose of the study.

All learners assented to participate in the study, and parents gave consent for their children to participate in the experiment, based on the declaration that the learners would all receive the normal/formal prescribed syllabus-based instruction throughout the academic year. No participants received less instruction than others. The data gathered for this study was kept confidential and therefore adhered to ethical requirements for research studies conducted.

Research ethics further demands that participants are given the opportunity to ask questions and discuss any concerns surrounding the study (Babbie & Mouton 2001; Makey & Gass 2005; Olckers 2011). It is the researcher's responsibility to make sure the language is understood by the participants and to consider their age, educational background, mental capacity and language proficiency. Thompson & Jackson (1998) note that children cannot be treated as adults since their cognitive development, perspectives and needs are different to those of adults. In a research study in an educational context, participants must understand that their participation will not be rewarded by extra marks or higher grades (Thompson & Jackson 1998). Schanzenbach (2012) suggests that some people object to experiments because they are uncomfortable with the idea of withholding treatment from the participants acting as controls (given the general presumption among participants that the treatment will lead to some kind of improvement). In the case of this study, the researcher allowed the control group to complete the self-help intervention programme once the data was collected. In the next section, the biographical details of the participants who were included in the study, as well as the process that was followed to divide the participants into experimental and control groups are discussed.

4.8   The participants

98 learners (62 girls and 36 boys) in two existing Grade 8 ESL classes participated in in the study. The average age of the entire sample (i.e. 98 participants) was 13 years and 2 months. School attendance/absenteeism was not regarded as a reason to exclude learners from the study, since the completion of the intervention was not affected by attendance or absenteeism per se. The group of participants reflected the normal dynamics of Grade 8 learners in the school. Dörnyei (2007) suggests that samples in quantitative research should consist of at least 30 participants to ensure reliable statistical results. Keeping this in mind, all 98 participants that provided informed consent and assent were asked to complete the pre-test, since the researchers needed to form two groups of participants.

All participants attended the same secondary school in Gauteng. The participants were all residents from the same community, residing within a 4-kilometre radius of the school. All of the participants were Afrikaans L1 users, with English as L2. All the learners attended primary schools where the LOLT was primarily Afrikaans. Three of the participants were repeating Grade 8, while the rest were new Grade 8 learners. The participants comprised 54 White, 29 Coloured and 15 Black learners. All the participants however were Afrikaans-speaking (their L1), even though some of the black learners have knowledge of the other official languages such as Zulu and Xhosa because one of the parents might be Zulu or Xhosa. In these cases, the participants used Afrikaans as primary home language. The selection of the

sample for this study was unbiased; meaning the ethnicity was of no concern since the focus was on ESL grammatical proficiency. The SES of the participants was established in terms of combined monthly income and level of education of parents. Parents were asked to record only the highest qualification in the household.

Based on the results of the baseline assessment (pre-test), the researcher formed two balanced groups (i.e. a control group and an experimental group). The researcher accommodated false representation in this study by selecting the experimental and control groups only on the basis of the results of the pre-test, making sure that the two groups were similar in terms of their respective ESL abilities. The reason for this was that the groups had to be similar in ESL proficiency at the outset of the study.

The experimental and control groups were formed to include even numbers of learners who obtained scores within pre-determined performance ranges on the pre-test. These ranges were: 0%- 39% (failing score); 40% – 69% (average score) and 70% - 100% (above average score). The assignment of a particular learner (in a particular performance range) was random. The experimental group and the control group comprised 49 learners each. There were 34 girls in the experimental group and 15 boys. The control group comprised 28 girls and 21 boys. The average age of the participants in the control group was 13;3, while the average age of the participants in the experimental group was 13;1.

The experimental and control group participants were not separated into two different classes. The reason for this was that the intervention was a self-help intervention programme and the participants of the experimental group received no additional instruction from their teachers. Both Grade 8 classes received the normal curricular instruction, while only the experimental group participants receiving the self-help programme to complete at home. A t-test (results presented in Chapter 5) confirmed that the groups were similar in terms of ESL proficiency at the outset of the study, and false representation thus did not pose a threat to the findings of this study.

In terms of SES, the average monthly income for the experimental group was R24, 600 per household and for the control group R31, 200. The control group revealed the following qualification levels from a total of 49 parents: 11 had a degree qualification; 28 had completed Grade 12 and 10 did not complete Grade 12. For the experimental group the following education levels were recorded: 9 parents obtained degree qualifications; 25 had completed Grade 12 and 15 did not complete Grade 12.[11] The SES of the two groups was thus also comparable.

In terms of assessment, ethical conduct implies the appropriate, fair, professional and ethical use of assessment tools; considering the needs and rights of those assessed; ensuring that the assessment closely matches its intended purpose; taking into account the broader

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[11] This information was obtained through a background questionnaire (cf. section 4.9 and Appendix 5) completed by the parents of the participants in the study.

cultural, social and political context in which the assessment is applied and considering the effect of the context when interpreting and publishing the results (Foxcroft & Roodt 2001).

In the current study, the researcher took great pains to ensure that the research instruments used to assess the learners' ESL proficiency were appropriate and reliable for the South African context. An in-depth description of the baseline assessment (the pre-test) is presented in this section. The post-test and delayed post-test were similar in nature, and the development of these tests will not be described separately – however all three language tests are included in Appendix 8.

4.9 Research instruments and research procedure

4.9.1 Research instruments

4.9.1.1 The questionnaire

Although the main aim of the study was the effect of a self-help grammar programme, the researcher also wanted to gather particular background information pertaining to the L1 proficiency, beliefs about own ESL proficiency and SES of the participants. The rationale for obtaining the information was that the researcher wanted to control for the influence of social factors (e.g. income and parental level of education) that could affect the outcome of the intervention. The information was obtained through the completion of questionnaires (Appendix 7) by the parents and the learners. The focus was on the average income per household, academic qualification levels of parents and the self-rating of proficiency levels by the participants. The participants were also required to indicate their average scores (%) for Afrikaans (L1) and English (L2).

4.9.1.2 The ESL measuring tools: the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test

The pre-test (Appendix 8) was completed at the beginning of the academic year. The pre-test acted as the required baseline assessment test for the Grade 8 learners. The researcher set the pre-test based on the Grade 7 curriculum (to ensure fairness in establishing a baseline). The pre-test comprised sections that tested the following components: comprehension, POS, tense, active and passive voice, writing, spelling and visual literacy. The time allocation for the test was two hours. The comprehension test comprised questions based on Blooms Taxonomy, which allowed for simple one-word answers to more complex reasoning responses, e.g. the learners were asked to respond with yes/no to some questions but had to provide a valid reason for their choice of answers. Although spelling was not part of the experiment it was included to identify learners who displayed specific spelling problems. Visual literacy was also not a focus of the study but forms an important part of the ESL curriculum and was therefore included in the pre-test. The data gathered on these components (spelling and visual literacy) were not analysed for this study.

The grammar section of the pre-test focused on identification of POS and matching the various POS to their appropriate definitions. Learners were further required to match correct tenses to sentences and also to rewrite an active sentence into the passive voice. The researcher

wanted to test the writing skill levels of the participants and therefore included a section where they had to write a paragraph on a topic of their choice. Examples of the types of questions posed in the pre-tests are presented in Appendix 8.

The pre-test simulated the structure of a mid-year ESL examination (but was slightly easier in terms of content). In light of the format of the normal examination papers prescribed by the DoE (which includes components on POS, tense, comprehension, active and passive voice and writing), the researcher utilised the June ESL examination paper for obtaining results for the post-test (Appendix 9 and Appendix 11) and the October examination paper for the delayed post-test (Appendix 10 and Appendix 12) results. These measuring instruments are also presented in Appendix 8. All marks were converted to 100% for the sake of the data analysis. The data obtained from the three tests were analysed and will be presented and discussed in Chapter 5.

4.9.2 The research procedure

After attending to the ethical issues of this study, participants were tested (pre-test: Appendix 8) at the onset of the 2015 school year. Following this, as explained above, the participants were divided into an experimental and control group. The experimental group received the self-intervention programme and completed it over five consecutive months (i.e. before the mid-year examination in June 2015). Both groups completed the post-test (Appendix 9 and 11)) after during the mid-year examination period in June. The delayed post-test (Appendix 10 and 12)) was written by both groups in the form of the October formal examinations – this data was included to determine any long-term effects of the intervention. The post-tests were thus based on formal school-based examinations where the teachers were responsible for the marking of tests. The participants wrote the paper set by the Ekurhuleni District Offices, which offered the added opportunity to measure the outcome of the intervention programme against an objective test, meaning that the researcher did not set the test. Any extension of the data-collection timeframe (nine school months) might have resulted in loss of data because participants who started the programme may not have been available to complete the post-test(s). In the case of this particular study, all participants who set out to participate in the study were able to conclude it.

During the course of the intervention, participants received feedback via correct answers that were provided as part of the self-instruction lessons, and learners were responsible for correcting themselves. The teachers in both classes signed off each completed section of the programme and were responsible for assessing the written activities for the programme.

4.10 The intervention

A working definition of intervention, more specifically, self-intervention was presented in Chapter 1. Assessment is typically seen as a process in which the instructor, based on a set of data drawn from a learner, judges whether that learner has mastered specific concepts (Rinaldi, 2001). However, Edwards (1997) postulates that assessment practices should extend beyond measuring learning outcomes – ideally it should provide insight into learning processes.

Learners must actively participate in their own learning process and must progress through self-evaluation, interpretation and decision-making (Boud 2000). Yorke (2003) and Allal (2010) also support the idea that learning depends on knowledge of results, which can be utilised continuously for self-correction. This means that correction and feedback take place in conjunction with the learning process and is not left for the summative assessment only. In other words, learners who are aware of the scores of tests can use the results to enhance learning, which is relevant to this study since the learners informally had to assess their progress through the tests included in the intervention programme. Self-assessment enabled learners to return to the programme to improve their competence of a specific grammatical construct, e.g. adverbs.

Generally speaking, teachers should modify their feedback on assessment to ensure that it is accessible to learners (Rust et al. 2003; Yorke 2003) and can be implemented successfully (Boud 2000). In other words, providing continuous assessment and feedback to students during the instruction process will enable and allow learners to positively apply the feedback. This becomes meaningful to learners if their marks improve. These principles were indirectly applied throughout the self-help intervention programme for this study – participants received feedback on their assessment in the form of a self-instruction programme and were responsible for their own corrections throughout the self-intervention programme, since answers to activities were provided for self-marking. A clear advantage of self-correction is that it is less time-consuming for the teacher if the learner can assess and correct himself.

The intervention that was designed in the present study is situated within the broad idea of Imaginative Formative Assessment Methods (IFAM). One aspect of IFAM is self-intervention, which was the primary focus of this study. The intervention programme further included aspects of Systemic Functional Grammar integrated with traditional English Grammar (as discussed in Chapter 3) in order to enhance the development of ESL proficiency.

As mentioned earlier, all participants wrote a pre-test to determine problem areas in their use of English grammar. The pre-test specifically focused on learners' competence in POS, and established to what extent learners used this grammatical competence effectively when dealing with writing tasks in English. On the basis of the pre-test, the experimental group were handed a self-intervention programme to complete in their own time. The participants were required to take control of their own ESL grammar development outside of the classroom based on existing research about learner participation in assessment. Allal (2010), Boud (2000) and Edwards (1997) all agree that assessment should:

i.   provide learners with insight into the learning process;
ii.   encourage learners to actively participate in the learning process; and
iii.   should allow learners to progress in their learning through self-evaluation, interpretation and decision making.

The purpose of this study was to design and develop a self-help intervention programme that would do just that – include the learner in his/her own learning process and support the learner to self-assess progress. A discussion of the design of the intervention programme follows. The

focus of the self-help intervention programme was to serve as a learning tool and not an assessment tool. It is however not possible to separate learning (progression) from assessment, and for this reason, the self-help intervention programme included informal, self-assessment throughout the three sections of the programme. They were however provided with the answers.

4.10.1 Design of the self-intervention programme

The self-help intervention programme (Appendices 13 - 17) was designed by the researcher in order to simplify complex grammar constructs in language to be more accessible to Grade 8 learners. Recall that the main objective of the self-help intervention programme was to assist participants in understanding the various POS in English, as well as other grammatical concepts such as active and passive voice and tense by integrating traditional ESL grammar instruction (which would be familiar to learners) with the principles of SFG. This section will focus on how POS (in particular, nouns; adjectives; verbs and adverbs) were presented in a more accessible manner to the participants.

Part One of the programme (Appendix 14) introduced the rationale for looking at grammar in an alternative manner. Participants were reminded that grammar rules are there to help them create meaningful texts (verbal and written), but that Traditional English Grammar looks at grammar form the bottom (individual POS of the sentence) and works its way to the top (grammatical constructed texts). In other words, knowledge of POS forms the building blocks for sentences, which leads to paragraphs and ultimately to full texts (e.g. essays). SFG was introduced to the participants as an alternative way of looking at grammar, from the top to the bottom. Learners were introduced to the idea that, within SFG, the words of a text are not considered individually, but rather the focus is on how these words work together to create meaning in a text (see Appendix 14). The discussion that follows sets the three sections of the SFG-based self-help grammar intervention programme in more detail.

4.10.2   Part One of the intervention

4.10.2.1 Integrating traditional English grammar and SFG: the introduction of SFG

The first SFG aspect of English grammar introduced in Part One of the intervention focused on a comparison of how sentences are viewed in SFG and in Traditional English Grammar. Example 4.1 below from Part One of the programme illustrates how Field, Tenor and Mode (in SFG) were introduced to the participants.

Example 4.1 Introducing Field, Tenor and Mode (Appendix 14)

Traditionally *you are expected to start with the number of words (vocabulary) you know of English before you can build sentences to write a story or any message, just like needing bricks to build a house.*

Functional grammar *asks of you to start with the story/message, then to look at the clauses and phrases that make up the sentences, which again are built with words. Even the words are built from letters (morphemes) and are the smallest units you can find in language.*

Think of it as standing on top of a mountain looking down on the village below; the trees, the houses and people. You see a **whole** *village, but you also understand that the* **whole** *is made up of all the other little parts such as* **houses, roads, parks, trees, people and animals***. You also know that people cannot be bigger than houses, cars bigger than mountains etc... things would just look, well..., out of place and weird!*

Whole Text

$\downarrow$

Sentences

$\downarrow$

Clauses

$\downarrow$

Phrases

$\downarrow$

Words

$\downarrow$

Letters (morphemes)

What does 'functional' then mean?

☐ Functional grammar looks at grammar rules as a set of tools rather than a set of rules to help us know what 'not' to do when we write/speak messages.

☐ The message that we speak/write is then the outcome of the choices we make.

☐ It looks at the context (reason or environment) of the text and if the text belongs with the context, e.g. if you write about a robbery in a store the text must indeed reflect only that and not a robbery on a ship.

Functional grammar looks at:
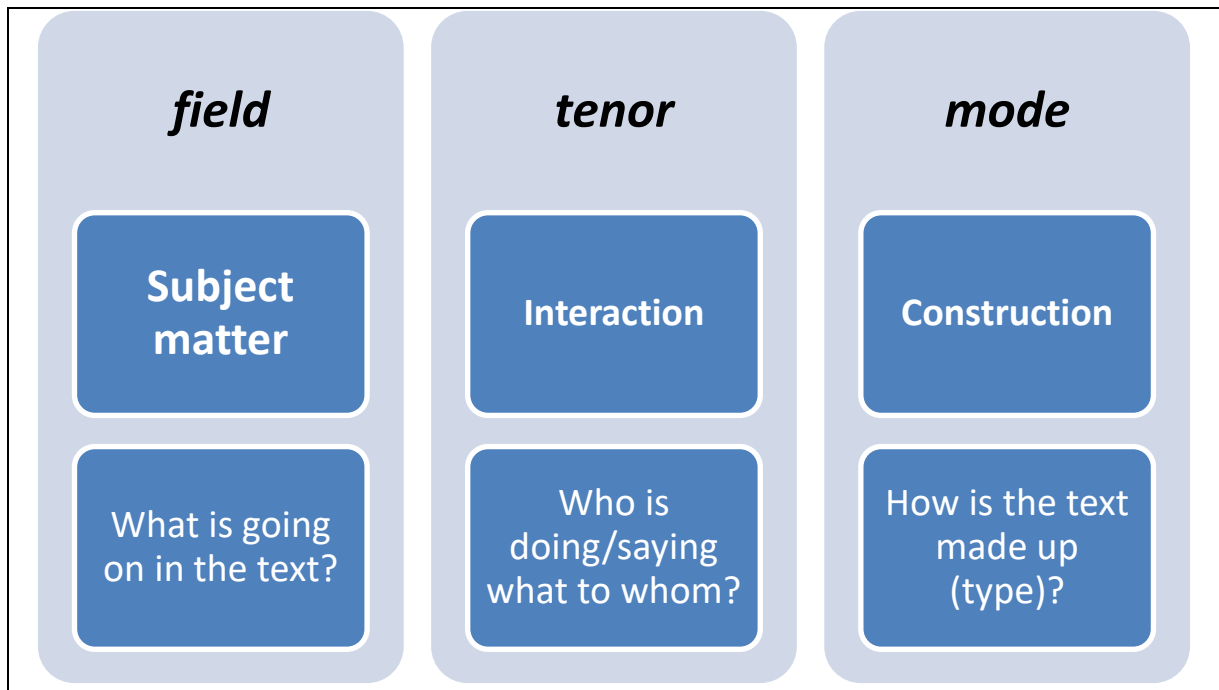
field	tenor	mode
Subject matter	**Interaction**	**Construction**
What is going on in the text?	Who is doing/saying what to whom?	How is the text made up (type)?

Instead of each of the nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and determiners as taught in traditional English Grammar.

An illustration of the above table would be:
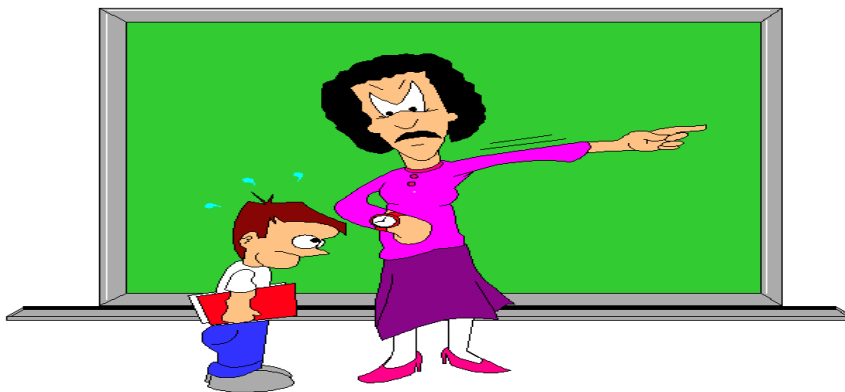
The teacher chased John out of the class.

» Field = chasing John out of the classroom

» Tenor = teacher does action to John

» Mode = sentence

Exercise

Quickly test whether you understand what you have learnt about Functional Grammar so far.

Identify the *field, tenor and mode* in each of the following sentences.

1. Susan met her friend in the coffee shop where they gossiped about Linda.

Field ....

Tenor ....

Mode ....

2. Both the red cars were speeding when they collided at the robot.

Field ....

Tenor ....

Mode ....

Answers

1. Field = drinking coffee and gossiping √

   Tenor = Susan and her friend met + they gossip about Linda √

   Mode = sentence √

2. Field = speeding red cars crash at the robot √

   Tenor = two red cars collide √

   Mode = sentence √

Well done! That was easy!

Now that you realise that all the separate words in each sentence work together to convey a particular message, you can start thinking about writing a paragraph in the same manner. In other words, when you write a

paragraph, all the sentences in the paragraph should convey information (field and tenor) about the most important topic of the paragraph. This means that if you write a paragraph about your favourite sport, each sentence in that paragraph must say something about your favourite sport and not about other sports, for example:

I love running long distances. I am good at running long distances because I am very fit. Training is important if one wants to do well in running long distances. My coach lets me run 5km every day in order to prepare me for the running season. I am grateful that my coach believes in me and motivates me to my best in each race.

There are 5 sentences in the paragraph above. Here are the five fields of the sentences:

1. Love to run long distances
2. Good at long distance running
3. Training for long distance running
4. Prepare for long distance running
5. Performance in long distance running

*** Note that the field of each sentence in this paragraph relates/refers to long distance running***

When you look at the tenor of each sentence it looks as follows (who does the running and how):

1.   I (the author) love long distance running
2.   I (the author) am fit for running long distances
3.   I (the author) train for long distance running
4.   My coach lets me (the author) run 5km every day
5.   My coach believes/motivates me (the author)

*** Notice that each sentence explains who (the author and the coach) is doing what, but that all the actions can be related in some manner***

The sentences form a paragraph because the main topic (field) of this paragraph is the author's love for long distance running and all the information in the sentences involve his passion/love for this sport.

In an essay you would now be able to create and develop various other paragraphs in the same manner, keeping in mind the field and tenor of each paragraph.

4.10.2.2 Integrating Parts of Speech with SFG

The emphasis in the following section of Part One fell on the integration of traditional POS with SFG. The main concept for the participants were to grasp that instead of focusing on the traditional POS performing the action in sentences, SFG looks at Field (what is happening); Tenor (who/what does what to whom/what?) and Mode (the type of text, for example, as sentence). Example 4.2 illustrates how this concept was introduced to the participants.

Example 4.2 Integrating parts of speech into SFG (Appendix 14)

RECAP

How do we now relate field, tenor and mode to what we have learnt about Parts of Speech, tense and number in traditional English Grammar?

☐ You know that each sentence carries a main clause (THE MAIN VERB/ACTION) or also known as topic/idea. (FIELD).

☐ NOUNS (Part of speech) perform actions such as playing, eating, running and sleeping in traditional grammar. The actions performed by NOUNS (e.g. people/animals) are known as VERBS in Parts of Speech. The TENOR in a sentence/paragraph can therefore be regarded as "who" is "doing what" to "whom"

For Example:

Tony   kicks   the   ball

(noun)   (verb)   (noun)
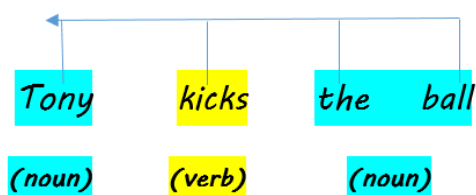
☐   The FIELD = kicking a ball

☐   The TENOR = Tony does kicking to the ball

☐   The MODE = sentence (clause)

First of all:

If you want to focus on **TENOR (who/what does what to what/whom):**

In the sentence **Jo kicks the ball,** we know that in traditional English we refer to 'Joe' as the **subject** and 'the ball' as the **direct object.** The **verb** is 'kicks'.

In the example sentence below the difference between how we view 'parts of speech' in Functional Grammar is illustrated:

Joe   +   kicks   +   the ball

subject   verb   direct object   = **Traditional English**

                                                       Grammar

Participant   Process   Participant   =   **Functional Grammar**
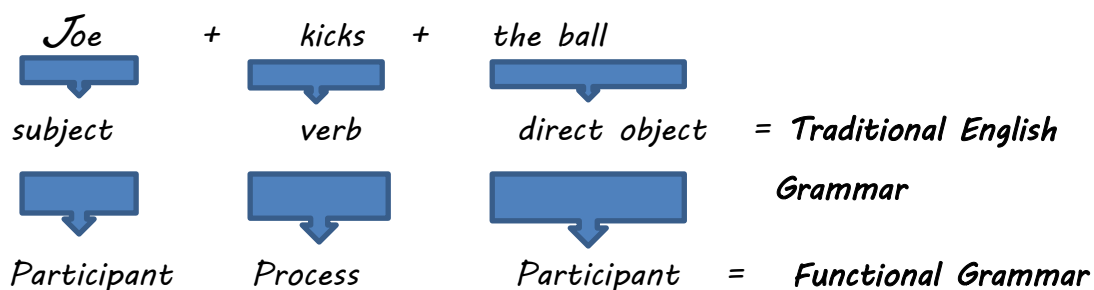
All the nouns (what and who) are called **PARTICIPANTS** and the verbs are called **PROCESS(ES)** in Functional Grammar.

In other words:

☐   **all the people or things doing things or receiving action = participants (Joe/the ball) and**

☐   **the action(s) = process(es)(kicks) in English sentences.**

> *This will help you to consider all the participants and processes in sentences you create. It is easier to think about who/what you want to do something to what/whom than thinking of nouns and verbs.*

Part Two (Appendix 15) of the intervention is presented next. In this part, clauses versus traditional sentences were introduced to learners. Examples are presented to illustrate how the concept of SFG clauses and circumstances was explained to the participants of the experimental group.

4.10.3 Part Two of the intervention programme

4.10.3.1 Introducing SFG clauses versus Traditional English Sentences

An important principle of SFG is that sentences are viewed as 'clauses'; phrases as 'groups' and then lastly the 'words' they comprise (Appendix 15). It was of importance that participants realised that at clause rank in SFG, verbs are seen as 'processes' and at word rank as verb (as in POS). The concept of 'circumstance' was also introduced. Adverbs in Traditional ESL grammar fulfil the role of providing additional information to verbs. SFG refers to such additional information as 'circumstances'. The idea of adding circumstances to processes taking place seemed more accessible than focusing on the traditional verb and adverb. Example 4.3 illustrates how the concept of 'circumstance' was presented in the intervention programme.

Example 4.3 Introducing circumstances in SFG (Appendix 15)

> *Another very important point about **Functional Grammar** is that you are in command of choosing what you want to say about the participants and the **circumstances** in your clauses. This means that you can **CHOOSE** how the participants (nouns) look and where/when/how/how often etc. the actions (processes) take place.*
>
> *__CIRCUMSTANCES__ refer to adverbs in Traditional English grammar (time, place, manner, frequency and degree) but Functional Grammar also includes a few extra circumstances such as __the role(s) of participant(s), reasons for the process__. The following circumstances are identified:*
>
> *__How:__   the manner (way something happens/ with what it happens)*
> *__How far:__   the extent or time of the action/participant*
> *__How long:__   the duration/time of process*

How often: frequency

Where: place/location/setting

When: time

With whom: participants

As what: role of participant in clause (doing/receiving the action)

Why: reason for process/action

With what: how is process done

☐   Circumstances provide you with all of the above options to enrich your clauses, so there is no excuse for boring sentences.

☐   Circumstances appear as prepositional phrases/adverbial phrases or adjectival phrases or noun phrases in clauses

☐   Circumstances contain NO PROCESSES (VERBS)

☐   Circumstances can be left out and the clause will still make sense.
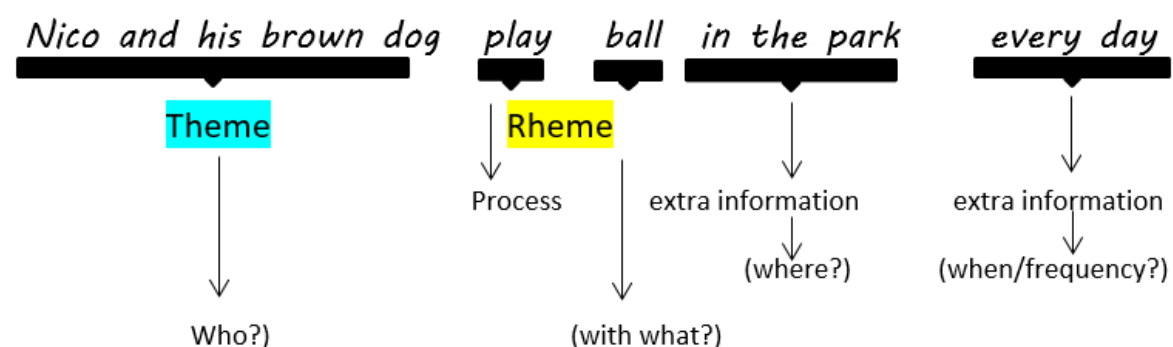
EXAMPLE 2

THUS:

☐   The theme (subject) of the clause is: **Nico and his brown dog**

☐   The rheme is: **play ball in the park every day**

☐   In other words, the field of the clause is **Nico and his dog that plays with a ball in the park**

☐   The example above illustrates clearly who the participants are: **Nico /brown dog/ball/park/day (all the nouns)**

☐   The only action is the process of **playing**

- ☐ *Extra information is provided: we know the dog is **brown** (adjective). We know where they play **(in the park)**, which is an adverb of place and we also know how frequently they play in the park **(every day)** – an adverb of frequency.*
- ☐ *Circumstances can be moved around in clauses, for example, **Nico plays ball in the park with his brown dog every day***
- ☐ *We can leave out the circumstances and the clause will still have meaning: **Nico and his dog play ball***
- ☐ *REMEMBER! Adjectives provide extra information about participants*
- ☐ *REMEMBER! Adverbs provide extra information about processes*

An important focus of Part Two of the intervention was that participants were to understand that while we never really consciously think of when and where to use POS, they perform a very important role in how successful and meaningful communication (texts) are constructed. Part Two therefore included a similar introduction to using conjunctions (Logical relations in SFG) and Context (Appendix 15). The conventional 'Subject' and 'Predicate' analysis of sentences were dealt with in Part Two as 'Theme' and 'Rheme' in SFG (Appendix 15). Part Three of the intervention programme (Appendix 17) dealt with more complex concepts such as Active and Passive Voice and tense. Examples of how Active and Passive was introduced are included in section 4.12.4.1 below.

4.10.4 Part Three of the intervention programme

4.10.4.1 Introducing Active and Passive Voice

There are a few concepts of Traditional English Grammar that learners generally struggle to master. One such concept is Active and Passive Voice. At this stage in the self-help intervention programme the participants have been taught to refer to all 'nouns' in 'participants' in SFG. Similarly, all 'verbs' are referred to as 'processes' in SFG and all other POS as 'circumstances' or additional information. Active and Passive is firstly presented in the traditional manner followed by a more functional interpretation of Active and Passive Voice. The complete introduction for Active and Passive Voice is presented in Example 4.4 below (taken from Part Three of the intervention: Appendix 17).

Example 4.4 Introducing active / passive voice (Appendix 17)

Active and Passive Voice

(tense)

You are now going to work with VERBS (PROCESSES) again. Remember VERBS/PROCESSES indicate how, where and when actions take place. The next aspect of TENSE you will learn is VOICE.

This is not the voice you speak with ☺ but refers to the **relationship** between **the subject (participants)** and the **verb (process)** in a clause.

***RECAP

Example 3.1

Clause (sentence)	John	eats	a pizza
Traditional Grammar	Subject	Verb	Object (direct)
Functional Grammar	PARTICIPANT	PROCESS	PARTICIPANT
	Theme		Rheme

The rules for ACTIVE and PASSIVE Voice state:

1) There must be a DIRECT OBJECT for passive to take place

2) The tense stays the same for the passive voice

So, in the sentence:

S   V   O

John   / eats /   a pizza

We traditionally say this is the active sentence, because an action is taking place – "eats". It is also clear who does the eating: JOHN

Note that the action takes place in the present

In the sentence:

O   V   S

A pizza   / is eaten /   by John.

The SUBJECT of the VERB is now the pizza. ***(Remember that everything in front of the VERB is always the SUBJECT?)***

What does this now mean?

*** It simply means that if you want to know What was done by WHO, this would be the best way to answer the question. This is called PASSIVE VOICE.

> NB! If you stick to the following quick rules for forming Active and Passive you will never have a problem (in English Grammar)

S   V   O   (-tense) + (3ʳᵈ column verb)

THUS: John eats a pizza.   (active)

               A pizza is eaten by John.   (passive)

☐   This means that when you are asked to rewrite a sentence into the Passive in an exam, you simply make use of this model

☐   The model illustrates what happens when you turn an active verb into a passive verb

☐   The SUBJECT and OBJECT switch places (S becomes O and O becomes S)

☐   The (- tense) means that you NEVER CHANGE THE TENSE

☐   This means that the tense of the active sentence stays the same for the passive sentence

☐   The + (3rd column verb) means that you need to use the 3rd column form (perfect tense) of the verbs for the passive, e.g. eat / ate/= is/was eaten

☐   A sentence without a DIRECT OBJECT cannot be written into then passive

From a FUNCTIONAL point of view active and passive is seen as follows:

EXAMPLE 3.2

Clause:	John	eats	pizza
Active	Participant 1	Process 1	Participant 2
Passive	Participant 2	Process 1	Participant 1

Thus:

☐   Participant 1 switches places with participant 2

☐   The tense does not change

☐   The process follows the same rule a for traditional English: the 3rd column verb is used

☐   **The reason for numbering the participants: all nouns are participants in a functional clause**

☐   *The reason for numbering the process: some clauses contain more than one process (verb)*

WAIT! THERE IS MORE

BUT FIRST:

Activity Time 😊

Rewrite the following active sentences into the passive by using the model above:

1.   Sue loves her mother.

………………………………………………………..

2.   The dog chased the cat.

……………………………………………………

3.   Bill and Chad were singing songs.

……………………………………………………

ANSWERS:

1.   Her mother is loved by Sue. √
2.   The cat was chased by the dog. √
3.   Songs were sung by Bill and Chad. √

GREAT JOB!!!!!

Of course, things do not always stay this simple

□ What happens when you get a sentence with more than two PARTICIPANTS (nouns/doers) and PROCESSes (verbs)?

EXAMPLE   3·3

CLAUSE	John	eats	pizza	but	Mary	washes	Dishes
active	Participant 1	Process 1	Participant 2	Conjunction	Participant 3	Process 2	Participant 4
passive	Pizza	is eaten	by John	but	dishes	are washed	by Mary
	Participant 2	Process 1	Participant 1		Participant 4	Process 2	Participant 4

***************EASY PEASY*****************

My suggestion is to:

□   *Isolate all processes as your first step*

□   *Highlight all the participants (nouns) in blue*

□   *Highlight all the verbs in yellow*

□   *Some verbs might not have an object (this means there is no passive form of the verb and it cannot change)*

□   *Now you simply apply your model for active/passive for each of the SVO structures in the sentence.*

□   *The sentence must still make sense after the changes*

How to identify a direct object and indirect object was presented similarly (see Appendix 17 for further examples).

4.10.4.2   Tense

The participants were also provided with a diagrammed summary (Appendix 16) of the main tenses for English in their normal classroom instruction. The participants were made aware that the rules for tense cannot be discarded, but that this knowledge could be applied in a less complex manner via time lines, while applying the principles for clauses in SFG. Tense was presented as follows in Example 4.5 from the intervention programme (Appendix 17).

Example 4.5 Tense (Appendix 17)

INTERVENTION ACTIVITY (self-study)

LEARNING about TENSE (recap)

*** You need to be able to use the correct verb tense if you want to express yourself clearly when speaking or writing. ***

☺☺☺

In this activity you will be revising when to use which tense and where. I have attempted to simplify the rules of the different tenses so that you may find it easier to understand when studying on your own. I hope that you enjoy this fun way of dealing with tense. I love taking short cuts! I hate learning rules and I know you do too. Let's go! ☺

WHAT YOU ALREADY KNOW ...

1. By now you already know that there are THREE basic tenses.
These are: PRESENT simple, PAST simple and FUTURE simple. These tenses are also known as indefinite tenses because the actions DO NOT HAPPEN AT A SPECIFIC (definite) TIME, but regularly, always or often. There are TIME WORDS to help you identify the indefinite tenses.

2. There are VARIOUS tenses in English Grammar
This means that there are specific times and less specific times when actions start and finish. Refer to your tense diagram to review the 12 different tenses.

Summary of the Indefinite tenses (SIMPLE TENSES)

	Present	Past	Future
When to use	Actions that happen regularly/often/always.		
Clue words	Today Often Always Everyday Usually	Yesterday Last week Previously In the past	Tomorrow Next week Soon In the future

☺ Close the columns with a piece of paper and see if you can repeat the clue words without peeking

☺ Then see if you can redraw the whole column on your own. Keep on trying until you succeed!

You are now ready to move on …

I want you to think 'TIME' when dealing with tense. It makes sense to make use of a TIMELINE when working with tense. Let's see how this works.

★★★

Remember that SFG refers to *participants* and *processes*?

Participants are all the "doers" in clauses and processes are all the "actions" of the doers in clauses.

☞ PRESENT, PAST and FUTURE TENSES : TIMELINE
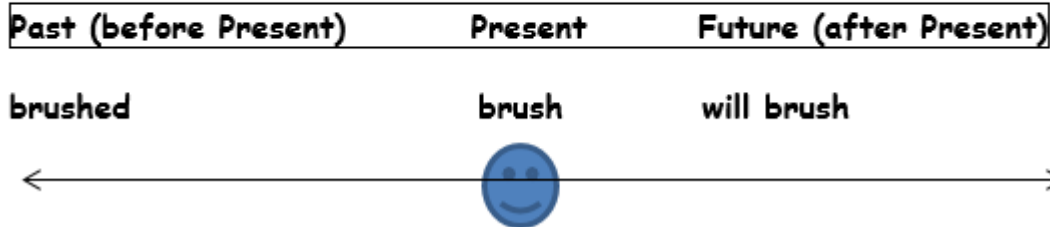
Example: I brush my teeth every morning.

Past (before Present)	Present	Future (after Present)
brushed	brush	will brush

☐ *A timeline will help you to identify and place the time that an action took/takes/will take place. The Present is always in the middle of the line, the past to its left and the future to its right.*

☐ *Remember to use your TIME WORDS (page 1) to guide you towards using the correct tense.*

► ACTIVITY 1

Draw your own timeline on paper for each of the following sentences. Indicate the tense of the verb with an X on the line:

1. I love hot chocolate.

2. Lee took her dog to the parlour last Saturday.

3. Mom cooks supper every day.

4. We will go to the mall soon.

5. John met Kyle previously.

ANSWERS

1. Example answer

Past   √ PRESENT   Future

Love

1·Past tense √

2·Present tense √

3·Future tense √

4·Past tense √

Seeing the light? You are now ready to look at tense in a different manner. We will investigate how SFG can make tense easier.

Remember that in SFG:

☐ we refer to "doers" (nouns) as PARTICIPANTS

☐ we refer to "actions" (verbs) as PROCESSES

When dealing with tense, think of asking the question: WHEN does the process take place in the clause?
Use your tense diagram to identify the clue words which tell you when the process takes place.

When dealing with more than one participant and more than one process in one clause it is often very hard to apply the correct tense. In the example

sentence below there are TWO processes taking place at TWO different times. How do you decide what tense belongs where in such a clause?

EXAMPLE:

1 After Sally **had eaten** a sweet, she **brushed** her teeth. **2**

Past perfect / past / present perfect / present continuous / present / future continuous / future perfect

1 (had eaten) 2 (brushed)

STEPS: a) Write down all the participants in the clause

b) Write down all the processes in the clause

c) Now look at the processes and determine which process
    took place first, second and number the processes accordingly.

In the example clause, the process of "eating" took place before the process of "brushing". It is then correct to say that process 1 (eating) happened furthest away from the present and process 2 happened closer to the present but still in the past. Indicate the processes on the timeline accordingly and you will see how easy it is to identify the correct tense.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE ON TENSE!

Rewrite the following clauses into the tense indicated in brackets:

1. John runs to school just now. (present perfect tense)

2. Tamara is going to the mall. (past tense)

3. We booked tickets. We went on holiday.

(link the two clauses with after and correct the tense)

4. I eat lunch at Wimpy. (future tense)

Use the tense sheet and draw time lines to answer the questions

123

Example answer: Sarah has just eaten a pizza.

PARTICIPANT   PROCESS   EXTRA INFORMATION
Sarah + pizza   **has eaten**   **When: just now = present perfect tense**
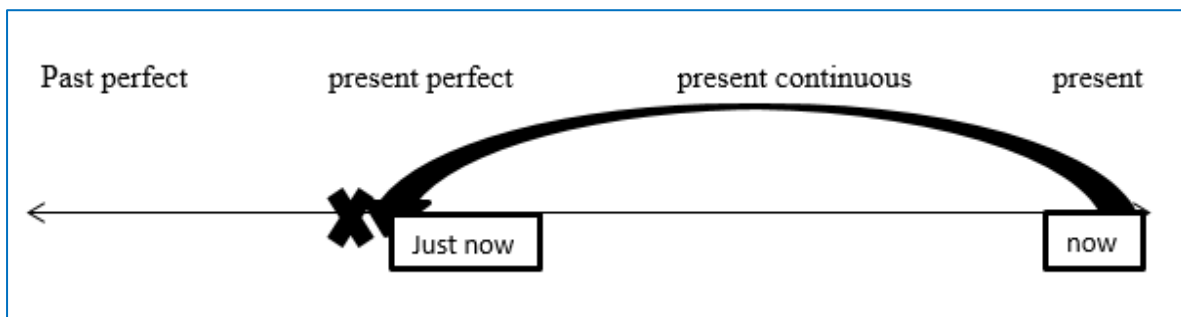
In other words, the time word is "just now", which means that the action wasn't completed long ago. "Now" refers to the present but the action is completed, which is part of the past tense. This tense is called present perfect.
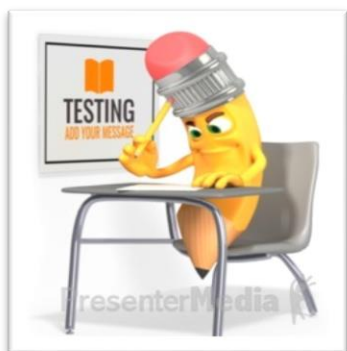
The answers to the tense questions follow below.

Answers to tense test
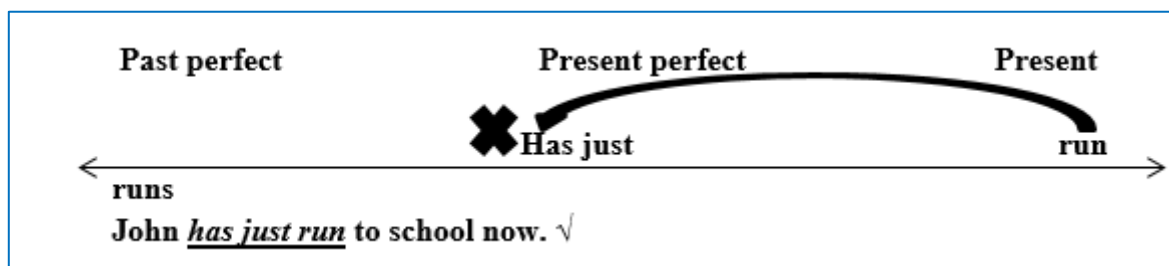
1.   Participant: John + school

Process: runs

When: at present = present tense

2.   Participants: Tamara + mall

Process: is going

When: currently = present continuous tense

Past perfect   Past continuous   Past tense   present perfect   Present   Present continuous

was going

Tamara was going to the mall.√
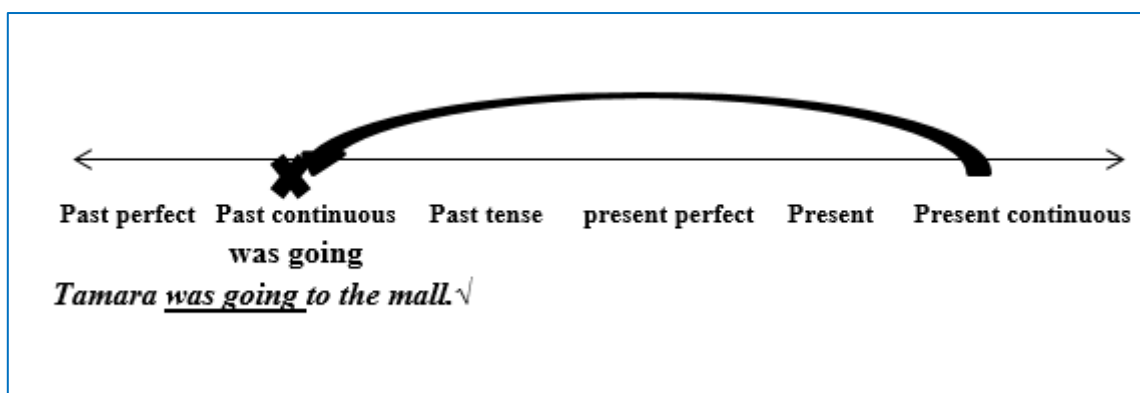
The focus of the self-help intervention with regards to tense (Appendix 17) was to engage participants to think differently about dealing with tense. In examinations learners are normally required to rewrite a given clause into another tense. The purpose of the intervention and the integration of SFG with tense were therefore focused on providing learners with alternative manner in which to deal with such questions in examinations. It also focused on assisting participants to apply tense correctly when producing spoken/written tasks.

As illustrated by the examples from the intervention programme above, participants had to assess their own progress continuously throughout the programme. The examples clearly indicate that there was a mini lesson on, for example, tense followed by an activity which included the answers to the activity for self-making. The participants only handed in the completed programme after completing and marking all the lessons and activities.

In order to better understand the role of DA in self-regulation, the following section provides a brief overview on DA as alternative method of assessment for ESL teaching and learning. It is however not enough to follow along the path of alternative SLA/ESL teaching and learning approaches without paying attention to alternative methods of assessment. The researcher was particularly interested in the role of Dynamic Assessment (DA) in ESL teaching and learning and in particular with regards to its role in self-intervention. It cannot be argued that assessment was inextricably interwoven throughout the intervention for this study.

4.10.5 Dynamic Assessment

There is currently an outcry for Alternative Approaches to Second Language Acquisition/Learning, which includes Alternative methods of Assessment (Larsen-Freeman 2007; Murphy & Maree 2009; Nazari 2015; Rahbardor, Abbasi & Talaei 2014). The rationale for including alternative assessment, and in particular, Dynamic Assessment (DA), as part of the intervention programme, was to link self-instruction and self-regulation/assessment in the experimental group. DA can be described as the continuous assessment of a learner's knowledge without interfering with the formal assessment and summative assessment

prescribed by syllabi (Nazari 2015; Singh 2017). The value of DA, in other words, is that it promotes the identification of problem areas in ESL, which means that intervention can take place as preventative measure instead of corrective measure (Nazari 2015). DA also supports CT in the sense that alternative ESL teaching and learning approaches cannot be caught up in static assessment approaches which counteracts the dynamic evolution of learning.

Current views across the world, including South Africa, seem to favour the inclusion and promotion of DA into the ESL learning environment (Murphy & Maree 2009; Singh 2017). DA, and in particular self-assessment, are valuable skills in ESL and other disciplines, since it supports formative assessment, which forms the basis of promoting learners from one level to the next in ESL curricula across the world (Dyer 2015; Nazari 2015; Singh 2017). Self-regulation is seen as a crucial learning tool for learners, since this enables them to recognise gaps in their own knowledge and motivate learners to seek ways to close such gaps (Dyer 2015; Furey 2017; Nazari 2015; Panadero, Alonso & Tapia 2014; Teng & Reynolds 2019). DA offers a more flexible approach towards monitoring learners' progress without interfering with the more static formative and summative assessment prescribed by ESL curricula.

In general, researchers value the involvement of the learners in their own progress (Graham et al. 2015 Limpo & Alves 2013; Singh 2017). Some scholars emphasise the need of intervention to create a sense of awareness among learners to self-regulate in order to deliver correct work (Harris & Graham 1999; Limpo & Alves 2013). As demonstrated in section 4.10, DA formed part of the intervention in this study since the experimental group was responsible for completing the intervention in their own time, and had to monitor their own progress. The intervention did not, however, exclude the teacher altogether from the learning process, as feedback was provided on the writing components of the intervention DA thus offers and allows teachers to intervene in a less formal manner, in order to accommodate specific gaps and individual variation in learners' knowledge. The value of DA and in particular, self-regulation as a component of intervention cannot be underestimated in ESL learning since learners must be able to apply self-regulation in order to obtain optimal success in academic studies (Panadero, Alonso & Tapia 2014; Teng & Reynolds 2019).

As demonstrated, dynamic self-regulation and self-assessment automatically formed part of the intervention in this study since the experimental group was responsible for completing the intervention in their own time. The final section of this chapter will present the results of the pilot study, which preceded the main study, and was the first step in assessing the viability of using an ESL self-help grammar intervention programme with Grade 8 learners. However, before the results of the pilot study is presented, the concepts 'reliability' and 'validity' are discussed, as these issues pertaining to validity and reliability informed the rationale for conducting a pilot study.

4.11   Validity and Reliability

When the researcher collects data, there are two concerns to consider: i) what to measure ii) how to measure it (Field 2009). Field (2009) continues to define variables as 'things' that can

change, for example, between people, locations or time. In other words, in a group of people there might be differences in IQ levels. In order to test hypotheses variables must be measured. Most hypotheses can be expressed in terms of two variables, namely a proposed cause and proposed outcome (Field 2009; Trochim 2006). This means that the researcher expects that one variable (the independent variable) will have an effect on another variable (the dependent variable) (Baguley 2004; Field 2009; Wilcox 2005; Wright 2009). Drost (2011)) and Pallant (2011) view the quantification of human behaviour as an important part of social science research. Quantification, in this study, can be described as the measurement of ESL grammar skills through the use of measurement instruments (language tests). Drost (2011) and Smallbone and Quinton (2004) state that the measurement of human behaviour takes place within a positivist or post-positivist paradigm (i.e. within an empirical-analytical approach) and is therefore required to be valid and reliable.

4.11.1 Validity

Field (2009), Lodico et al. (2006), Punch (2003) and Trochim (2006) all describe validity as the extent to which an instrument measures what it is designed to measure. In other words, when a researcher, for example, sets out to measure reading speed of students, the instrument used should not test, for example, motivation to read but in fact test the words per minute read by learners. This is also known as criterion validity. In the present study, criterion validity was ensured by including questions on POS, tense and Active and Passive Voice in the grammar components of learners' ESL tests.

Two other aspects of validity that has to be considered are internal validity and external validity. Internal validity is defined as the extent to which an intervention in a research study is responsible for the measured or observed changes in participants' behaviour, whereas external validity refers to the extent to which the results of an experimental study can be generalised to the larger population (Carmines & Zeller 1979). Trochim (2012) and Worobey (2006) regard non-experimental designs as the weakest type of design with respect to internal validity, as such designs threatens internal validity. In other words, the extent to which an intervention is responsible for the observed change(s) in the participants' performance cannot be measured in a non-experimental design, as other explanations, such as 'history' (environmental influences) or 'maturation' (participants maturing from the pre-test to the post-test) could also account for improved outcomes (Barnes et al. 2012; Field 2009; Pallant 2011; Trochim 2006). The current study ensured internal validity by utilising a quasi-experimental design, which provided the researcher with the possibility of controlling for some of the potentially interfering variables, such as SES and maturation. The researchers could not ensure external validity in this study, as quasi-experimental research studies have limited generalisability (limited external validity); this however is a normal feature of research studies in the field of Applied Linguistics.

4.11.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which scores on a test (or other instrument) are stable (i.e. yields similar results) over time, when repeated by other researchers or when presented to the same respondents over time (Drost 2011; Lankshear & Knobel 2004; Punch 2003). Reliability can thus be defined as the accuracy, precision and consistency of the measuring instruments used in a study (Bollen 1989; Kerlinger 1986; Olckers 2011). Oyetunji (2011) argues that it seems almost impossible for an instrument to be totally reliable at all times, since responses may be influenced by participants' temperament or physical well-being at the time of testing. Nonetheless, it is accepted that a valid instrument will be reliable in most instances (Hair et al. 2006; Oyetunji 2011).

Hair et al. (2006) stipulate that there are numerous ways to statistically determine reliability. Internal consistency reliability is often estimated by Cronbach's alpha, Kuder-Richardson formulas, the Guttman model or split-half model (Richards & Schmidt 2010). Cronbach's alpha seems to be the most appropriate manner to calculate internal consistency reliability and it is accepted that items with an alpha correlation of .70 and higher are regarded as acceptable (Richard's & Schmidt 2010; Hair et al. 2006). Internal consistency reliability can therefore be defined as a measure of the degree to which items or sections of a particular test (e.g. scaled questions measuring opinion on a scale of 1 to 5) are homogenous, consistent and equivalent with each other. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability of the ESL tests used to measure grammar proficiency. The results of these statistical tests will be presented in the next section, with the rest of the pilot study results.

4.12   The pilot study

A pilot study (Appendices 1, 2 and 3) was conducted to test i) the feasibility of this study (i.e. whether a self-help intervention grammar programme for Grade 8 ESL learners will enhance grammar proficiency), and ii) the reliability and validity of the research design and the measuring instruments (i.e. the ESL grammar tests that will be used in the study.

The rationale for the conducting the pilot study was that researcher noticed that a large number of the ESL learners arrived in the first grade of high school (Grade 8) with insufficient knowledge of English grammar, and thus underperformed on the grammar components of ESL tests. It seemed as if a lack of knowledge about the various POS influenced learners' scores negatively. The problem however was that it further seemed as though the majority of learners found themselves on different levels of ESL development and due to time constraints while following the prescribed school syllabus, there was no time to reteach all the necessary grammatical concepts in class. The researcher therefore set out to do a pilot study to test whether a self-help grammar programme would help to close the gaps in ESL grammar knowledge.

4.12.1 Participants in the pilot study

The pilot study was not performed with the same participants that participated in the main study. The pilot sample consisted of 78 learners in two Grade 8 ESL classes. Based on the scores of the pre-test, the researcher formed a control group and an experimental group from the pilot sample. Both groups consisted of 39 learners. The learners in experimental group received a short self-help intervention programme on 'adverbs' (Appendix 2); the control group received only normal syllabus instruction. Both classes contained learners from both the groups.

4.12.2 Procedure of the pilot study

A pre-test (Appendix 1) on adverbs was conducted in which both groups participated. The pilot test primarily set out to test whether the POS 'adverb', could be retaught through self-intervention (Appendix 2). The experimental group were allowed one week to complete the intervention programme at home. All learners continued to receive normal ESL school-based instruction during this one-week period, which included POS, thus including adverbs. The post-test (Appendix 3) was written by both the groups directly following the completion of the one-week intervention. Note that the intervention for the pilot study did not include aspects of SFG, since the main purpose was to test whether self-intervention for ESL grammar would have any effect on the Grade 8 ESL grammar proficiency, and whether learners were mature enough to at this age to follow a self-instruction programme. After much investigation into various theories for ESL instruction, the researcher decided to incorporate SFG into the self-help grammar intervention, as was discussed previously in this chapter.

4.12.3 The results of the pilot study

The individual raw scores that the learners obtained on the pilot pre-test and pilot post-test were entered into an MS Excel worksheet. These raw scores (out of 10 for both tests) were used to calculate mean raw scores, which were transformed to mean percentages. Independent samples t-tests in SPSS were used to determine significant differences between the experimental and the control group, in both the pre-test and post-test. The descriptive statistics of the pilot study are presented in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 Descriptive results of the pilot study

	Group	N	Mean %	SD	SE
Pre-test	Experimental	39	38.46	1.52	0.24
	Control	39	36.15	1.56	0.25
Post-test	Experimental	39	71.02	1.73	0.28
	Control	39	39.23	2.01	0.32

Notes: SD = Standard Deviation; SE = Standard Error

As can be seen in Table 4.1, the groups performed very similar in the pilot pre-test. With regards to the pilot post-test, the average performance of the control group did not change dramatically from the pre-test; the average in the post-test was only 3.08% higher in this group. In contrast, the experimental group scored 32.56% higher in the post-test than in the pre-test.

Shapiro-Wilks tests of Normality confirmed that the data obtained from the pilot sample was normally distributed in both tests (Pre-test, $W = .95$, p = .053; Post-test, $W = .97$, p = .074), and thus met the criteria for being analysed using an inferential test such the independent samples t-test. The results of the t-tests, which were consequently conducted to test whether the above descriptive results are significant, are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Inferential results of the pilot study

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for equality of Means			
	F	P	t	df	p	SE
Pre-test	0.13	0.72	0.66	76	0.51	0.35
Post-test	0.22	0.64	7.47	76	0.00	0.43

The results of the t-tests confirmed that there was no significant difference between the group means in the pilot Pre-test (t = 0.66, p = 0.51), but that mean difference in the pilot Post-test was significant (t = 7.47, p = 0.00). This result indicates that the short self-intervention programme on adjectives tested in the pilot study had a significant effect on learners' ability to correctly identify the POS 'adjective' in a grammar assessment.

In terms of reliability of the test instruments, the researcher conducted Cronbach Alpha tests in SPSS to assess the internal reliability of the tests. The analyses indicated that both the pilot Pre-test and pilot Post-Test were reliable (Pre-test: 10 items, α = 0.78; Post-test: 10 items, α = .81). This provided the researcher with useful information in terms of the design of the Pre-test for the main study, where similar types of questions on other POS were to be included. It is useful to note here that the reliability of the instruments used in the main study was assessed independently from the initial pilot study, and those reliability statistics will be presented in Chapter 5.

All in all, the pilot study confirmed that this study was viable and that the research problem could be investigated using the research design as set out in this chapter. The results of the pilot study indicated that learners in Grade 8 were indeed mature enough to complete a self-instruct programme at home in their own time, and that self-intervention had a positive and significant effect on the learners' performance in 'adjectives', which was the POS that the intervention focused on. Based on these promising results, the researcher thus proceeded with the main study, which will be the focus of Chapter 5.

4.13   Conclusion

This chapter provided insight into the philosophies that underlies research paradigms, and explained the design focused on the methodology and research design for this study. The development of the research instruments was discussed, and an overview (including examples) was provided of the actual self-help intervention programme as developed by the researcher (and as included as appendices). A pilot study was conducted prior to the main study and will be discussed in Chapter 5, where after an analysis and discussion of the research results will be provided in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Chapter 4 provided an in-depth discussion of the research methodology of this study. In Chapter 5, the analytical framework (for the statistical analysis of the data) is presented, followed by the presentation of the analysed data and an interpretation of the statistical findings. The abbreviations, C-group (for Control group) and E-group (for Experimental group) will be used in this chapter where results are presented for the two groups that participated in the study. The research questions that guided this study are restated here for ease of reference:

The main research question posed was:

Does the ESL grammar proficiency, specifically knowledge of POS, of Grade 8 learners improve as a result of a self-instructing grammar intervention programme based on SFG?

Several sub-questions related to the main research question were also posed:

i. *Will some aspects of ESL (specifically POS), be more affected by the intervention programme than others (including Tense, Active and Passive voice, comprehension and writing)?*
ii. *Does competence in terms of POS influence other aspects of ESL proficiency (including Tense, Active and Passive voice, comprehension and writing)?*
iii. *Are grammar skills such as POS, Tense and Active and Passive voice inter-correlated, and are these grammar skills associated with comprehension and writing?*
iv. *Do socio-economic factors play a role in the ESL proficiency of the respondents?*
v. *Can Dynamic Assessment be incorporated successfully in a self-help intervention programme at Grade 8 level?*
vi. *Do alternative approaches to SLA, such as Complexity Theory, provide a useful framework for the design of ESL grammar interventions?*

5.1   The data analysis process

Field (2009), Pallant (2011), Trochim (2006) and Wright (2003, 2009) all explain that data analysis in most social research studies involves three major rudiments:

i) Data preparation which involves checking the data for accuracy, logging the data and entering it into the computer.
ii) Obtaining descriptive statistics - this forms the basis of virtually all quantitative studies and provide simple summaries about the sample and the measures. Descriptive statistics are typically presented in graphs (visual description) or in tables (numerical description).
iii) Obtaining inferential statistics, which allows the researcher to investigate questions and hypotheses about the data and to reach conclusions beyond the immediate data alone (Field 2009; Pallant 2011; Trochim 2006). Inferential statistics is thus used to

make inferences from the immediate data to more general conditions, while descriptive statistics focus on merely describing what is going on in the data.

In most quantitative research studies, the data analysis proceeds through the above phases (Trochim 2006). Descriptions of how the data were prepared are usually brief and focus on the more unique aspects of the particular study conducted. Trochim (2006) further states that the descriptive statistics may be rather voluminous in nature and that normally only the most important and relevant information is given. It is the view of various researchers that careful attention should be paid not to provide too much statistical information, since it may detract the reader from presenting the central line of the results (Baguley 2004; Field 2009; Hayes 2000; Trochim 2006; Wright & London 2009). Following this line of thinking, only the most important and relevant statistical data are presented in this chapter.

5.2   Preliminary analysis

Field (2009) proposes that the first step in analysing data is to calculate a frequency distribution (using a histogram) – this entails plotting a graph of how many times each score occurs (Field 2009; Gravetter & Wallnau 2007; Trochim 2006). Although histograms were plotted for this study, and assisted the researcher in her visual inspection of the data, they will not be presented here for reasons of economy. Rather, the information will be presented in the form of tables summarising the relevant information. In quantitative studies, researchers aim to elicit data that are normally distributed, given that a pre-requisite for conducting most inferential statistical tests is that test scores are distributed normally (Field 2009; Hair et al. 2009; Pagano 2008 and Pallant 2011). Thus, before conducting the main data analysis, the data were screened for possible outliers followed by preliminary assumption testing to account for normality, homogeneity of variance and multicollinearity of the data.

5.2.1   Tests of normality

It is stated by Field (2009) that normality is one criterion that has to be met in order to use parametric techniques in data analysis. In an ideal world, scientists would like to see their data distributed symmetrically around the centre of all the scores (Field 2009), which would render the typical bell-curve associated with a normal distribution. This is however not always possible as a result of group dynamics. Despite this, it is good practice to test for the assumption of normality, whenever the inferential statistical analysis includes parametric tests (as is the case in this study).

There are various ways of assessing the normal distribution of scores, for example, plotting histograms or observing the skewness and kurtosis coefficients. Another way is to conduct tests of normality, such as the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and the Shapiro-Wilk test. For this study, tests of normality were conducted to examine how the scores were distributed within the entire sample (for the pre-tests), as well as within the E-group and the C-group (for the post-test and delayed post-test). Two normality tests, namely the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and the Shapiro-Wilk test were performed to test whether the data obtained from the pre-test, post-test and the delayed post-test were normally distributed. The results of the Kolmogorov-

Smirnov test were preferred for this study because it is suitable for smaller samples. Normality is met when the results of the tests are non-significant (p > 0.05). Information regarding the test of normality for the pre-test is presented in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1 Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality for the pre-test

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
	Statistic	Df	p
Pre-test	0.067	98	.200

Table 5.1 provides the results of the normality test for the pre-test scores in the entire sample (N = 98). Careful and random selection of the sample group for the pre-test was not an option since the research was school-based. This means that the researcher was forced to work with the group of participants at hand. Despite this, the data obtained in the pre-test was normally distributed, suggesting a normal distribution in the participants' ESL grammar proficiency at the outset of the study (D (98) = 0.067, p = 0.2).

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was also performed for the post-test and the delayed post-test to verify that the data for both tests were normally distributed. Table 5.2 and Table 5.3 below illustrate the results for the post-test and the delayed post-test, the C-group and E-group, respectively.

Table 5.2 Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality for the post-test

		Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
		Statistic	df	p
Post-test	C-group	0.093	49	.200
	E-group	0.124	49	.057

Table 5.3 Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality for the delayed post-test

		Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
		Statistic	df	P
Delayed post-test	C-group	0.089	49	.200
	E-group	0.087	49	.200

In the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test, p = .200. Thus, the data for all three tests were normally distributed and it can be concluded that the data meets the assumption of normality. Visual inspection of the histograms confirmed a bell curve and it was therefore assumed that the central limit theorem holds and that the group means followed a normal distribution. Given

this evidence, the researcher was satisfied that it would be appropriate to use parametric inferential statistical procedures to analyse the data of the main study.

5.2.2. Homogeneity of variance

The assumption of homogeneity of variance were checked in SPSS Statistics using Levene's Test for Equality of Variances (for the t-tests) and Box's M test of equality of variance – covariance matrices for the ANOVAs and MANOVAs (Field 2009). The results of these tests are presented in section 5.4, together with the results of the statistical tests.

5.2.3. Multicollinearity

In order to perform a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), the researcher checked that the assumption of no multicollinearity has been met. Ideally, the dependent variables in a statistical model have to be correlated moderately with one another to run a MANOVA. If correlations are weak, it is considered better to run separate one-way ANOVAs, and if correlations are too strong (greater than 0.9), multicollinearity is deemed problematic and needs to be screened out. Checks for multicollinearity in this data set are discussed further in section 5.4.

5.2.4. Tests of reliability

As mentioned in analysis of the pilot study, the reliability of the measuring instruments (i.e. ESL tests) that were used for data collection in the main study was assessed in the main study. The researcher used a Cronbach Alpha test in SPSS to assess the internal reliability of the pre-test. The analyses indicated that the test was very reliable (pre-test: 80 items, $\alpha = 0.84$). It was deemed redundant to do a reliability analyses for the post-test and for the delayed post-test, as the official mid-year and end-year ESL assessments of the Ekurhuleni South district of the Department of Basic Education were used to collect the data for the second and third measuring point.

5.3 Descriptive analysis

Preliminary analyses were conducted to obtain descriptive information about the nature of the groups prior to the intervention, and about the effect of the self-help intervention programme on ESL grammar proficiency. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the overall picture of the data in this study. These statistics include the means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum scores, as well as skew and kurtosis in the data (Pallant 2011). Although descriptive statistics do not provide a detailed account of the participants' struggles or successes during the whole course of action, they provide a powerful summary that may be compared to other similar cases (Field 2009; Stevens 2009; Trochim 2006). Trochim (2006) further asserts that descriptive statistics are used to present quantitative descriptions in a manageable form. Thus, the descriptive statistics presented in the following section is a summary of what the data shows overall.

5.3.1 Descriptive statistics for the experimental group and the control group for the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test.

Table 5.4 presents a summary of the means (M), standard deviation (SD), standard error (SE), kurtosis and skewness as well as the minimum and maximum scores for the experimental group and the control group for the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test. Recall that all three tests consisted of sections testing knowledge of POS, knowledge of Tense, knowledge of Active and Passive voice, comprehension skills and writing. The statistics in Table 5.4 are based on the individual scores obtained for the entire test; i.e. including all the mentioned sub-components. All three tests (the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test) counted out of 100.

In the pre-test, the C-group obtained a mean of 43.39% while the E-group obtained a mean of 45.96%. As can be observed in the boxplots presented in Figure 5.1, the median, interquartile range and lowest and highest scores were very similar in the two groups in the pre-test.
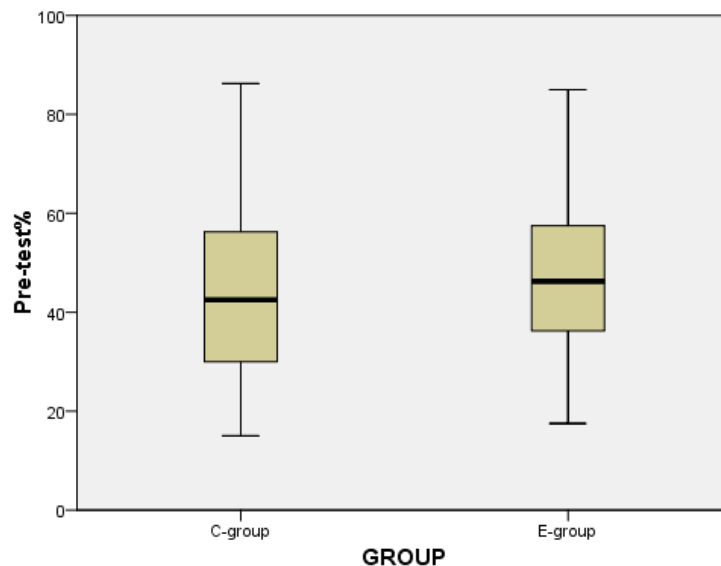
Figure 5.1 Boxplots demonstrating performance on the pre-test

In the post-test, the C-group scored an average of 47.98%, while the average score for the experimental group was 54.89%, indicating that the E-group scored higher on the overall post-test following the intervention. Both groups displayed negative kurtosis (C-group: K = -0.29; E-group: K = -.05). Kurtosis gives an indication of the 'heaviness' of the tails of a distribution, and also reflects the presence of outliers in a data set. In SPSS, the kurtosis of a normal distribution is estimated to be zero. Thus, the closer to 0 the value of K, the closer the data fits a normal distribution. In the post-test, given the negative K values, both the C-group and E-group had tails that were slightly 'lighter' than would be expected for a normal distribution. Put differently, the data was slightly platykurtic (flatter and more dispersed along the X axis than in a normal distribution), but neither level of K was deemed unacceptable (K falls within the ± 0.5 range).

Table 5.4 Descriptive statistics per group for the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test

	C-group (n = 49)							E-group (n = 49)						
	Mean	SD	SE	Skewness	Kurtosis	Min. score	Max. score	Mean	SD	SE	Skewness	Kurtosis	Min. score	Max. score
Pre-test	43.39	17.89	2.55	0.32	-0.44	15.00	86.25	45.96	16.00	2.28	0.40	-0.12	17.50	85.00
Post-test	47.98	16.11	2.30	0.66	-0.29	23.75	88.75	54.89	14.84	2.12	0.38	-0.05	27.50	91.25
Delayed post-test	47.24	14.96	2.13	0.49	-0.14	21.2	87.50	57.88	14.88	2.12	0.17	-0.61	31.25	86.25

SD = Standard Deviation
SE = Standard Error

With regards to skew, both groups presented a slight positive skewness (C-group: S = 0.66; E-group: S = 0.38). Skewness is a measure of the asymmetry of a distribution. If a distribution is perfectly symmetric, skewness will have a value of zero. The slight skew observed in the post-test was not deemed problematic for further data analysis. The SD was 16.11 in the control group, and 14.48 in the E-. These large SD values indicate that, on average, the values in both data sets were relatively far away from the mean. In other words, there was a large amount of variation in both groups in terms of ESL proficiency – this was even more true in the C-group than in the E-group. The median, interquartile ranges and lowest and highest scores obtained in the post-test in each group are presented graphically in Figure 5.2.
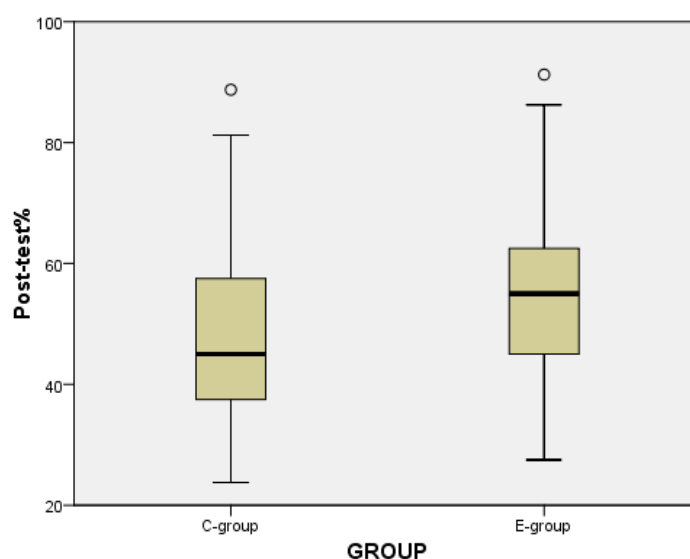
Figure 5.2 Boxplots demonstrating performance on the post-test

The boxplots presented in Figure 5.2 show a clear shift in the performance of the E-group in the post-test. The median is higher, both the lowest and highest scores in this group were higher than in the C- group, and the spread of scores around the median is smaller.

The results for the delayed post-test indicated a mean of 47.24% for the C-group and 57.88% for the E-group. Thus, the C-group again scored lower than the E-group in the delayed post-test. Kurtosis was again negative for both groups (C-group: K = -0.14; E-group: K = -0.61), suggesting that the data was once more had a platykurtic shape. Skew was higher in the delayed post-test than in the post-test, (C-group: S = 0.49; E-group: S = 0.17), but still at acceptable levels in both groups. The SD in both the C-group and the E-group was around 15.00, again indicating considerable variation in both groups in terms of ESL proficiency. The boxplots in Figure 5.3 give a clear picture of how differences between the C-group and E-group became even more pronounced in the delayed post-test.
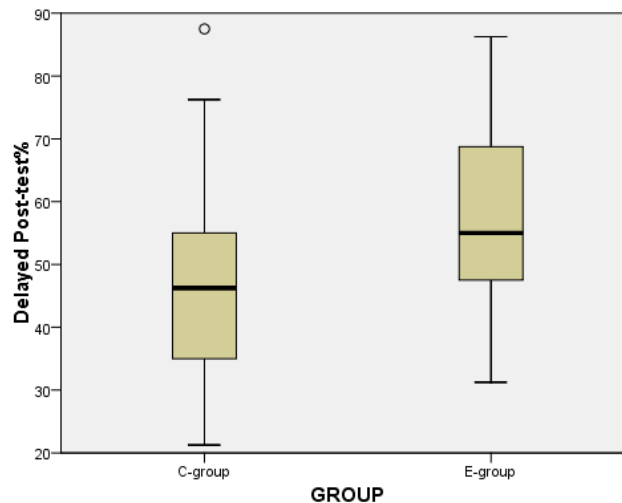
Figure 5.3 Boxplots demonstrating the performance in the Delayed post-test.

As can be seen in the three sets of boxplots, the lowest score in the C-group remained around 20% in all three tests. In comparison, the lowest score in the E-group moved from around 20% in the pre-test to around 30% in the delayed post-test. Perhaps even more interestingly, the interquartile range in Figure 5.3 clearly shows that the majority of the scores in the delayed post-test are above the median in the E-group, whereas in the C-group, the majority of the scores are below the median.

5.3.2   Differences on specific grammar variables in the post-test and delayed post-test

Because the aim of the self-help intervention was to improve learners' competence in using different Parts of Speech (POS), and ultimately to establish whether learners with an improved competence in POS will also demonstrate better grammar skills in general, and better comprehension and writing skills, it was deemed necessary to compare the two groups on specific grammar variables, including *POS*, *Tense*, *Active | Passive voice*, as well as on C*omprehension* and *Writing*. The researcher also calculated a 'total grammar' score (i.e. *Grammar overall*) out of 80 – this score, which was transformed to a percentage score, reflected a participant's performance on POS, Tense, and Active and Passive voice combined. Descriptive statistics on all these variables are provided in Table 5.5, to clarify how the groups differed on the separate components of the post-test and delayed post-test. Table 5.5 includes the descriptive statistics for both the post-test and the delayed post-test.

Detailed results regarding performance on the various grammar components in the pre-test are excluded here for reasons of economy, since the researcher's interest was to investigate differences following the intervention), but more information on group differences in the pre-test will be presented in section 5.4.1. As can be seen in Table 5.5, the E-group scored higher than the C-group in *Grammar overall* in both the post-test and the delayed post-test. The most pronounced difference in both post-tests was observed for the variable *Active | Passive voice*, where the E-group scored 29.79% and 33.46% higher than the C-group, in the post-test and

delayed post-test respectively. With regards to the other variables, it is clear that the E-group scored higher than the C-group in the post-test on *POS* (MD = 20.40), *Tense* (MD = 18.16) and *Writing* (MD = 20.000), and that the E-group also obtained higher scores on these variables in the delayed post-test (MD *POS* = 28.93; MD *Tense* = 32.85; MD Writing = 23.47). The variable *Comprehension* behaved differently, in that there were no large differences between the two groups, in either of the two post-tests. The E-group scored slightly higher in than the C-group in comprehension in the delayed post-test (66.63% vs 63.16%), but this difference seems insignificant on face-value. Generally speaking, the SDs in the E-group is smaller than the SD in the C-group, indicating the scores for the E-group appear closer to the mean more frequently, whereas the scores for the C-group appear further from the mean. This was especially true in the delayed post-test, suggesting that variance in performance had decreased notably in the E-group by the end of the year, whereas it stayed roughly similar in the C-group over time. Overall, the descriptive statistics indicated higher scores on all the variables, except for comprehension, delayed post-test.

The shifts that occurred from the pre-test to the delayed post-test in the two groups in terms of the specific grammar variables, as well as in terms of comprehension and writing, are visually represented in the box plots following below (Figure 5.4 to Figure 5.18). Notably, the experimental group showed a large increase in their ability to identify and use *POS*, and the interquartile range for this variable was much smaller in the delayed post-test than in the pre-test, indicating that there was less variability in the middle 50% of the scores at the end of the year than at the beginning of the year (i.e. the scores were more closely distributed around the central tendency (the median), which improved from 36.36% in the pre-test to 80% in the delayed post-test. The same developmental pattern emerged for *Tense*, *Active / Passive voice* and *writing* in the E-group group.

In the C-group, the development patterns are rather different. In terms of *POS*, the C-group did show some improvement, and the interquartile range is also smaller, suggesting less variability in this variable at the end of the year. However, the improvement seems much smaller in the C-group (the median improved from 27.27% (pre-test) to 40% (post-test) to 50% (delayed post-test)). In terms of *Tense, Active / Passive voice* and *Writing*, the C-group again improved less than the E-group, and in all these measures, the interquartile range in the delayed post-test was comparable to the range in the pre-test, suggesting that the variability in the middle 50% of the scores was bigger in the C-group at the end of the year than in the E-group. Also note that for *Writing*, the C-group scored *lower* in the delayed post-test than in the post-test. The only variable that seemed unaffected by the intervention programme was *Comprehension*. As can be seen in Figures 5.13, 5.14 and 5.15, the median scores in comprehension remained similar in both groups from the pre-test to the delayed post-test, and the development of *Comprehension* as a language skill was rather flat (both groups improved from a median score of 60% in the pre-test to a median score of 65% in the delayed post-test). This suggest that the development of comprehension skills in this particular sample did not improve much from the beginning of the year to the end of the year – not as a result of the self-intervention programme or as a result of normal ESL instruction.

Table 5.5 Descriptive statistics for grammar variables, comprehension and writing in the post-test and delayed post-test

| | Post-test | | | | | | | | | | Delayed Post-test | | | | | | | | | |
| | C-group | | | | | E-group | | | | | C-group | | | | | E-group | | | | |
	M	SD	SE	Min.	Max.	M	SD	SE	Min.	Max.	M	SD	SE	Min.	Max.	M	SD	SE	Min.	Max.
Grammar overall	47.98	16.11	2.30	3.75	88.75	54.89	14.84	2.12	27.50	91.25	47.24	14.96	2.13	21.25	87.50	57.88	14.88	2.12	31.25	86.25
POS	48.77	18.88	2.69	20	100	69.16	17.23	2.48	40	100	48.97	20.23	2.89	0	90	77.91	13.83	1.99	50	100
Tense	43.26	20.91	2.98	0	100	62.44	17.87	2.55	30	100	39.79	20.15	2.87	0	90	72.65	11.50	1.64	50	100
Active/ Passive	43.26	21.34	3.04	0	100	73.06	20.22	2.88	20	100	43.67	26.97	3.85	0	100	77.14	16.32	2.33	40	100
Comprehension	65.91	13.48	1.92	40	100	65.20	17.19	2.45	25	100	63.16	12.73	1.81	35	95	66.63	15.75	2.25	30	100
Writing	60.61	20	2.38	40	80	80.61	13	2.38	50	90	58.98	19	2.30	45	70	82.44	13	2.30	50	80
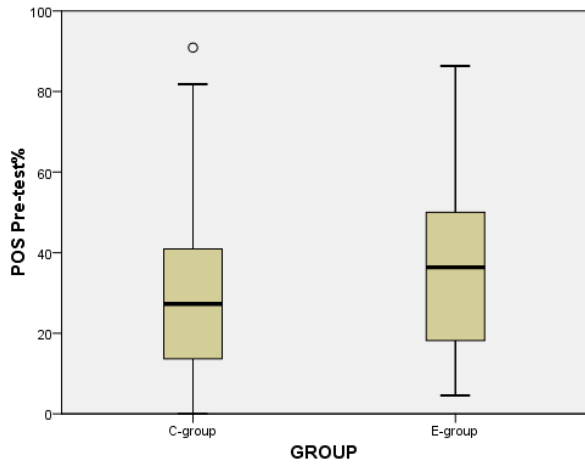
Fig. 5.4 Boxplots of performance in POS in pre-test
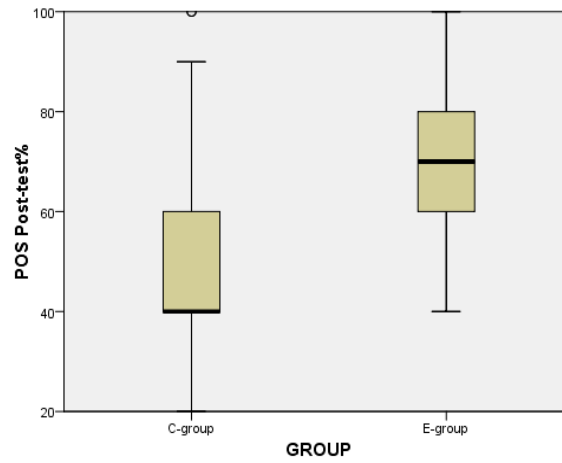
Fig. 5.5 Boxplots of performance in POS in post-test
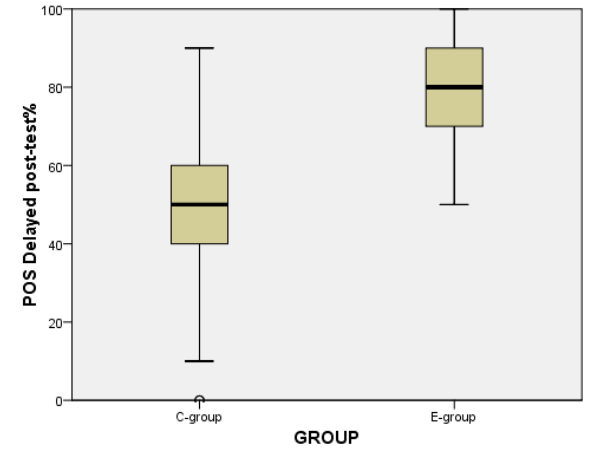
Fig. 5.6 Boxplots of performance in POS delayed post-test
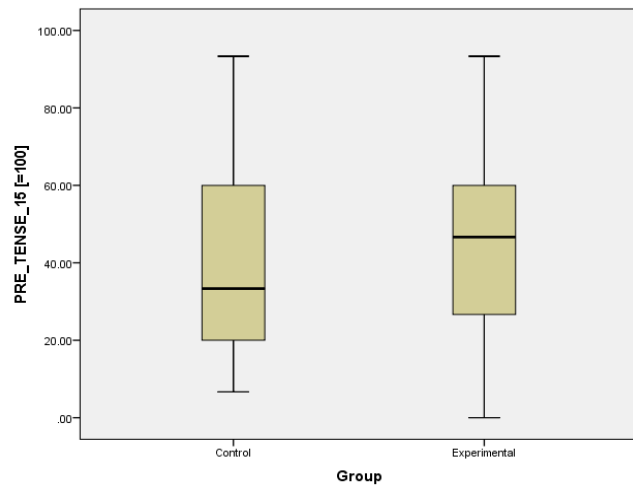
Fig. 5.7 Boxplots of performance in Tense in pre-test
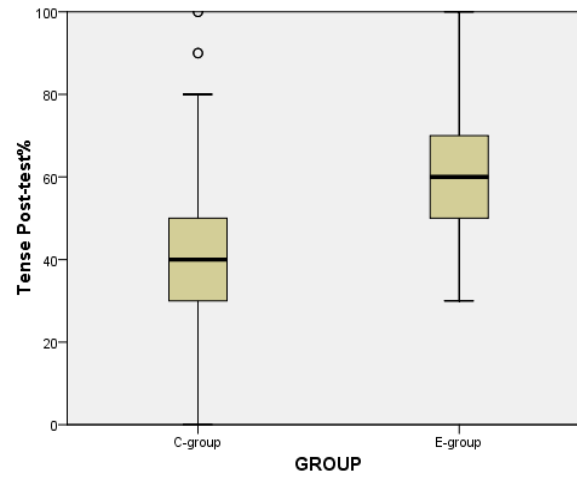
Fig. 5.8 Boxplots of performance in Tense in post-test
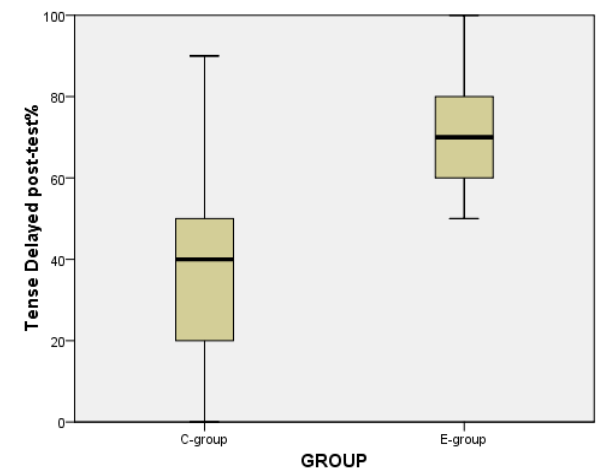
Fig. 5.9 Boxplots of performance in Tense in delayed post-test

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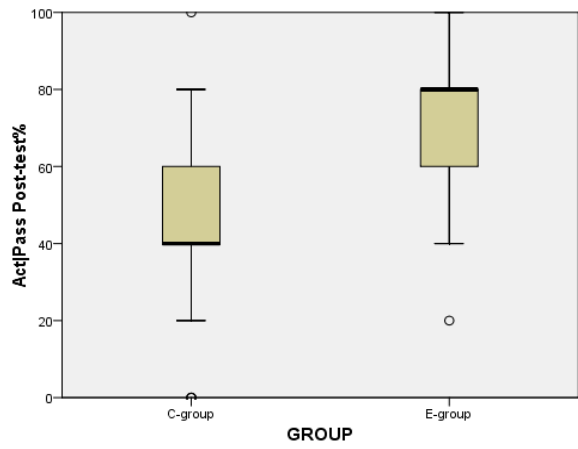
Fig. 5.10 Boxplots of performance in ACT|PASS in pre-test
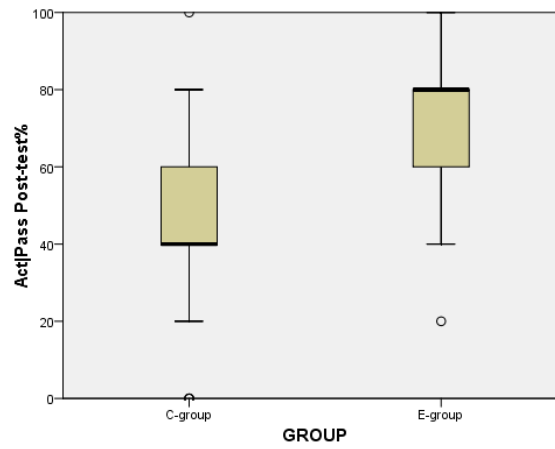
Figure 5.11 Boxplots of performance in ACT|PASS in post-test
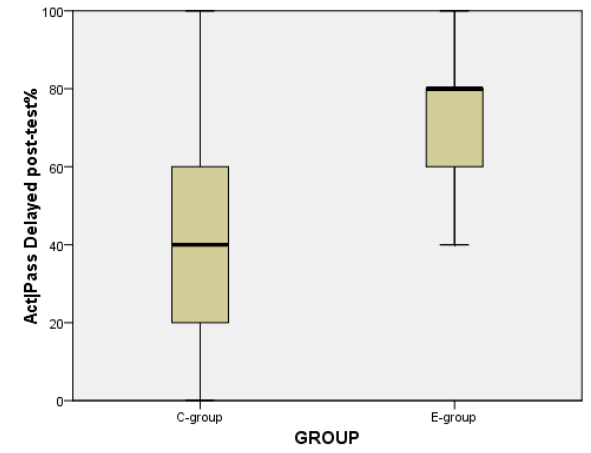
Fig. 5.12 Boxplots of performance in ACT|PASS in delayed post-test
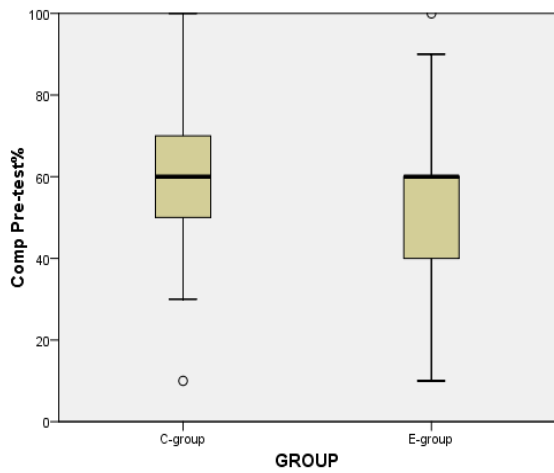
Fig. 5.13 Boxplots of performance in COMP in pre-test
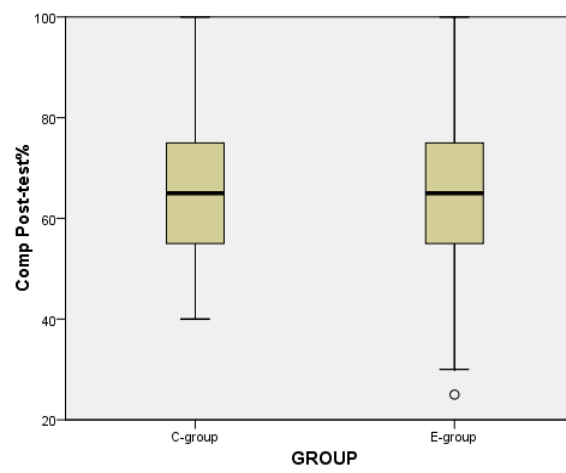
Fig. 5.14 Boxplots of performance in COMP in post-test
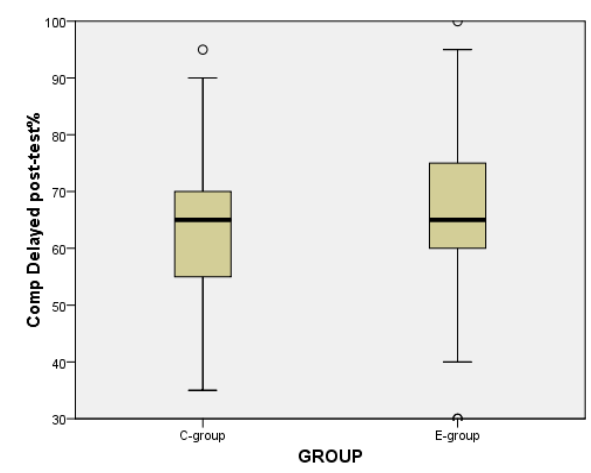
Fig. 5.15 Boxplots of performance in COMP in delayed post-test

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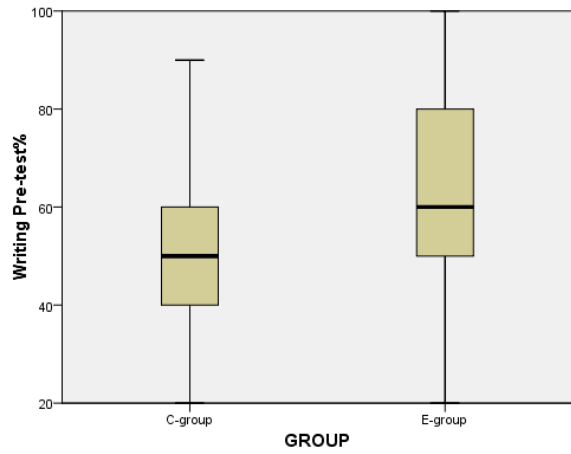
Fig. 5.16 Boxplots of performance in Writing in pre-test
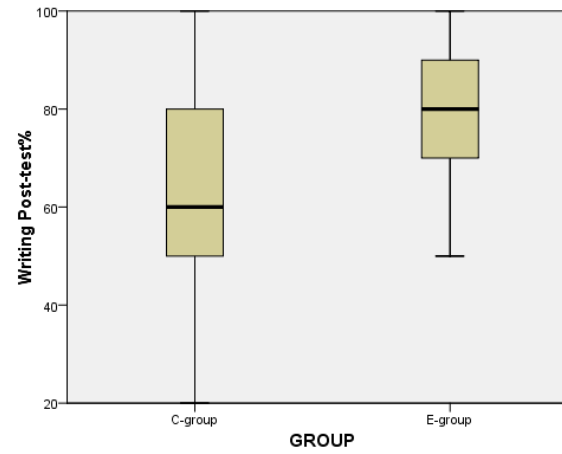
Fig. 5.17 Boxplots of performance in Writing in post-test
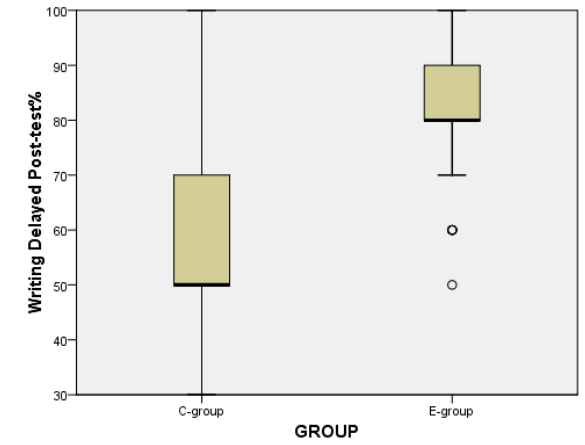
Fig. 5.18 Boxplots of performance in Writing in delayed post-test

The results of the descriptive statistical analysis for the post-test and the delayed post-test suggest that the intervention programme had a positive effect on the ESL grammar proficiency of the E-group, directly after the intervention, and that, for some of the grammar measures, this effect was getting stronger over the course of the school year. The C-group improved slightly with normal ESL school instruction (i.e. English as First Additional Language instruction), but for some measures (writing specifically) the C-group did not maintain an improvement throughout the academic school year.

5.4   Inferential statistical analyses

5.4.1   Pre-test analysis

As was demonstrated in the previous section, the C-group and E-group obtained an average of 43.39% and 45.96% in the pre-test, respectively. As this was an intervention study, it was important to establish whether this mean difference was significant, as the assumption was that the two groups of participants were similar in terms of their ESL grammar proficiency at the outset of the study. An independent samples t-test was performed to determine whether the means obtained by the two groups were significantly different for the pre-test. Table 5.6 presents the results of this t-test, as well as the results of Levene's Test for Equality of Variances.

Table 5.6 T-test (two-tailed) for Equality of Means in the Pre-test

Independent Samples Test									
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				T-test for Equality of Means				
Pre-test	F	Sig.	t	df	p	MD	SE	95% CI	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	0.083	0.78	-0.811	96	0.42	-2.6	3.14	-8.80	3.71

The t-test showed that the two participating groups obtained similar mean scores on the pre-test: t (1; 96) = -0.811; p = 0.42. Based on this finding, one may conclude that there was no significant difference between the participants in ESL proficiency at the outset of the study. With regards to the component variables that constituted the pre-test, it is also worthwhile to note here that independent samples t-tests confirmed that there were no significant differences between the groups in the pre-test on any of the grammar variables (POS: *M C-group* = 30.79%, *M E-group* = 36.17%, t (1; 96) = -1.31, p = 0.19; Tense: *M C-group* = 40.68%, *M E-group* = 45.17%, t (1; 96) = -0.90, p = 0.37; Active/Passive voice: *M C-group* = 29.38%, *M E-group* = 39.18%, t (1; 96) = -1.82, p = 0.07).

The participants' performance in their home language (HL) (which was Afrikaans for the vast majority of the learners) was used as an additional measure to determine whether the groups were well-balanced in terms of linguistic ability at the outset of the study. The mean score of the C-group in a HL test was 43.53%, whereas the mean in the E-group was 43.38%. An independent samples t-test indicated that this difference was not significant (t (1; 96) = -0.04; p = 0.97). This was taken as additional evidence that the groups were comparable before the introduction of the intervention programme.

5.4.2 Statistical models

In order to determine whether the observed differences between the two groups in the post-test and delayed post-test are statistically significant, and whether these differences are the due to the intervention programme, three main factors were considered. First, the increased scores in the C-group and E-group could be the result of *the time* that passed from the pre-test to the delayed post-test (i.e. the increased scores are the result of a normal developmental process). Secondly, *the intervention* itself could be the determining factor in this study, as the participants in the E-group clearly outperformed the C-group. Thirdly, additionally there are socio-educational factors, including performance in L1 (i.e. linguistic aptitude), parents' educational level and income that may influence learners' scholastic development in ESL. To disentangle these factors, several repeated measures ANOVAs and MANOVAs were conducted.

Two separate MANOVAs (Multivariate Analysis of Variance) were conducted, one for the post-test results and one for the delayed post-test results, in order to answer the first research question as stated at the beginning of this chapter. In the first MANOVA model, the independent variable was *group* (C-group or E-Group), while *post-test Grammar overall, POS, Tense*, *Active / Passive*, *Comprehension* and *Writing* were entered as dependent variables. In the second MANOVA model, the independent variable was once again *group* (C-group or E-Group), while *delayed post-test Grammar overall, POS*, *Tense*, *Active / Passive*, *Comprehension* and *Writing* were entered as dependent variables These MANOVA models provided the researcher with information about the effect of the self-help intervention, on each of identified dependent variables, at each of the post-intervention measuring points. The results of these statistical analyses (General Linear Models) are presented in section 5.5. First, however, it is necessary to report on the outcome of the statistical tests which were conducted to determine the suitability of the data for multivariate analyses.

5.4.3 Testing assumptions

As mentioned in section 5.2, it is vital for the researcher to establish whether the assumptions regarding normality, equality of variance, multicollinearity and equality of covariance matrices are met before conducting a MANOVA analysis. As indicated in section 5.2., the data in this study was normally distributed. The data was checked for possible outliers. No outliers were detected. Homogeneity of variance, and multicollinearity also did not pose any risks to the outcome of the MANOVAs, as will be illustrated in the following sections.

Parametric statistical analysis techniques assume that variances in participating groups are equal (Field 2000). This implies that the variability in the scores obtained by different groups is the same. Homogeneity of Variance-Covariance Matrices assumes that the variance-covariance matrices of all the dependent variables are equal for all the participating groups (Field 2000). To test these assumptions statistically, two measures were considered: covariance and correlation coefficient. Covariance refers to the similar changes or deviations that occur between two variables and in effect means that deviation is expected to be similar in two correlated variables. Box's Test of equality of covariance was performed for the post-test and delayed post-test, to test the null hypothesis that the observed covariance matrices of the dependent variables are equal across groups. The outcome of Box's test is reflected in Table 5.7 below.

Table 5.7 Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices

	Post-test	Delayed post-test
Box's M	39.00	51.00
F	2.00	2.50
df1	21	21
df2	33900.00	33900.00
p	0.021	0.001

Unlike most tests, Box's M test is very strict and thus the level of significance is typically .001 and not .05. The outcome for the post-test was not significant (F (1, 96) = 2.00, p = 0.021) and thus the post-test data meets the assumption of equality of covariance matrices. Box's test was significant for the delayed-post test data, which motivated the researcher to also consider the outcome of Levene's test of Equality of Variances for each of the identified grammar variables, as well as for comprehension and writing.

Levene's test was conducted as an additional measure to determine whether the assumption of equality of variance across groups was met. Levene's test tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups. Levene's test is significant at $p \leq .05$. Table 5.8 presents the results for Levene's test of equality of variances.

Table 5.8 Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances for the post-test

	Post-test				Delayed post-test			
	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	p	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	p
Grammar Overall	0.51	1	96	0.50	0.00	1	96	1.00
POS	0.24	1	96	0.62	3.00	1	96	0.10
Tense	0.03	1	96	1	9.00	1	96	0.04
Act/Passive	0.28	1	96	1	3.00	1	96	1.00
Comprehension	2.90	1	96	0.6	1.00	1	96	0.34
Writing	5.52	1	96	0.02	8.00	1	96	0.008

In order to conduct a MANOVA, the researcher ideally wants to observe non-significant results on Levene's test. If the p-value of Levene's test is significant (< than 0.05), the obtained differences in sample variances are unlikely to have occurred based on random sampling from a population with equal variances. The majority of the p-values in Table 5.8 are bigger than 0.05, for both the post-test and the delayed post-test, which means that the researcher can accept the null hypothesis that the population variances are equal

In the post test, the only significant result was for *Writing;* $F(1, 96) = 5.520$, $p = 0.021$). In the delayed post-test, Levene's test yielded significant results for *Writing* ($F(1, 96) = 8.0$, $p = 0.008$) and for *Tense* $F(1, 96) = 9.00$, $p = 0.004$). In other words, for these variables, equal variances cannot be assumed with certainty. However, it was deemed in order to ignore these violations, given that all the other scores met the assumption, given the robustness of MANOVAs, and given the sample sizes for each group.

5.4.3.2 Multicollinearity

The correlation coefficients obtained after conducting Pearson correlations between the various dependent variables are shown in Table 5.17 and Table 5.18. These correlations will be interpreted later in this chapter in the relevant section; here it is only important to note that none of the r values is higher than 0.9. Therefore, multicollinearity did not pose a threat to the validity of the MANOVA tests that were used to analyse to compare the data.

5.5.   Main factors and group differences

5.5.1   Effect of time

Repeated measures models are used when participants in a study are assessed on the same variables repeatedly. In this study, all participants were assessed on the variables *Grammar overall*, *POS*, *Tense*, *Active / Passive voice*, *Comprehension* and *Writing*, in the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test. As explained previously, the researcher's aim was to test the effect of a self-help intervention programme on the E-group's knowledge of POS. The C-group did not receive the intervention. However, given that learners' linguistic development in both groups is likely to be affected by the *time* that elapsed from the first assessment to the last assessment (due to natural maturation), the researcher deemed it important to also assess the effect of time on learners' development. For this purpose, a repeated measures ANOVA was used. Repeated measures ANOVAs make use of the assumption of sphericity, which is likened to the assumption of homogeneity of variance. The assumption for homogeneity of variances was assessed in the previous section, and given that the data set used for the repeated measures ANOVA is the same, the test assumptions regarding MANOVAs apply here and will therefore not be discussed again (i.e. the assumption is that the data meets the requirement of conducting an ANOVA).

At this point, it is useful to repeat the means obtained on the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test, in the entire sample, as well as in the group (see Table 5.9 below for ease of reference).

Table 5.9 Means obtained on the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test

	Overall population	C-group	E-group
Pre-test	46.80	45.53	48.08
Post-test	61.32	57.63	65.02
Delayed post-test	62.10	56.32	67.87

In the pre-test, the entire group scored 46.80% on average, while the mean score improved to 61.32% in the post-test and 62.10% in the delayed post-test. To ascertain whether the time that passed in between the assessments affected the increase in the mean score, in both the entire population and in the groups, a General Linear Model (GLM) (repeated measures) was conducted. The model included *repeated measurement* (i.e. time 1, 2 and 3) as the within-subject factor, while *group* (Control or Experimental) was the between-subject factor. The three measurement points (pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test) were entered as dependent variables. The outcome of the multivariate test (Pillai's trace) associated with this model is shown in Table 5.10.

Table 5.10 Effect of time (repeated measurement) and group (intervention) on the performance of the learners at three points

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Time	Pillai's Trace	0.660	92.02	2.000	95.000	0.00	0.66
Group	Pillai's Trace	0.254	16.16	2.000	95.000	0.00	0.25

As can be seen in Table 5.10, the time that passed between measurements had a significant effect on the performance of the entire sample of learners at time 2 and 3 (F = 92.02, p < 0.00). This effect size was large (partial eta squared = 0.66). Furthermore, there was a significant effect of the group in which the learners were (Control or Experimental) (F = 16.16, p < .00). The size of this effect was also large (partial eta squared = 0.66). Taken together, this means that both the time that learners spent learning in school, over the course of a normal school year, and the group in which the learners were (Control or Experimental) effected ESL scores in this population.

Pairwise comparisons revealed that, when considering the entire population, the mean difference between the pre-test and the post-test was significant (MD = 14.52, p < .00). Likewise, the mean difference between the pre-test and delayed-post- test was significant (MD = 15.29, p < .00). However, in the entire population, the observed difference between the post-test and delayed post-test was not significant (MD = .77, p = 0.19).

With regards to the development of ESL skills in the C-group, Huynh-Feldt's test of within-subjects effects indicated that the time that passed between the three measuring points had a significant effect on the outcome (i.e. test scores) in this group (F = 137.66, p < .00). Pairwise comparisons (to which Bonferroni adjustments were applied) showed that, in the C-group, both the mean difference between the pre-test and post-test (MD = 12.10, p < .00), and between the pre-test and the delayed post-test (MD = 10.79, p < .00) were significant. However, in the C-group, the mean difference between the post-test and delayed post-test was not significant (MD = -1.3, p = .32). In other words, the C-group improved significantly from the time of the first assessment to the time of the second assessment, but not from the second assessment to the third assessment.

With regards to the development of ESL skills in the E-group, Huynh-Feldt's test of within-subjects effects once more indicated that the time that passed between the three measuring points had a significant effect on performance in the ESL tests in this group (F = 299.94, p < .00). Pairwise comparisons (Bonferroni adjustments were applied) showed a somewhat different pattern in the E-group than in the C-group. Both the mean difference between the pre-test and post-test, and between the pre-test and the delayed post-test were significant (MD = 16.49, P < .00 and MD = 19.79, p < .00). However, in the E-group, the mean difference between the post-test and delayed post-test was also significant (MD = 2.85, p = .008). Thus, in the E-group, the learners continued to perform significantly better in each of the assessment, as the year progressed.

On the basis of establishing a significant group effect in the initial repeated measures ANOVA, it was deemed appropriate to do further statistical analyses in order to establish how exactly the groups differed from each other in the post-test and delayed post-test – this was done via multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVAs) (see section 5.5 – 5.6).

While the developmental patterns of the various variables assessed in each test (*Grammar overall*, *POS*, *Tense*, *Active / Passive voice*, *Comprehension* and *Writing*) in the two groups is potentially interesting, the main focus of this thesis was on determining the effect of the SFG-based intervention on the development of knowledge of POS (and other aspects of grammar). It was thus deemed more important to report the results of the MANOVAs in detail, which would highlight significant differences between the C-group and E-group. Although separate repeated measures ANOVAs were conducted to determine the growth of each variable in each group, these analyses are not presented here in further detail, to avoid information overload. Instead, the researcher opted to illustrate the developmental patterns of the assessed variables in both groups via line graphs, which are presented from Figure 5.19 to Figure 5.25).
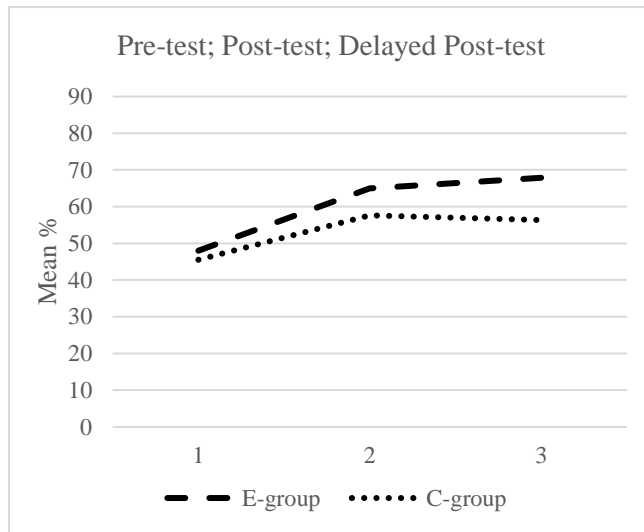
Fig. 5.19 Development of ESL (overall)
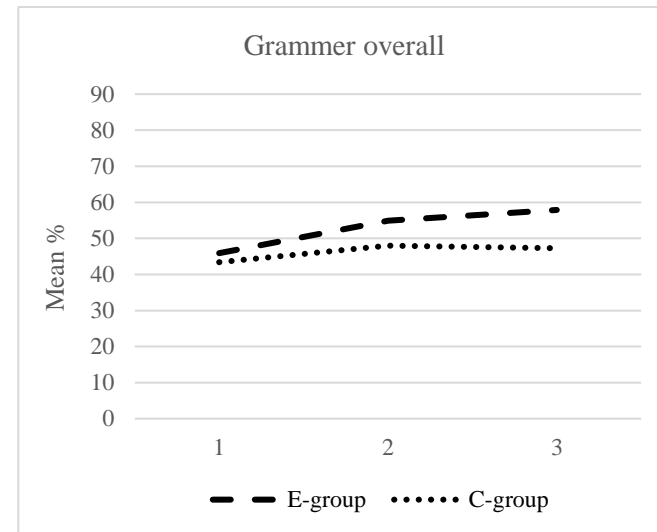
Fig. 5.20 Development of overall grammar skills
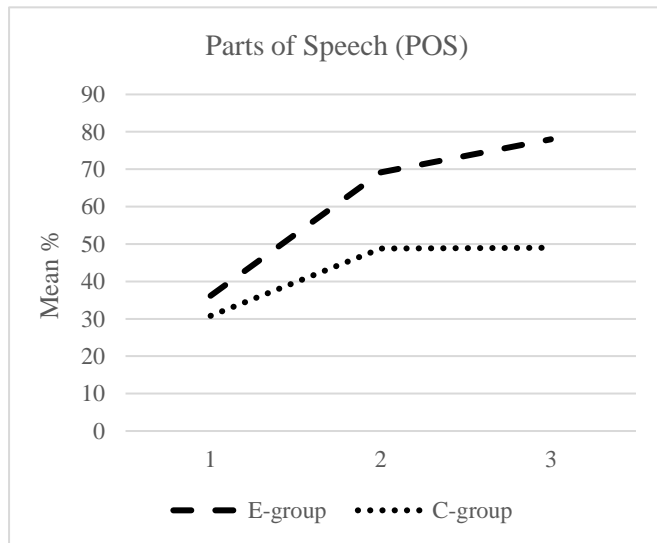
Fig. 5.21 Development of ESL POS skills
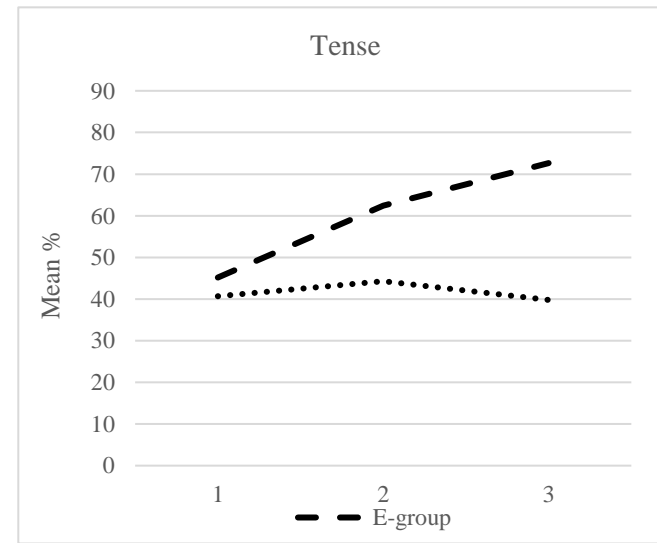
Fig. 5.22 Development of ESL Tense skills
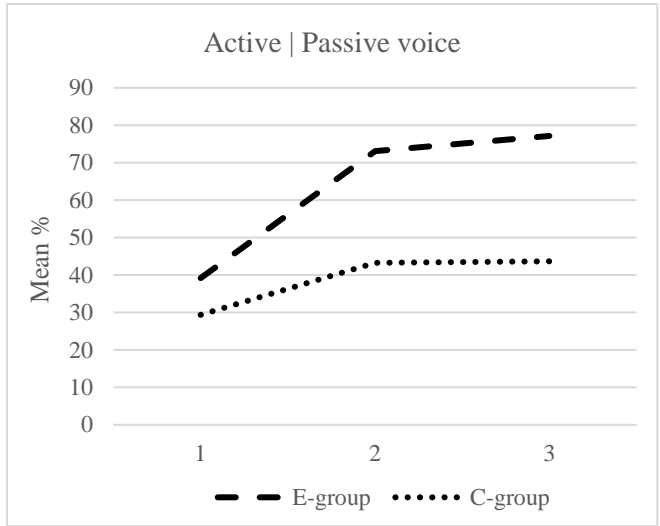
Fig. 5.23 Development of ESL Active | Passive skills
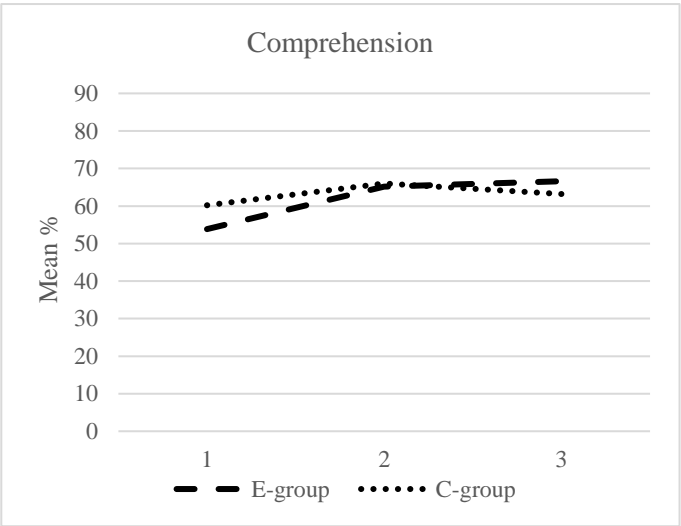
Fig. 5.24 Development of ESL Comprehension skills
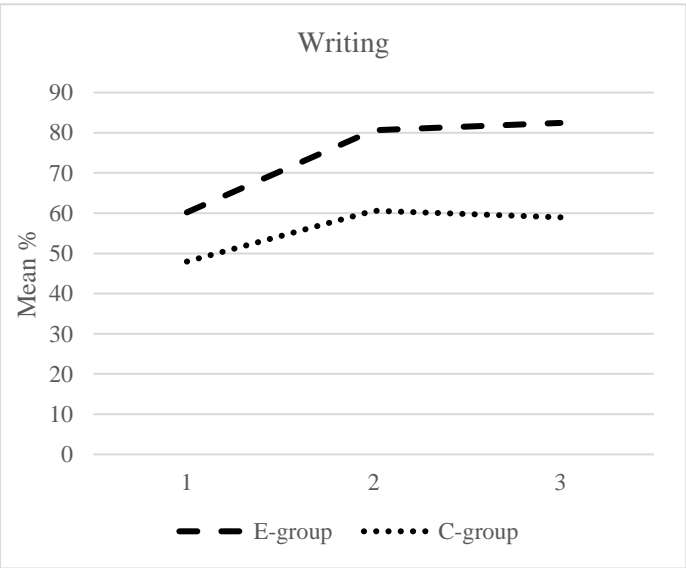
Fig. 5.25 Development of ESL Writing skills

The line graphs of the grammar variables, as well as of comprehension and writing clearly confirms the statistical results of the repeated measures ANOVAs. For all the variables, the E-group shows increased scores from the first to the second assessment (pre-test to post-test), and then a further (albeit smaller) increase in scores from the second assessment (post-test) to the third assessment (delayed-post-test). In contrast, the C-group's scores increased from the first assessment to the second assessment (typically the increase is less steep than the increase in the E-group), but then the scores in this group remained stagnant, or even decrease from the second assessment (post-test) to the third assessment (delayed post-test). It would seem then that the inability of the C-group to improve significantly from the post-test to the delayed post-test was not the result of one particular weakness, but rather reflected a general trend in terms of ESL development.

5.5.2. *Effect of group (intervention)*

In order to determine whether the independent variable *group* had a significant effect on the various dependent variables, the result of Pillai's Trace was considered. The rationale for choosing Pillai's Trace (rather than Wilks' Lambda, Hotelling's Trace or Roy's Largest Root) was that Pillai's Trace is thought to be a more robust indicator of overall significant effects in smaller sample sizes, unequal groups and in cases where some violations of assumptions occurred (as is the case with this data set) (Field 2000). The results of the multivariate tests conducted for the post-test and delayed post-test are presented in Table 5.11.

Table 5.11 Multivariate test for the post-test and delayed post-test

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Post-test Group (intervention)	Pillai's Trace	0.585	21.360b	6	91	.00	0.585
Delayed post-test Group (intervention)	Pillai's Trace	0.685	33.016b	6	91	.00	0.685

a. Design: Intercept + GROUP
b. Exact statistic
c. Computed using alpha = .05

Pillai's trace indicated the group in which a learner was (C-group or E-group) had a significant effect on the outcome of the dependent variables in the post-test (F (6, 91) = 21.36b, p < .00 and in the delayed post-test F (6, 91) = 33,016b, p < .00. In other words, Pillai's trace confirmed that there are significant differences between the groups with respect to the dependent variables, and that this was the case for both tests that followed the intervention.

The pairwise comparison (Table 5.12) contains multiple paired t-tests. Bonferroni adjustments were used to reduce the chances of obtaining Type 1 errors when doing multiple pairwise comparisons on a single data set. Table 5.12 reports the statistics for the pairwise comparisons of all the dependent variables in the E-group and the C-group. Table 5.12 also presents the *F*-values and *p*-values. Considering that the significance level was set at 95%, it is clear that most of the differences reported between the groups in the post-test were statistically significant. The Tests of Between-Subjects Effects confirm the rejection of the null hypothesis, since the majority of *p* values were smaller than 0.05. An exception however is for *Comprehension* (p = 0.820), where no significant difference between the two groups was seen in the post-test.

Overall, the experimental group clearly presented as the stronger group, with the exception of *Comprehension,* where the groups were almost identical. In all the remaining variables the experimental group achieved between 7% and 30% higher than the experimental group. The fact that these differences were statistically significant provides strong evidence that the self-help intervention programme had a positive effect on the dependent variables in the experimental group.

Table 5.12 also indicates the effect sizes of the intervention in the post-test (i.e. an indication of which ESL skill was influenced most by the intervention). The effect on *Active / Passive voice* was very big (MD = 30.000; F = 50.300, p < .05). *POS* (F = 32.000, p < .05), and *Writing* (35.200, p < .05) was also affected strongly. *Tense* was influenced slightly less (F = 21.400, p < .05). The intervention had no effect on *Comprehension* (F = 0.052, p > .05). A possible explanation for this could be that the comprehension process follows a different path of development and does not rely on assessment of individual aspects of grammar - rather, assessment focuses on the overall meaning of what is written, in other words, does the learner understand what is asked with regards to the text and does the response answer the question, irrespective of grammatical errors. Comprehension is also affected by other linguistic skills, such as vocabulary, reading fluency, critical thinking etc. The researcher will return to this point in the discussion.

Table 5.12 further indicates which of the dependent variables were influenced significantly by the intervention in the delayed post-test. The effect of *group* (i.e. no-intervention vs. intervention) seemed to be even bigger for the variables *Tense* (F = 98, p = 0.00)*, POS* (F = 68, p = 0.00) and *Writing* (F = 52, p = 0.00) in the delayed post-test, whereas comprehension was again not significantly influenced by the intervention. The effect of the intervention *Active / Passive voice* was similar in the delayed post-test than in the post-test. There was a slight improvement in comprehension skills detected in the E-group in the delayed post-test; however, the difference between the E-group and C-group was not significant.

Table 5.12 Pairwise comparisons for the E-group and the C-group across all the dependent variables

Dependent Variable	MD	SE		F	p	95% Confidence Interval for Differences		MD	SE	F	p	95% Confidence Interval for Differences	
			Post-test			Lower Bound	Upper Bound			Delayed post-test			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Grammar overall	7	3.13		5	.03	0.70	13	11	3.01	12	.001	5	17
POS	20.40	3.63		32	.00	13.19	28	29	4	68	.000	22	36
Tense	18.16	3.93		21.40	.00	10.36	26	33	3.32	98	.000	26	39
Active/Passive	30.00	4.20		50.30	.00	21.46	38	30	4.20	50	.000	21	38
Comprehension	-0.71	3.12		0.05	.82	-6.91	5.40	4	3	1.50	.234	-2.28	9
Writing	20.00	3.37		35.20	.00	13.30	27	23	3.30	52	.000	17	30

Based on estimated marginal means
The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

5.6.   Additional analyses

5.6.1   Marital status, income, gender and L1 proficiency

To test whether parent's marital status, parents' income, learners' gender or learners L1 proficiency influenced ESL performance, separate ANOVAs were performed. *Marital status* was entered as either *Married* or *Divorced*. In the C-group, there were 12 learners whose parents were divorced, whereas 19 learners in the E-group had parents who were divorced. The variable *parents' income* was recoded into three categories: 1 = Low (below R15,000 p/m); 2 = Medium (between R15,000 and R30,000 p/m) and 3 = High (above R30,000 p/m). Using this categorisation, the C-group contained 11 families with a Low income, 16 families with a Medium income, and 22 families with a High income. In the E-group, 12 families fell in the Low-income group, 18 families had a Medium income and 19 families had a High income. There were 28 females in the C-group and 33 females in the E-group. The average score for L1 at the outset of the study was 43.53% in the C-group, and 43.38% in the E-group. The results of the ANOVAs that were conducted to determine any interaction effects between these social, biological and linguistic factors and *group* are presented in Table 5.13.

Table 5.13 Test of between-subject effects: marital status; income; gender and L1 proficiency

	Post-test			Delayed post-test		
	Mean Square	F	p	Mean Square	F	p
Marital status*Group	29.52	.12	.72	.084	.00	.985
Income*Group	33.97	.13	.87	18.82	.083	.921
Gender*Group	51.27	.880	.36	64.19	.65	.26
L1%*Group	32.33	.55	.84	49.83	.512	.87

As can be seen in Table 5.13, none of the considered 'noise' variables significantly impacted the outcome of the post-test or of the delayed post-test. As such, it can be concluded that the enhanced performance in the E-group following the intervention could not be attributed to the considered SES factors, to gender or to proficiency in the L1.

5.6.2   Self-rated ESL proficiency

The participants for both groups were required to evaluate their ESL proficiency at the outset of the study by indicating whether they believed their ESL proficiency to be 'low', 'intermediate', 'advanced' or 'near-native'. This rating was performed before the pre-test and again after the post-test to determine whether the ratings changed in between the two tests.

Participants from both groups rated their ESL proficiency quite high before the pre-test. In the C-group, 0 learners rated themselves as 'low', 14 rated themselves as 'intermediate', 23 thought they were 'advanced' and 12 felt they had 'near-native' levels of proficiency. In the E-group, 4 learners rated themselves as 'low', 7 as 'intermediate', 26 as 'advanced' and 12 believed their English skills to be 'near-native'. After the results of pre-test and post-test were reported to the participants there was a large change in the self-rating. 22 learners now thought their ESL skills were 'low' (10 in the C-group and 12 in the E-group). The majority of the learners in both groups thought of themselves as 'intermediate' after the post-test (28 learners in both groups). The number of participants who rated their ESL level at 'near-native' declined from 24 to 1, the only learner who continued to think of themselves as near-native was in the C-group.

In general, the E-group reflected a slightly better ability to rate themselves realistically, which might be attributed to a combination of the intervention and the scores for both tests. Table 5.14 reflects the multivariate tests for the self-rating activity. A repeated measures test was performed to test whether the change in self-rating was significant, and whether this factor interacted with group.

Table 5.14 Multivariate tests for self-rating from the pre-test to the post-test

Effect	Pillai's Trace	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta squared
Time*Self-rated proficiency	0.50	97.45	1	95	0.00	0.50
Time*Self-rated proficiency*Group	0.003	.255	1	95	0.615	0.003

As can be seen in Table 5.14, there was a significant interaction between *self-rating* and the *time* that passed from the pre-test to the post-test, but there was no significant interaction between *self-rating* and *group*.

5.7   Correlations

In order to determine whether there were any significant relationships between the various variables (*POS*, *Tense*, *Active / Passive voice*, *Comprehension* and *Writing*), Pearson correlations were conducted. Pearson correlation coefficient (r) determines any significant correlations between variables. Field (2000) warns that interpreting coefficients do not provide an indication of the direction of causality. However, including correlations in the interpretation of the data provides the researcher with a view of the interrelationships that exists between the dependent variables in the study. The researcher hoped to determine which aspects of grammar had strong relationships with each other, in order to form a clearer understanding of how these variables interact. This information could assist language teachers to understand, for example, which aspects of grammar competence are associated with competence in reading comprehension and writing.

5.7.1   Assumptions for Pearson's correlation coefficient

The basic assumption required for Pearson's correlation coefficient is that the data has to be normally distributed. It has already been reported that the data obtained on the three tests were normally distributed. Hence, parametric correlation tests were conducted to determine significant associations between the various variables.

5.7.2   Correlations between dependent variables in the pre-test

To test for any relationships between the dependent variables (grammar total, POS, tense, comprehension and active/passive) before the intervention took place Pearson correlations were performed. The rationale for conducting correlations in the pre-test and post-tests was to establish whether new relationships formed after the grammar intervention. Table 5.15 reflects the correlation coefficients between the dependent variables, as they existed in the pre-test.

The results indicated that there was a strong positive correlation between the overall (i.e. total) grammar score and each of the dependent grammar variables (i.e. *POS* (r = .87; *Tense* (r = 88) and *Active / Passive voice* (r = .81)). This means that a learner who performed well in the grammar component of the pre-test was likely to perform well in each of the grammar variables that were assessed. Furthermore, the *POS* component of the pre-test correlated significantly and strongly with all the other components of the test. These strong positive relations suggest that if a learner performed well in the *POS* -component of the pre-test, the learner most likely also performed well in *tense* and *active/passive* (the correlations were very strong (r = .83) and strong (r = .74), respectively). This suggestion holds for comprehension as well, although the correlation was only moderately strong (r = .626). The relationship between knowledge of POS and comprehension was thus not as strong as the relationship between knowledge of POS and tense or active/passive. A moderate correlation was detected between comprehension and active/passive (r = .538), which seems to suggest that an ESL learner who perform well in the active/passive part of the test might not necessarily perform as well in comprehension, and vice versa part. Writing correlated weakly with *POS*

(r = .36), *Tense* (r = .35), *Active / Passive voice* (r = .39). There was no significant correlation between scores on the writing component and the comprehension component of the Pre-test.

Table 5.15 Pearson Correlations (two-tailed) between dependent variables in pre-test (N = 98)

	Grammar overall	POS	Tense	Active/ passive	COMP	Writing
Grammar overall	1	.87**	.88**	.81**	.72**	.39
POS	.87**	1	0.83***	0.72***	0.63***	0.36**
Tense	.88**	0.83***	1	0.78***	0.67***	0.35**
Active/Passive	.81**	0.72***	0.78***	1	0.54***	0.39**
COMP	.72**	0.63***	0.67***	0.54***	1	.19
Writing	.39	0.36**	0.35**	0.39**	.19	1

*Correlation significant at the 0.05 level
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level
***Correlation significant at the 0.001 level

5.7.3   *Correlations between dependent variables in the post-test*

5.7.3.1 *Correlations for the C-group for the post-test*

In order to check if any of the relationships as reflected in the pre-test have changed after normal school-based instruction, a Pearson correlation test was performed for the control group. The Pearson correlation coefficient for the Post-test (C-group) is provided in Table 5.16.

Table 5.16 Pearson Correlations (two-tailed) between dependent variables in the post-test: C- group (N = 49)

	Grammar overall	POS	Tense	Active/ passive	COMP	Writing
Grammar overall	1	.76**	.79**	.32*	.68**	-.15
POS	.76**	1	0.70***	0.37***	0.63***	-.14
Tense	.79**	0.70***	1	0.33***	0.60***	-.19
Active/passive	.32*	0.37***	0.33***	1	0.37***	-.12
COMP	.68**	0.63***	0.60***	0.40***	1	-.00
Writing	-.15	-.14	-.19	-.12	-.00	1

*Correlation significant at the 0.05 level
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level
***Correlation significant at the 0.001 level

For the C-group, the Pearson correlations indicated strong positive relationships between the overall grammar score and *tense* (r = .79), the overall grammar scores and POS (r = .76) and the overall grammar score *comprehension* (r = .70). This suggests that a ESL learner (who only received normal school-based instruction) that performed strongly on the overall grammar component of the test, is likely to have performed well in POS and tense, but not necessarily as strongly on the active| passive component (r = .32). Another strong correlation between *POS* and *tense* (r = .70). The correlation between *POS* and *active | passive voice* was significant but weak (r = .32), while the correlation between *POS* and comprehension was moderately strong (r = .63). This relationship was exactly that same than in the pre-test. On average, the significant correlations in the C-group were slightly weaker in comparison to the pre-test correlations, and there were no significant correlations between writing and any of the grammar variables.

A strong relationship was observed between *POS* and *comprehension.* A logical explanation for this is that learners' comprehension, to some extent, relies on understanding the function of each POS in a sentence (and this in turn, should assist in text comprehension which should lead to more accurate answers on a comprehension test). The negative relationship between *POS* and *writing* is potentially interesting, and suggests a complex relationship, but none of the negative correlations observed between writing and the grammar components were significant, and thus interpreting them any further makes little sense.

Of further interest is the significant relationship between *tense* and *comprehension* where r = 0.61 and *p* = 0.000. A possible explanation is that where there is a better understanding of the role of tense in a text, there is better understanding of text as a whole, which potentially could assist learners in identifying POS more accurately in a text.

5.7.3.2   Correlations for the E-group for the post-test

In order to determine how the correlations may have changed after the intervention, Pearson correlations were conducted for the E-group. These correlation coefficients are presented in Table 5.17 below.

Table 5.17 Pearson Correlations (two-tailed) between dependent variables in the post-test: E-group (N = 49)

	Grammar overall	POS	Tense	Active/ Passive	COMP	Writing
Grammar overall	1	.60**	.74**	.48**	.702**	.28
POS	.60**	1	0.55***	0.20	0.40***	0.47***
Tense	.74**	0.55***	1	0.50***	0.50***	.21
Active/Passive	.48**	0.20	0.50***	1	0.33***	.048
COMP	.702**	0.40***	0.50***	0.33***	1	.09
Writing	.28	0.47***	.21	.048	0.92	1

*Correlation significant at the 0.05 level
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level
***Correlation significant at the 0.001 level

The post-test performance correlations reflect a significantly and moderately strong relationship between the overall grammar score and *tense* ($r = .75$), a strong correlation between the overall grammar score and *comprehension* ($r = .70$), and moderate correlations between the overall grammar score and *POS* ($r = .60$) and *active / passive* ($r = .50$), *POS* and *tense* ($r = .60$), and moderate correlations between *POS* and *writing* ($r = .500$) and *POS* and *comprehension* ($r = .40$). This can be interpreted that if an ESL learner performed strongly in the POS component of the test, there is a strong chance that the learner also performed well in the tense component of the test, and a moderate chance that the learner performed well in the writing and comprehension components of the test. The relationship between POS and writing was not quite as strong in the E-group as the same relationship in the C-group – a possible explanation for this is that that learners' comprehension did not improve to the same extent as their POS knowledge (which was of course the focus of the intervention).

The E-group reflected a non-significant relationship between *active / passive* and *POS* ($r = .200$; $p > 0.05$). This same relationship was significant in the C-group ($r = .370$; $p < 0.05$). This seems to suggest that the improved skills in terms of POS in the E-group cannot be related to improved skills (to the same extent) in learners' ability to formulate active/passive sentences. In the C-group learners, where knowledge of POS did not increase to the same amount than in the E-group, relationships between the various grammar variables remained more consistent to the correlations observed in the Pre-test.

An interesting observation is that there was a moderate correlation between POS writing (r =.500) in the E-group. This is interesting, when taking into consideration that writing showed no significant correlation with any of the components of grammar in the pre-test, and in the C-group post-test. This seems to suggest that the enhanced skills in POS in the E-group correlated with enhanced writing skills. The intervention programme included a section on SFG-based writing skills, to which the C-group was not exposed, and this may possibly explain the correlation for the E-group.

5.7.3.3 Correlations for the C-group for the delayed post-test

A delayed post-test was conducted in order to determine any long-term effects of the intervention programme. The correlations between the dependent variables in the C-group in the delayed post-test are presented in Table 5.18.

The results showed a moderate correlation between *tense* and *POS* where r = 0.47 and p = 0.00. Likewise, a moderate correlation was observed between *tense* and *comprehension* (r = 0.52 and p = 0.00). No other significant relationships were revealed.

Table 5.18 Pearson Correlations (two-tailed) between dependent variables in the delayed post-test: C-group (N = 49)

	Grammar overall	POS	Tense	Active/ Passive	COMP	Writing
Grammar overall	1	.47**	.55**	.027	.42**	.001
POS	.47**	1	0.43***	0.15	0.41***	0.08
Tense	.55**	0.43***	1	0.25	0.52***	-0.4
Active/Passive	.027	0.15	0.25	1	0.35***	0.2
COMP	.42**	0.41***	0.52***	0.35***	1	0.23
Writing	.001	0.08	-0.4	0.2	0.23	1

*Correlation significant at the 0.05 level
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level
***Correlation significant at the 0.001 level

5.7.3.4 Correlations for the E-group for the delayed post-test

The E-group underwent the self-help grammar intervention before the post-test in June. They received the same normal school-based ESL instruction as the C-group throughout the year. The final examination at the end of the academic year (5 months later) acted as the delayed post-test for both groups. The results for the Pearson correlations are presented in Table 5.19.

Table 5.19 Pearson Correlations (two-tailed) between dependent variables in the delayed post-test: E-group (N = 49)

	Grammar overall	POS	Tense	Active/ Passive	COMP	Writing
Grammar overall	1	.44**	.24	-.12	.45**	.16
POS	.44**	1	0.12	-0.05	0.24	.20
Tense	.24	0.12	1	0.15	-0.03	.27
Active/Passive	-.12	-0.05	0.15	1	0.00	-.01
COMP	.45**	0.24	-0.03	0.00	1	.03
Writing	.16	.20	.27	-.01	.03	1

*Correlation significant at the 0.05 level
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level
***Correlation significant at the 0.001 level

Table 5.19 provides the results for the delayed post-test conducted in the November examination of the curricular year. A moderate correlation was revealed between the overall grammar score on the Delayed Post-test and POS where r = 0.40 and p = 0.00. Another moderate correlation was revealed between the overall grammar score and comprehension, which is a similar finding than in the post-test. Far fewer significant correlations were observed between the dependent variables in delayed post-test in the E-group, when compared to the C-group. In fact, the correlations remained more similar in the C-group. As was seen in the results of the second MANOVA, the intervention had a long-term positive effect on the learners' knowledge of POS. No other significant relationships between the various variables were revealed for the delayed post-test. The correlations in the E-group seem to suggest that the relationship between enhanced POS knowledge and other grammar variables were not clear-cut in the E-group at the end of the school year – this seems to be the case even though the E-group outperformed the C-group in all the grammar variables (not only in POS) in the delayed post-test.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter reported the statistical analyses and the results of this study. An in-depth discussion of these findings will be presented in Chapter 6, where the implications of the results will be discussed in terms of SLA theory and second language learning pedagogy.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The present study explored the effect of a self-help ESL grammar programme for Grade 8 learners in a single secondary school in Gauteng, South Africa. The rationale behind the study was that many learners in South Africa arrive in Grade 8 (the first year of high school) with underdeveloped ESL skills, particularly in the domain of grammar. Foundational concepts of grammar, such as POS (which are first introduced to learners in Grade 4 in primary school) have often not been firmly established, which causes ESL learners to struggle when more complex aspects of grammar are introduced in secondary school. Attempting to close these knowledge gaps in the classroom puts huge amounts of pressure on ESL teachers and learners, when considering the limited time that is available to work through the relevant grade curriculum. Learners cannot cope with the curriculum if they have not acquired basic skills, and hence ESL teachers are often forced to do large amounts of revision in overcrowded classrooms in Grade 8. Despite best efforts to balance revision and teaching of the actual curriculum, teachers fall behind with the actual grade curriculum, which results in weak ESL learner scores at the end of the year (own experience and personal communication).

To try and alleviate this situation, the researcher developed a self-help ESL grammar programme, which learners can complete at home – the rationale being that if such a programme is effective, it will assist ESL teachers to close gaps in the grammatical knowledge of Grade 8 learners, which in turn will minimise the negative effect that the large variation in learners' grammar proficiency has on teaching and learning in the ESL classroom. The study further investigated the relevance of using alternative ESL approaches in ESL teaching and learning. The investigation into Larsen-Freeman's Complexity Theory acted as motivation for the researcher to apply Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistic approach in developing the self-help intervention.

Two groups of participants were assessed in a pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test to determine i) whether the SFG-based self-help programme had any effect on the grammar proficiency of the experimental group, and ii) whether improved grammar proficiency had a positive effect on comprehension and writing skills in ESL learners. Both groups received normal school-based grammar instruction and the experimental group completed the self-help programme in their own time, over a period of five months. The data were statistically analysed using SPSS. This chapter discusses the findings that resulted from the repeated measures analyses, the multivariate analyses of variances and the Pearson correlations. The first part of this chapter provides an overview of the study, while the second part addresses the research questions systematically, and discusses the findings in relation to previous empirical studies. The final part of this chapter summarises the study by providing a summary of the key research findings and discussing the limitations, as well as the practical implications of the findings for ESL learning and teaching in the South African context. Finally, recommendations for future studies are given.

6.1   Overview of the study

The main objective of this study was to explore alternative methods of intervention, in the form of self-instruction and self-assessment, to address gaps in the grammar proficiency of ESL Grade 8 learners at a secondary school in Gauteng, South Africa, and to simultaneously monitor learners' progress throughout the process of intervention. Specifically, the researcher was interested in establishing whether knowledge of the different POS in English could be improved by providing learners with a self-help intervention programme based on the principles of SFG. In addition, the researcher deemed it important to investigate whether other components of grammar (such as Tense and Active/Passive voice) as well as broader language skills, such as comprehension and writing improved as a result of an intervention programme that focused primarily on improving learners' knowledge of POS. The reason for this was that several scholars have argued that improving proficiency in POS does not positively affect language skills such as writing (Denham & Lobeck 2010; Jones, Myhill & Bailey 2013; Troia 2014). With regards to comprehension, scholars also claim that ESL learners fall behind in reading for comprehension despite a strong focus on grammar instruction (Adoniou 2013; Bandura 1993; Duke, Cartwright & Hilden 2013; Klingelhofer & Schleppegrell 2016; Ofudu & Adedipe 2011; Zhao, Elliott & Rueckl 2018). A secondary objective was thus to test the effect of the intervention on (arguably related) skills such as writing and comprehension. For this reason, the current study had a wider scope than most previous studies in this field – as will become evident previous studies typically focused on just one particular ESL skill (writing or reading or comprehension or grammar). Several research questions were stated in Chapter 1 to guide this study. Those questions will be answered and discussed in this chapter based on the statistical analyses of the data, as presented in Chapter 5.

6.2   The research questions

The main research question asked whether it was possible to improve ESL grammar proficiency of Grade 8 ESL learners, and if so, whether it could be achieved through a self-instruct (self-help) grammar programme based on the principles of SFG. Sub-questions to the main research question asked whether knowledge of POS will benefit more from the intervention that related grammar skills such as Active and Passive voice and Tense, and other skills such as comprehension and writing, given that the intervention focused primarily on the development of learners' knowledge of POS. Other sub-questions asked whether SES influenced the ESL grammar intervention programme and whether ESL learners can self-regulate their own progress within the framework of Dynamic Assessment. Finally, the question was posed whether CT provides a useful framework for developing a self-intervention ESL programme.

6.2.1   The main research question

With regards to the main research question, the results from the data collected for this study suggest that it is indeed possible to positively affect ESL the grammar proficiency of Grade 8 ESL learners through a SFG-based self-help intervention programme. The experimental group received normal curricular ESL instruction along with the control group, while completing the

self-help intervention programme in their own time. The intervention programme comprised three different sections (each section complementing the preceding section) and the researcher monitored the learners' process of completion of the various sections. The results of the multivariate analyses indicated that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in grammar overall, as well as on each of the individual grammar variables (POS, Tense and Active/Passive voice). Furthermore, the experimental group performed significantly better in writing than the control group. The only tested variable that did not improve significantly in the control group (in comparison to the experimental group) was reading comprehension. The effect of the intervention on the dependent variables (ESL skills) was found to be large (partial eta squared = 0.66), and the intervention made an independent contribution to ESL learning (i.e. it had a significant effect on the outcome variables in a statistical model that also considered the effect of *the time* that the learners spent learning in school). In order to contextualise these findings in the South African ESL teaching and learning environment, it is useful to recap the nature of the intervention (as discussed in chapter 4). Following this, the researcher will situate the findings of this study within local and international research (i.e. studies that implemented SFL/SFG in order to enhance ESL grammar proficiency).

Taking into consideration that SFG is not included in the South African ESL curriculum, the researcher included traditional English grammatical terms (e.g. noun, verb, adverb) in the intervention, but integrated these traditional grammatical terms with their counterparts in SFG, i.e. 'verbs' were referred to as 'processes' and 'nouns' as 'participants', while all other POS were regarded as 'extra information'. The aim was to look at an alternative approach to teaching traditional grammar terms without ignoring the way in which grammatical concepts are introduced to ESL learners in the South African curriculum. In the new CAPS curriculum currently followed by South African ESL teachers (introduced in 2009), the role of explicit grammar teaching is given more prominence than in the preceding ESL curriculum, which followed a strictly text-based communicative approach. However, the communicative approach is still advocated (Ayliff 2012).

In the researcher's experience, ESL learners struggle to master grammatical concepts in an approach that is communicative. The need to focus on grammar instruction rather explicitly in the South African ESL learning context has also been confirmed by other scholars too (Ayliff 2006; Ayliff 2010; Ollerhead & Oosthuizen 2006). These scholars all found that, when taught via a CLT approach, South African learners mainly acquire basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS), but not cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP) in, which they need if they are to succeed scholastically. Importantly, all these scholars argued that insufficient knowledge of English grammar contribute to learners' weak CALP skills. All believe that it is not helpful in the South African context, to focus on communicative skills only where learners do not receive rich linguistic input and that focus on forms is indeed necessary for ESL proficiency. Given that the new CAPS curriculum allows for explicit ESL grammar teaching, this study therefore aimed to complement existing traditional explicit ESL grammar instruction with an alternative approach. With this aim in mind, and considering the complexity and systemic changes involved in L2 learning, Halliday's SFG offered an alternative approach

to teaching ESL grammar constructs. Both Halliday (2010; 2014) and Larsen-Freeman (2014; 2015) advocate and support explicit grammar teaching as discussed in chapters 2-3, but also state that alternative approaches are necessary to ensure that L2 concepts are mastered by L2 learners. In other words, instead of focusing on naming traditional POS individually in sentences, SFG provided the researcher with a framework to explain traditional concepts in an alternative manner to ESL learners. The specific focus was on *the function* of chunks of words in clauses and *how such chunks of words contribute towards meaningful communication* (written or oral), were highlighted to learners in the intervention programme. By looking at the 'process' and the 'participants' in sentences, the learners in the experimental group were provided with a tool-set to determine the role of participants in processes in relation to each other, and to understand the role of the extra information in a sentence that describes the various processes and participants. The aim was thus to simplify the construction of sentences by focusing on the various participants and the processes they are involved in, rather than focusing on identifying and naming the constituent POS of a sentence.

The incorporation of SFG in grammar teaching and/or intervention programmes seems to be fairly novel concept, both in the South African and wider international context. Most existing intervention studies that incorporated SFG involved a focus on reading comprehension or writing skills. However, in some of these studies, an explicit focus on grammar was included with positive effects (Horverak 2016; Mekala, Ponmani & Shabita 2016), or the focus shifted to genre-based use of text, where grammar instruction was embedded into the instruction (D'Amant 1998; Jones, Myhill & Bailey 2013; Mgqwashu 2007; Ramcharan 2009). Although a bulk of literature exists that informs ESL researchers and instructors about the positive effects of SFL/SFG exists, there seems to be little empirical evidence of the true effects of SFG, and in many existing studies researchers failed to include a control group, rendering results in favour of a SFL approach less robust. In particular, very little has been written about the usefulness of SFG as an intervention to improve knowledge of POS. Furthermore, although several scholars have advocated SFL/SFG as an alternative method for ESL grammar instruction, the literature is theoretical in nature and not based on conclusive or supportive research. All too often, scholars' suggestions are based merely on the observations of teachers or researchers in the classroom (Al Hamnady 2018; Custance 2017; Feng 2013; Gardner 2013; Poehner & Lantolf 2005; Zwien 2013). Even so, all of the above-mentioned scholars agree that SFL/SFG is a useful tool in the ESL classroom for developing grammar, writing and comprehension skills.

6.2.1.1 SFG-based research

The lack of empirical studies into the effectiveness of using a SFL/SFG approach does not suggest that SFL/SFG is not applied widely. The bulk of available literature is from Anglophone countries, and more recently from various Eastern countries (including Malaysia, India, Iraq and China) and a few African countries (including the Congo and South Africa). The discussion that follows has in mind to situate the findings of the current study within global research conducted to establish the importance of grammar instruction in the ESL curriculum,

and to clarify the position of SFL/SFG in ESL education across the globe and in South Africa in particular.

The rationale for most of the reported SFL/SFG studies is a lack of ESL grammatical proficiency, especially at tertiary level, where students are not able to produce proficient academic texts. As mentioned in the introduction, SFL/SFG is not implemented in the South African ESL curriculum, and very little research in the local context exists as to its usefulness in instruction L2 to ESL learners. However, countries such as Britain, Australia, New-Zealand, Canada and America have successfully implemented SFG in their respective curricula. Various Eastern countries (Malaysia, India, Iraq and China) have also conducted research into SFL/SFG in an effort to enhance ESL proficiency. Previous research has looked into the effect of SFL/SFG on specific aspects of grammar, overall grammar competency, comprehension and writing skills at various levels of the educational system, i.e. primary school, secondary school and tertiary institutions. All over the world, there seems to be a stronger focus on developing reading comprehension and writing skills of ESL readers than on developing grammar skills, and intervention studies similar to the present one where SFG was used specifically to improve knowledge of POS do not seem to exist. This is understandable, since the ultimate goal of L2 instruction, especially in contexts where the L2 is to be used as academic language, is to develop learners' levels of comprehension and writing skills to a high level. Furthermore, assessment of ESL competency involves mainly reading, comprehension and writing, and so learners cannot succeed without these skills. Indeed, most existing studies using a SFL framework have also focused on the impact of SFL/SFG on reading for comprehension and/or writing skills, and have implemented SFL in an attempt to specifically improve these skills. The current study's focus on developing ESL grammar proficiency using a SFL/SFG framework, and measuring the effect of this intervention on related grammar skills, comprehension skills and writing skills thus is quite unique.

One study that did blend traditional English grammar instruction with SFL/SFG was conducted by Cunanan (2011). The study did not involve a control group, but reported that the 100 tertiary students who participated in SFG-infused classes at an American university benefitted significantly from SFL-inspired text analyses, as demonstrated by their improved ability to create more relevant and meaningful ESL texts. The focus was specifically on experiential processes (verbs) and the instruction was based on Halliday's contextual interpretation of text. Cunanan (2011) found that the participants responded positively to a blended instructional approach that used aspects of both traditional and functional grammar. The current study also blended traditional grammar concepts with functional interpretations and applications (especially in relation to POS) but is more robust in design than existing studies (like the one by Cunanan) as it included a control group. The results of the current study thus confirm and support studies such as Cunanan's, since it provides statistical data obtained in a quasi-experimental study in line with previous findings. Cunanan (2011) cautioned that it is a complex endeavour to blend SFG with traditional grammar and that most teachers will find teaching and applying SFG to ESL a daunting task. However, the current study illustrates that an instructional programme implementing SFG can be designed and developed by a language

teacher – the researcher agrees though that distilling the concepts of SFG to a level where ESL learners understand them is not a simple task, and that some trial and error is to be expected

The current view on SLA and ESL teaching and learning is that learning grammar is complex and that there is no single pedagogical approach that can claim priority (Ellis & Shintani 2014). Various scholars currently hold that grammar has a place in the classroom but that it is best to develop the language learner's awareness of the purpose of texts and the related functions of the grammar embedded in the texts. Furthermore, a balance between implicit and explicit grammar teaching is advisable (Byrnes & Schleppegrell 2013; Carey et al. 2011; Chowdhury 2014; Coffin 2010; Cullen 2012; Denham et al. 2010; Derewianka & Jones 2013; Halliday 2010; Hewings & Hewings 2005; Richards & Reppen 2014; Uysal & Bardakci 2014). Exactly what this balance entails is not always clear, and it may vary from one learning context to another. What does seem clear is that international studies concur that ESL students across the world experience poor levels of ESL grammar proficiency, and that these poor grammar skills can account for poor academic results at school and tertiary levels (Lawson 2012; Talebloo & Bin Baki 2013).

South Africa has a challenging sociolinguistic educational context, considering the 11 official languages that are acknowledged as languages of learning and teaching in the foundation phase. Currently, it is still the reality that only English, and to a lesser extent Afrikaans, is used as LOLT in the secondary and tertiary phases of education. This reality necessitates South Africans to become proficient in the official language of business (English), since this is the language in which they will mostly be schooled and trained in to be economically competitive. The situation is not much different elsewhere on the African continent, where learners and students also often have to study in an L2 (such as English or French). Furthermore, many African students pursue postgraduate studies in South Africa but lack adequate ESL skills to do so effectively. For instance, in a study by Tsotsho, Cekiso and Mumbembe (2015) it was found that foreign African students studying in South Africa experienced problems in applying Tense, Concord, Infinitives and POS, suggesting overall low levels of ESL proficiency. Although the study was conducted on a small scale, the authors confirmed the need for improved ESL interventions, to assist students with poor ESL grammar proficiency across Africa. The particular design of the current intervention programme is thus very significant, as the statistical findings presented in Chapter 5 suggest it can enhance ESL grammar proficiency in secondary school learners. Possibly, this finding can be extended to include tertiary students, but no strong claims about the generalisability of the findings can be made at this stage.

The effect of the present intervention programme on writing and on comprehension, and the improvement of ESL skills in relation to each other will be discussed in the following sub-section, where the sub-questions that guided this study will be discussed.

6.2.2   The sub-questions

6.2.2.1 The first two sub-questions

The first two sub-questions asked i) whether the intervention would affect POS more than other related aspects of ESL (i.e. Tense, Active and Passive voice, writing and comprehension), since ESL learners in the experimental group spent more time practising POS than other grammar skills and ii) whether other aspects of ESL (Tense, Active/Passive voice as well as writing and comprehension skills) would be affected at all by the intervention programme. These two questions will be discussed together in this section.

The effect of the intervention on Active and Passive voice and Tense

With regards to the first sub-question, the findings suggest that, although the intervention programme focused primarily on improving knowledge of the POS in English, the experimental group showed very similar gains in other aspects of English grammar, such as Tense and Active and Passive voice. Thus, although the learners spent most of their self-instructing time on practising English POS skills, this aspect of the intervention did not stand out dramatically in terms of achievement in the post-tests. As pictured in Figure 5.21 and Figure 5.23, the developmental curve for POS and Active and Passive was almost identical, with learners starting off at around 40% accuracy in the baseline assessment, improving to around 70% accuracy in the post-test, and reaching around 80% accuracy in the delayed post-test. Clearly then, learners' new understanding of POS in terms of their functional capacities seems closely linked to their ability to manipulate these POS in a task that requires a solid grasp of 'whom did what to whom' in a text. It makes sense that conceptualising nouns as participants in a process, that fulfil a specific function, is more helpful than merely presenting nouns as abstract entities such as 'subjects' and 'objects', when learners are required to identify the relevant role players in a sentence.

The developmental curve for Tense was slightly less steep than for POS and Active/Passive voice, as can be seen Figure 5.22. Learners in the experimental group started off at around 45% accuracy in terms of this component of grammar, improved to just over 60% accuracy in the post-test and jumped to just over 70% accuracy in the delayed post-test. Still, this aspect of grammar clearly benefitted from the overall intervention. Interestingly, when comparing the developmental patterns of the two groups, it becomes clear that it was the intervention in particular that supported the development of ESL grammar and writing skills in the learners in the experimental group. Although the learners in the control group showed some improvement in the grammar variables over the course of the study, their (normal maturational) development was much less steep, and plateaued between the second and final assessments. In other words, the interlanguages of the control group learners seemed to fossilize, whereas the interlanguages of learners in the experimental group continued to move closed towards the TL. A repeated measures analysis of variance confirmed that learners in the control group improvement significantly from the beginning of the year to the midline assessment, but then failed to improve further in the final examination. Thus, the improvement in the control group could be ascribed to normal ESL development through normal classroom instruction - it is a normal

expectation for learners to progress through curricular instruction. This improvement was, however, not as strong as in the experimental group, which suggests that the intervention programme was a big determining factor with regards to learners' improvement in ESL grammar.

Regarding the second sub-question, the results indicated that the current intervention significantly and positively affected performance on Active/Passive voice and Tense. On all of these variables, the experimental group outperformed the control group, which provides a strong case for the effect of the intervention programme, and more specifically for the premise that improved knowledge of POS in English will assist learners to also develop other related grammar skills. Active/Passive voice is regarded as one of the most difficult concepts to master in English (Amadi 2018; Hinkel 2002; Master 1991). The researcher's personal experience is that language learners do not fully understand the principles underlying Active/Passive voice formation in English. Because of this, the concept remains abstract, and learners do not realise that the rules governing Passive voice construction real-world implications in terms of meaning construction. The Active/Passive voice questions in formal assessments are always embedded in texts but isolated for the purpose of the question where learners are mostly required to rewrite a given sentence into its passive form. The testing of Active/Passive voice is therefore almost always decontextualised and bears no significance on the meaning of the text itself. Learners are expected to rely on knowledge of the rule for forming passive voice to produce grammatically correct sentences. The current study attempted to bring about change in the participants' perception of this aspect of grammar by focusing on the role-switching of the participants in the sentences. In other words, the participants were asked to focus on *who does what to whom* and then to rewrite this sentence construction into *what is done to whom by who?* They were also provided with a diagram that clearly illustrates the role-switching (see Appendix 17). The researcher was unable to find any similar illustration or presentation of Active/Passive voice intervention, which suggests that the combined instructional approach used here (SFG-based and traditional grammar instruction combined), represents a unique pedagogical contribution to the field of ESL teaching.

Tense is also implicated in active and passive voice formation, and in the researcher's experience, Tense is another complex aspect of English grammar that learners struggle to grasp. Correct application of the Active/Passive voice rule requires an understanding of how to use Tense accurately in English. The current SFG-based intervention therefore also focused on Tense in order to test whether SFG-based instruction would positively affect learner's grasp of concepts related to Tense, such as movement on a time-line. Tense is traditionally taught in class with the use of a Tense table where all the Tenses are listed underneath each other accompanied by 'time-words' that learners must simply learn in order to apply Tense. This approach to teaching Tense is mostly decontextualised and in the researcher's experience a very abstract concept for learners to grasp. The problem with Tense in formal assessment activities is similar to that of Active/Passive voice, namely that the questions are presented in a decontextualised manner and that the learner is required to rewrite the given sentence into various forms of Tense.

Tense is different for each language, but the concept of 'time' exists for all human beings. Tense is described as the grammaticalisation of the expression of time, while time is a personal experience of events (Jabbari 2006). Understanding the concept of time is affected by the complexities of understanding Tense and Aspect, respectively (Bardovi-Harlig 2007; Jabbari 2013; Ogihara 2007; Okanlawan 2006; Tong 2011; Valia 2006). Although most languages have the propensity to express Tense, not all languages express the concept of time in the same way, for example, Chinese does not have any specific Tense markers, which may explain the negative L1 transfer of time concepts in Chinese ESL learners. In the field of ESL learning and teaching, it is, however, widely accepted that Tense forms a key component of grammar, and that ESL learners have to master the various English Tenses (Cakir 2011; Halliday 1976; 1985; Maksud 2015; Sukasame et al. 2014), regardless of their L1 knowledge.

Many international studies, in China, India and Africa (to name a few), have reported poor performance in Tense tasks in ESL/EFL learners (Cakir 2011; Okanlawan 2006; Sukasame et al. 2014). English have 12 specific Tenses and in general, researchers report that ESL learners find the concept of Tense complex and tend to omit the use of Tense (Collins 2007; Flora & Hassan 2012; Jabbari 2006; Muftah & Rafik-Galea 2013; Okanlawan 2006). Part of the problem might be that text books for ESL grammar often ignore the lexical aspect of Tense (Maksud 2015). Various scholars hold that Tense problems are mostly semantic in nature and that there should be a stronger focus on meaning in conjunction with form when teaching Tense to ESL learners (Maksud 2015; Ogihara 2007). For this reason, the researcher investigated Halliday's concept of temporal experience in order to find a more realistic understanding of time in English. Halliday (1976; 1985) views the concept of transitivity as 'experiential' in nature. In other words, transitivity is seen as the transmission of ideas which revolve around the participants and the additional social contexts within the processes (experiences). The Hallidayan view of 'process' is seen as a semantic verb: doing/happening/sensory experiences/behaviour and existing. SFL/SFG therefore relies on our expression of experiences through clauses that contain all the information about the experience. SFL/SFG relies and focuses on the choices available through the verbs to relate to the temporal aspect of grammar (Halliday 1976; 1985).

The researcher therefore considered SFG when developing the current intervention to improve learners' use of Tenses in English. This entailed looking into ways to blend SFG and the concept of timelines to present Tense in a simplified manner. Therefore, instead of focusing on a table containing all 12 Tenses) described in much detail (as in traditional ESL teaching), the researcher opted to illustrate *what happens when* on timelines (Annexure 17). The concept of time/Tense was linked with SFG in terms of asking *when* participants participated in a certain process and to illustrate the process on the timeline. Traditional aspects of Tense were still taught in conjunction with SFG. This blended approach might explain the strong effect on the experimental group's performance in Tense, since they had a clearer understanding of the time that the experience took place in. Besides the use of timelines, learners were introduced to the concept of timelines, and familiarised with the specific time words associated with each Tense form. In addition, a functional interpretation of Tense in a sentence was presented, by once again making clear that the rules underlying Tense formation has a real-world meaning

implication, and thus that an understanding of *when who did what* is crucial. The findings showed that, following the intervention, the experimental group performed significantly better than the control group in Tense. The implemented approach thus improved the learners' understanding of Tense – this was found despite the fact that the current SFG intervention programme used mostly decontextualised examples to teach the concept of Tense.

Few other intervention studies that aimed to improve Tense have been reported. Tong (2011) conducted a study in a Hong Kong secondary school with Grade 8 students, basing the intervention on the Theory of Variation. This entailed that teachers had to adapt the method of instruction for each of the 5 cycles of the intervention. Although not exactly similar to the present intervention, the underlying idea that alternative instructional approaches need to be implemented in grammar intervention programmes underpins Tong's study – this is also one of the main ideas of the present study. Tong's results suggested a strong positive effect for an intervention based on the Theory of Variation, but as in many other studies, the study did not include a control group. The current study, in comparison, provides more robust evidence that supports the effectiveness of a blended approach to Tense instruction, using both SFG and traditional instruction in order to assist learners in understanding Tense. The researcher was unable to find any SFG-based intervention studies that involved Tense, which again highlights the unique pedagogical contribution of the present study. In essence then, the results of the present study lend credence to previous studies that suggested that an explicit focus on Tense in a systematic intervention does enhance knowledge and accurate use of Tense, compared to regular curricular class instruction.

The effect of the intervention on Writing

The writing skills of the experimental group developed similarly to the grammar skills, with learners in the experimental group starting off around 60%, and improving to over 80% in the delayed post-test. The experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in writing in the post-tests. The positive effect of the intervention on writing was not necessarily anticipated, as there is much disagreement about the role of grammar teaching in improving writing skills. With regards to the role of POS in writing, many language practitioners and teachers have argued that the ability to successfully analyse POS in isolation will not assist learners in terms of written composition (Dyslexia – Speld Foundation, accessed on 23 October 2019). Even so, knowledge of the different POS is essential to the writer – the belief is however, that this knowledge will only be useful if learners also know how to combine the parts into a whole: "Words themselves have no value until they are combined. Word banks can be a useful tool to support the generation and organisation of ideas however students also need to be taught the function of the words and how to use them in their writing" (Dyslexia – Speld Foundation, accessed on 23 October 2019). Indeed, there is some evidence that intervention programmes that aim to improve learners' ability to combine POS in sentences, or that highlights the function of words in sentences are successful in improving learners' writing.

While it is widely acknowledged that grammar is important for writing, there is controversy about whether explicit or implicit grammar teaching impacts writing the most

(Groves 2013; Horverak 2016; Jones Myhill & Bailey 2013; Lawson 2012; Salahu-Din, Perskey & Miller 2008; Troia 2014). Troia (2014) stated that there is a lack of empirical support for explicit grammar instruction leading to improved writing skills, and argues that most studies have indicated that ESL learners should use their existing grammar knowledge to improve productive text quality, specifically written text, rather than focus on decontextualised grammar activities to develop writing skills. Research suggests that traditional grammar instruction (which normally focuses on developing extensive metalinguistic knowledge about grammatical structure and rules) is *not* a means to improve writing (Campbell, Brady, & Linehan, 1991; Finestack & Satterlund (2018). Despite this rather prominent viewpoint, recently more and more researchers started focusing on the possible impact of explicit grammar teaching on L1 and L2 writing skills. Jones, Myhill and Bailey (2013), for example, conducted a study to investigate the effect of contextualised (but explicit) grammar teaching on the writing skills of ESL learners (aged 12-13) and claimed that their study was the first to find evidence in support for the possible benefits of explicit grammar teaching on writing skills (Jones et al. 2013). Several writing interventions have been based on SFL, and also reported gains in writing proficiency (Brisk & Zisselsberger 2011; Daniello 2012; Gebhardt et al. 2010; Horverak 2016; Humphrey & Macnaught 2016). Horverak (2016), for instance, found that explicit teaching of English grammar, inspired by SFL and text structure, led to significant improvements in the writing of Norwegian secondary school learners. Regrettably, there was no control group included in the study, diminishing the significance of the results. Horverak (2016) used a genre-pedagogy approach, meaning that literature was used as point of entry to teach context. The current study applied SFG and POS as point of entry for creating meaning in texts. The two studies thus differ in that the Norwegian learners examined existing text structure, while the current study's ESL learners had to create meaningful text based on SFG principles. Humphrey and Macnaught (2015) implemented a SFL-inspired intervention in the upper-secondary phase in an Australian school, which also resulted in significant gains in terms of writing skills. Finally, in a longitudinal study, Daniello (2012) investigated the effect of SFL instruction on writing skills over a period of 3 years in Grade 4 and Grade 5 learners. Again, there was no control group, but the learners did show a marked improvement in writing skills over time. Despite some weaknesses in design, all these studies found significant effects, lending some support for the idea that explicit grammar instruction based on a functional grammar approach can have a positive effect on writing.

Quality of writing remains a universal concern (Daniello 2012; Gilbert & Graham 2010; Salahu-Din, Persky & Miller 2008). In the Far-East, Malaysian schools and universities are particularly focused on the development of intelligible writing skills in ESL learners (Mekala, Ponmani & Shabita 2016; Singh, Sing, Razak & Ravinthar 2017). Grammar is viewed as an essential component in the production of intelligible sentences, and Malaysian ESL instructors believe that solid grammar skills underlie proper sentence production in the TL. Some scholars believe that grammar skills that are explicitly instructed is transferred to learners' writing (Mekala et al. 2016). Mekala et al. (2016) found that learners who previously experienced problems with POS, Concord and Tense in written compositions, successfully transferred knowledge of POS, singularity and plurality, punctuation, word order and conjunctions into writing activities after a grammar intervention programme. Singh, Singh, Razak and Ravinthar

(2017) identified nine types of grammatical errors in students' ESL writing, most of which involved errors in using POS. Singh et al. (2017) concluded that inadequate grammar knowledge was responsible for the identified errors. De Oliveira (2015) focused on the grammatical features of texts that caused students to either pass or fail a written assignment. It was found that students with higher grammar proficiency ultimately outperformed students with lower grammar proficiency. Similar to the researcher's own experience, De Oliviera's study supports the importance of ESL grammar proficiency for passing academic writing tasks. Students entering university with insufficient linguistic proficiency failed assessments. Similarly, in the present study, learners entering Grade 8 with insufficient ESL linguistic skills fail ESL tests.

Closer to home, poor writing in ESL has been a concern in African countries (including South Africa) for many years (D'Amant 1998; Mgqwashu 2007; Ramcharan 2009; Tsotsho, Cekiso & Mumbembe 2015). Mgqwashu (2007) found that traditional ESL grammar instruction did not enhance writing development in a study conducted among Grade 8 learners. The study was genre-based, and participants had to complete a Writing Proficiency Test and Reading Proficiency Test. The results indicated low ESL proficiency skills among all participants. Ramcharan (2009) and D'Amant (1998) both found that poor linguistic skills in ESL are associated with poor academic performance at secondary school level in South Africa. Only one writing intervention that used an SFL approach was identified in the South African context. Khanyile (2015) used a genre-based approach to investigate to what extent Grade 12 learners can use their L1 (Siswati) to write about their content subjects (e.g. history, geography and agricultural sciences) when their LOLT is English. The learners' ability to write an essay in Agricultural Sciences was analysed, following the SFL inspired intervention. Significant gains in writing were observed overall, but again, no control group was included. The findings of the current study support these previous studies, and reinforce previous findings that lack robustness due to weak research designs.

Although the current study applied (for the most part) decontextualised examples to explain grammatical aspects, it still had a positive effect on the writing skills of the experimental group. In the current study, the reason for this improvement may be linked to how the intervention programme approached and led the participants to a more functional consideration of a text, by highlighting the functions of the various participants and processes in the text. The participants were also encouraged to explore various choices on how to provide extra information about the participants and processes in the text. In other words, instead of just creating sentences for the sake of completing a task such as an essay, the participants were stimulated by the intervention programme to look at what extra information could be added about the processes and participants in sentences to create more complete and meaningful sentences. The subtle 'prompting' to implement meaningful and relevant choices to describe participants and processes (included in the third section of the intervention programme) may have become more concrete to the participants after they had worked through the grammar section of the intervention, which focused on the various functions of the POS in sentences as participants, processes and additional information about those participants and processes. The improvement in the writing skills of the participants in the experimental group in this study

could possibly be explained by a better understanding of the role that 'extra information' plays in sentences. It could further be speculated that an implicit understanding of grammatical aspects such as adverbs, adjectives, conjunctions and prepositions was supported by viewing all of these aspects under the umbrella of 'extra information' instead of focusing on traditional terms individually. It would seem then that a SFG approach positively affected writing skills in the experimental group.

The effect of the intervention on Reading Comprehension

In contrast to the positive effect on writing, the intervention programme tested in this study had no effect on comprehension. In fact, comprehension was the only language skill that showed no positive effect of the intervention programme. The two groups performed almost exactly similar across the three assessments in terms of comprehension, and the small advantage demonstrated by the experimental group in the final exam was not statistically significant. As can be seen in Figure 5.24, the developmental curve for comprehension was similar (and rather flat) in both groups. A reasonable explanation for this finding might be that knowledge of POS is not the only and certainly not most important factor in reading comprehension. Other cognitive-linguistic skills, including vocabulary knowledge, reading fluency, and critical thinking tend to be better predictors of reading comprehension than grammar proficiency (Adoniou 2013; Klingelhofer 2014; Teng & Reynolds 2019). The current researcher would also speculate that it is possible that the reading comprehension scores obtained by the control group were somewhat inflated, given the fact that comprehension tests are often scored sympathetically (personal experience). Although the curriculum suggests that true understanding of text content is the desired outcome, there exists a tendency (in the researcher's experience) to overlook grammar errors and to focus mostly on whether there is some indication of text comprehension. Copying (also called 'lifting') answers from textual content is a practice that is strictly discouraged by teachers, but in the researcher's experience, learners are still allocated marks for 'more-or-less correct' answers, which eventually reflect a false sense of comprehension competency in learner scores. Higher order questions in comprehension tests are especially scored sympathetically by teachers, who award marks for a vague meaning conveyed, or for demonstrating a basic understanding of the question. As such, even if the experimental group in this study provided better quality answers in terms of grammatical correctness, this will not automatically result in higher scores, since grammatically incorrect responses in the control group would have been rewarded, as long as the answer is 'more or less correct'. In other words, responses in the control group that were correct 'by chance' (where the learner copied text from the text that contained relevant information to the question) possibly falsely inflated comprehension scores in the control group. Note however that this explanation is speculative at this point in time, as it is based on anecdotal evidence. Further research might establish whether this is truly a factor in how reading comprehension is scored by ESL teachers.

It should be further noted that reading comprehension problems are not uncommon in L2 learning, and that scholars have mixed views about the importance of grammar competence in reading comprehension. In general, scholars agree though that poor reading comprehension

results in poor academic performance, and that creative and hands-on interventions are required to improve learners' comprehension skills (Adoniou 2013; Duke, Cartwright & Hilden 2013; Klingelhofer 2014; Ofudu & Adedipe 2011; Pretorius & Klapwijk 2016). Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016), for instance, stated that there is a misperception about the influence and effect of grammar proficiency on reading comprehension. They argue that grammar proficiency and reading comprehension are inextricably linked, but that grammar proficiency alone does not determine proper comprehension of textual content. This may explain why the intervention for this study did not have a strong effect on participants' comprehension skills in the experimental group. Further afield an Australian study indicated that ESL learners could not interpret complex sentences due to a lack of explicit knowledge of English, meaning they could not explain nor apply the grammar rules (Adoniou (2013). The researchers suggested intervention by secondary EFL teachers, policy makers and curriculum writers in order to find solutions. In many African countries (e.g. Kenya, Ethiopia, Ghana, Namibia and Tanzania), poor reading comprehension levels are a reality (Conn 2014; Dubeck et al. 2012; Wetterberg & Gove 2011; Thomas 2016) and typically linked to poor ESL scores and poor academic performance. South Africa is not excluded from low levels in reading comprehension and it is reported that according to the PIRLS 2011 report that 8 out of 10 grade 4 learners in South Africa reads below the required level (McBride 2018; Wittenburg 2018). Given this, it remains important to develop targeted interventions that specifically focus on improving reading comprehension – on the basis of the current findings it seems that focusing on improving grammar skills alone will not sufficient to improve problems with reading comprehension.

There is some evidence that SFL/SFG instruction supports meaning construction. For example, in a study with fourth graders, Symons (2015) reported that SFL/SFG supported meaning and grammar structure in clauses. Symons (2015) found that SFG analysis provided an emergent meta-language for the ESL teachers to utilise in discussions about meaning in various texts. The focus was on the stages of argument building in texts. Explicit attention to grammar was provided throughout the study, which had a positive effect on both writing and reading comprehension skills. However, this study is one of only a handful that reported enhanced reading comprehension as a result of SFL/SFG intervention.

Essentially then, scholars agree that the development of reading comprehension skills require a multifaceted approach, especially in the earlier years of schooling of learners (Duke, Cartwright & Hilden 2013; Klingelhofer 2014; Ofudu & Adedipe 2011; Teng & Reynolds 2019). Naturally, as mentioned already, sufficient vocabulary levels are crucially important for reading comprehension. However, L2 learners may still experience comprehension problems if they only focus on learning vocabulary in the TL for the sake of knowing words. It is generally expected to become familiar with the idiomatic features of a language to fully understand the meaning of cultural ideas interwoven in the language of a speech community (own experience as educator). Thus, mere knowledge of vocabulary will be insufficient to explore and understand social contexts in texts. Learners thus have to be taught that they cannot always rely on a literal interpretation of the text, and must learn to process figurative meaning in texts, especially when reading literature (Adeniou 2013). Leaners also have to develop metacognitive awareness during reading activities, as illustrated by Ofudu and Adedipe (2011)

in a study with secondary school learners. They found that metacognitive strategies played a role in comprehension and that secondary school learners often possess metacognitive skills but do not know how to apply them. Similarly, Teng and Reynolds (2019) also posit that meta-cognition effects comprehension and writing skills.

Various other factors influence reading comprehension, including socio-cultural context, language background and general levels of language proficiency (Adoniou 2013; Duke et al. 2013; Klingelhofer 2014). Duke et al. (2013) suggested that a meaning-based approach (Systemic Functional Analysis) to text interpretation might be helpful to improve reading comprehension skills, and called for more research to be done in this regard. This approach is closely related to SFL and although it was not the focus of the current study to pay attention to text analysis there was a focus on improving writing skills. This presents a future opportunity for research where the intervention may specifically focus on finding meaning in text opposed to creating meaning such as in the writing activities of the intervention.

The researcher's experience in ESL grammar assessment is that although examination questions are based on sentences that are taken from a genre-text (a few (4-5) sentences that are related) at the introduction of the grammar section, they are still presented to the learners as a decontextualised sentence with the instruction to rewrite the single sentence into a certain Tense or into its passive form. This sort of question does however not function as a genre-based approach to grammar teaching, since it removes the sentence from the text and presents it as a single sentence to the learner. In the researcher's opinion, this type of question defies the true 'meaning' of the sentence as proposed in SFL/SFG. The self-help intervention however had a significant effect on the understanding of how the rule works in terms of participants and processes since the participants in the experimental group were able to respond to the decontextualised questions in a successful manner. The effect was still measured for the delayed post-test where the learners were also tested on their normal annual (summative) examination which included similar type questions as described above. The same effect for the control group could not be reported.

6.2.2.2   The third sub-question

The third sub-question asked whether grammar skills such as POS, Tense and Active and Passive voice are interrelated, and whether these grammar skills are associated with comprehension and writing. To test for any relationships between the grammar variables (POS, tense, Active and Passive voice) before and after the intervention programme, Pearson correlations were performed.

In the pre-test, the correlational analysis was conducted for the entire sample (as there was no reason to believe that correlational patterns would be different across the groups before the intervention). The analysis provided evidence for strong and significant interrelationships between all the grammar variables. Scores on the POS component of the pre-test correlated strongly with Tense and with Active and Passive voice. With regards to related ESL skills such as comprehension and writing, the analysis showed a moderately strong correlation between POS and comprehension, and a moderate correlation between Active and Passive voice and

comprehension. All three grammar variables correlated only weakly with writing in the pre-test, and no significant correlation was seen between comprehension and writing.

The strong interrelationships between the grammar variables in this study are not surprising. Regarding the relationship between POS and Active and Passive voice, it has long been suggested that correct interpretation of passive voice relies on prior acquisition of the POS and their potential functions in sentences (Scholnick & Adams 1973). For instance, in the active sentence *Anne baked a cake*, the first noun *Anne* is both the semantic agent/actor and grammatical subject, while *cake* is both the semantic receiver and grammatical object. In the corresponding passive sentence, *A cake was baked by Anne*, the first noun becomes the receiver, while the second noun is the agent. Correct interpretation of the passive depends on a person's ability to transform the order of actor and recipient, which leaves the meaning of the text unchanged; this in turn relies on the language user's understanding of the fact that participants in a sentence can fulfil various semantic functions. In SFG, the interrelationship between POS and Active and Passive voice is explained as follows. If a Process has an Actor and a Goal, the representation of these participants in relation to the Process can be in one of two forms, either operative (active), or receptive (passive). The contrast between operative and receptive is possible because a contrast in voice is possible in transitive clauses. Thus, the clauses *Anne baked the cake* and *A cake was baked by Anne* are experientially the same (they both represent a configuration of Actor + Process + Goal), but what is different is how these functions are mapped onto interpersonal functions in the modal structure of the clause. In the 'operative' variant, the Actor is mapped onto the Subject, so it is given modal responsibility. In the 'unmarked' case (i.e. in a declarative sentence) the Actor is also the Theme, while the Goal is mapped on to the Complement, so in the declarative sentence the Goal falls within the Rheme. Contrastingly, in the 'receptive' variant, the Goal (*cake*) is mapped onto the Subject position, which means that it is assigned modal responsibility and becomes the Theme in the 'unmarked' case. The Actor (*Anne*) now has the status of an Adjunct within the Rheme of the clause and, as an Adjunct it may in fact be left out: *A was baked*. In other words, to understand how Active and Passive Voice works, language users need to understand how POS can potentially be mapped onto functions in a clause, depending on the Voice, and what that would entail for the configuration of the clause.

Passive constructions can normally be detected easily, by looking for the verb 'to be' (i.e. *is*, *are*, *am*, *was*, *were*, *has been*, *have been*, *had been*, *will be*, *will have been*, *being*) followed by the past participle of the verb (typically ending in *-ed*.). However, not every sentence containing a form of *have* or *be* is a passive construction. For example, in *John has to study all afternoon*, *has* is not part of a past-tense verbal construction. Rather, it acts as a modal verb, similarly to *must*, *can*, or *may*. Its function is to inform us about how necessary it is to do something. The verb *to be* is also not always passive, as it can describe a state of being, rather than an action, as in *John is a good student*. Thus, in order to correctly identify passive constructions, a learner cannot always rely on the rule – often it is necessary to interpret a sentence by using all the linguistic cues present, including those provided by Tense words. The importance of having access to Past Tense in the formation of Passive voice has been highlighted in clinical linguistics, for instance in a study by Faroqi-Shah and Thompson (2004).

These scholars compared the abilities of patients with Broca's and Wernicke's aphasia to produce passive constructions. Their results indicated that patients in both types of aphasia were impaired in passive sentence production, and that, interestingly, this impairment was not overcome when lexical cues (the relevant POS, including the nouns and the uninflected verb) were provided. However, whenever the patients were provided with cues such as the auxiliary, and past tense morphemes (along with the verb stem), the ability to produce passives improved dramatically in both groups. In line with the general argument, that knowledge of POS and Tense is important for successful passive voice construction, Elmadwi (2015) found that Libyan ESL students' errors in forming passive voice constructions can be linked to problems with using Tense (learners omit the –ed from of the past participle) and to problems with distinguishing the object/receiver from the other sections of the sentence.

The fact that the grammar variables only weakly correlated with writing could be explained by the fact that quality writing depends on more than accurate positioning of the various POS in sentences. The quality of writing first and foremost depends on whether the constructed text is coherent, which presuppose that writers understand how to create logical connections between the various clauses in a text, and how to choose participants, processes and other information in a way that ensure that the text as a whole is functional and meaningful. It would be entirely possible for a young writer to construct a text containing grammatical sentences only, but that has little meaning. The researcher hoped that a better understanding of the functions of POS in texts would improve writing. With regards to the weak correlation between Active and Passive voice and writing in the pre-test, it is worthwhile noting that Passive voice is more associated with the construction of academic texts, where it can serve several purposes. In academic texts, writers often prefer not to focus on who is doing an action, but on who or what is receiving or experiencing the action. The passive voice can be very useful in academic writing as it allows writers to highlight the most important participants or events within sentences by placing them at the beginning of the clause (e.g. the active *Scientists classify mercury as a liquid* is more likely to be presented as the passive construction, *Mercury is classified as a liquid*, in academic texts). Passive voice is sometimes also preferred in academic texts where it is irrelevant to know who the doer is, or where the context makes this obvious, or where a writer wants to be pragmatic by avoiding naming the 'doer', which in some cases could be seen as provocative. The learners in the present study were not yet producing academic texts, and were unlikely to demonstrate skilled use of the passive voice in their production of narratives and transactional texts. It should however be noted that ESL learners are required to use passive voice when performing writing tasks such as newspaper articles.

Following the intervention, the correlational analysis was repeated, based on the data obtained on the post-test and the delayed post-test. The data of the post-test and delayed post-test was analysed per participant group, in the hope that any changing relationships between the variables would be detected.

In the C-group, the data obtained on the post-test showed strong positive interrelationships between *Grammar overall*, *POS* and *Tense*, as well as moderately strong relationships between the grammar variables and *Comprehension*. The relationship observed

between *POS* and *comprehension* is interesting and suggest that learners' comprehension, to some extent at least, relies on an understanding of the function of each POS in a sentence (and this in turn, should assist in text comprehension which should lead to more accurate answers on a comprehension test). A noticeable pattern in the C- group in the post-test was that *Active and Passive voice* correlated only weakly with other grammar variables, possibly indicating that learners in the Control group were not developing these skills in tandem. Furthermore, none of the variables correlated significantly with writing, suggesting that if grammar skills improved in this group as a result of normal ESL instruction, writing skills did not improve similarly. On average, the significant correlations in the C-group were slightly weaker in comparison to the pre-test correlations.

In the E-group, the data obtained on the post-test once more indicated significant and positive interrelationships between the grammar variables, and moderate correlations between *POS* and *writing POS* and *comprehension*. This can be interpreted that if an ESL learner performed strongly in the POS component of the test, there is a strong chance that the learner also performed well in the tense component of the test, and a moderate chance that the learner performed well in the writing and comprehension components of the test. The E-group reflected a non-significant relationship between *POS* and *Active and Passive voice*. This same relationship was weak in the C-group, suggesting that improved skills in terms of POS didn't automatically mean that learners' ability to formulate active and passive sentences. In other words, it is possible that the learners in the E-group developed some skills (such as POS) more consistently than others (such as Active and Passive Voice). An interesting observation in the E-group was the moderate correlation between POS and writing (r =.500). This is interesting, when taking into consideration that writing showed no significant correlation with any of the components of grammar in the pre-test or in the C-group post-test. This seems to suggest that the enhanced skills in POS in the E-group correlated with enhanced writing skills. The intervention programme included a section on SFG-based writing skills, to which the C-group was not exposed and this may possibly explain the correlation for the E-group.

With regards to the data obtained in the Delayed Post-test, the correlations in the C-group were similar to what was seen in the post-test, although the correlations became even weaker. In the E-group, the correlations in the delayed post-test also changed quite drastically, with fewer significant correlations overall and where relationships were significant they were moderate at best. As was seen in the results of the second MANOVA, the intervention had a long-term positive effect on the learners' knowledge of POS. It is thus hard to interpret the correlational patterns observed in the delayed post-test of the E-group. It is possible that relationships between enhanced POS knowledge and other grammar variables were not clear-cut in the E-group at the end of the school year, or that other variables not measured contributed to the learners' overall performance.

6.2.2.3 The fourth sub-question

The fourth sub-question asked whether Dynamic Assessment could be incorporated successfully in a self-help intervention programme at Grade 8 level. Dynamic Assessment in

this study was conceptualised as the process of self-regulation and self-assessment. Scholars in the field of SLA agree that alternative approaches to L2 learning, which included processes such as Dynamic Assessment, need to be considered more often in L2 learning (Larsen-Freeman 2007; Murphy & Maree 2009; Nazari 2015; Rahbardor, Abbasi & Talaei 2014).

Current views across the world, including South Africa, seem to favour the inclusion and promotion of Dynamic Assessment in the ESL learning environment (Murphy & Maree 2009). Dynamic Assessment and in particular self-assessment are regarded valuable skills in ESL and other disciplines, since it supports formative assessment, which forms the basis of promotion in ESL curricula across the world (Dyer 2015; Nazari 2015; Singh 2017). Dynamic Assessment offers a more flexible approach towards monitoring learners' progress without interfering with the more static formative and summative assessment prescribed by ESL curricula. In general, researchers value learners' involvement in their own progress (Singh 2017). Self-regulation is seen as an essential learning tool for learners, as it enables them to recognise gaps in their own knowledge, and motivates them to seek alternatives in closing such gaps (Nazari 2015). Self-regulation does however not exclude the teacher from the learning process, meaning that Dynamic Assessment specifically focuses on learner weaknesses and intervention from the teacher's part to empower learners (Dyer 2015). Dynamic Assessment therefore offers and allows teachers to intervene in a less formal manner in order to accommodate the various gaps in learner knowledge.

In the present study, learners' weaknesses in ESL grammar were identified by the researcher in a baseline test. The researcher was thus fully aware of the problems each participant experienced, and was therefore able to design an intervention that focused on the collective problems of all the participants. The intervention required self-regulation and self-assessment throughout the duration of the programme, since each participant had to mark their own assessments before moving on with the programme. The intervention offered them the opportunity to revisit concepts they had not mastered, and equipped them to work through the various stages of the intervention at their own pace. At no stage was formative or summative assessment undermined, but rather complemented by the self-assessment. Although no systematic information was gathered from the learners regarding their perceptions of Dynamic Assessment, it can be inferred from the positive results of the study that the participants were able to self-regulate and self-assess their own progress throughout the duration of the study.

This conclusion is in line with results presented by scholars like Furey (2017) and Graham et al. (2015). Furey (2017) applied a blend of explicit teaching and Self-Regulating Strategy Development (SRSD) to remedy sentence construction in writing activities. The study indicated the more the learners became aware of regulating their own writing, the fewer errors appeared in the final writing assignment they presented for scoring. Graham et al. (2015) found that teaching learners how to regulate (edit) their own work improves meta-cognitive and content knowledge, which consequently tends to motivate learners to self-regulate and correct their own work. Graham et al. (2015) further stated that sentence construction has only recently been associated with SRSD. In light of the available research, and the positive effect of the current intervention programme, the inclusion of self-regulating activities in the self-

instructing intervention seemed to have been successful. Extended opportunities to practise the various grammar concepts and to self-assess progress may also have created more awareness of the editing process that is involved in writing, which in turn might have contributed to the improved writing skills of the learners in the experimental group. This speculative conclusion would be in line with Furey's (2017) results.

Although no systematic data were gathered with regards to learners' perceptions of Dynamic Assessment specifically, the researcher did consider the participants' ability to self-assess their own ESL proficiency before and after the intervention. In the questionnaire that participants completed prior to the pre-test, they were requested to rate their own proficiency as follows: 'low', 'intermediate', 'advanced' or 'near-native'. Most of the learners in this study rated their ESL proficiency as 'advanced' or 'near-native', although their scores on the pre-test indicated the opposite. Overestimation of own proficiency seems to be a common occurrence among ESL students (Carey, Mannell & Dunn 2011; Tubbs 2016; Yang & Yuen 2014). In general, ESL learners seem to overestimate their own proficiency because of the grammar-centred approach followed in many ESL learning contexts (Tubbs 2016). In other words, while students might be able to apply grammar rules successfully in decontextualised tasks, their actual proficiency is negatively affected by not being able to use the TL productively in a communicative context.

The participants in the current study were required to re-assess their proficiency after the intervention. The experimental group, in particular, demonstrated a shift in perception over time, as hardly any of the participants valued their competency as near-native (only 1 learner rated themselves as 'advanced' after the intervention, in comparison to 19 before the intervention). The learners' ability to self-assess their ESL competence clearly seemed to have improved as a result of having to self-regulate their progress throughout the intervention programme. Overall then, the answer to this sub-question is that Dynamic Assessment can be used with learners at Grade 8 level, and that it enhances learners' ability to accurately perceive own ability and progress. This study therefore contributes to current understanding on assessment and specifically Dynamic Assessment, since the self-help intervention provided ample opportunity for the participants to identify gaps in their ESL knowledge, and then closing those gaps in a self-regulatory manner. Furthermore, the study provides a rough framework for teacher involvement in self-regulation. In the present study, the researcher/teacher could potentially intervene with the self-instructing process in an unobtrusive manner, since formative and summative assessment still took place as per curricular prescription, and thus learners who were not benefiting from self-regulation could have been identified and provided with additional support. Also, the written components of the intervention programme were actively assessed by the researcher/teacher, which saved additional insight into individual learners' progress, and theoretically provided opportunities for the teacher to intervene.

6.2.2.4 The fifth sub-question

The fifth sub-question asked whether SES played a role in the ESL proficiency of the Grade 8 participants. The SES of participants in this study was not the main focus of this research but the researcher wished to explore whether SES factors would hamper the effectiveness of

implementing an intervention programme such as the present one. This is an important consideration, given the fact that learners come from various economic strata, and, especially in terms of parental support, tend to be a very heterogeneous group. The results for the current study indicated that the SES of the participants did not significantly affect the ESL proficiency of either the experimental group or the control group. The secondary school where the data were collected was surrounded by various informal settlements as well as more affluent areas. Many of the families earned an income from a mainly industrial trade sector surrounding the school. The data were collected through a questionnaire on which parents indicated their combined monthly incomes, level of education and marital status.

It is currently widely accepted that the inclusion of English in curricula across the globe encourages ESL learners to become competent users of English, enabling them to become active social and economic agents in modern society (Pinilla-Portino 2018). Such ESL students are also expected to contribute in the economic future of their respective countries. However, there is also an urgent appeal for more empirical research to be conducted from a socio-cultural perspective of ESL learning, specifically focusing on the SES of the ESL learners (Pinilla-Portino 2018). It seems as though the drive from previously colonised countries to restore local linguistic ecology post-colonially, have failed, and recent surveys and reviews have indicated that the international status of English as language of economic empowerment have settled strongly in such countries. A review of the local language reform in African countries (2013) indicated that English serves as prominent and functional device towards socio-economic growth, but local languages failed to be restored in countries such as Rwanda and South Africa. In other regions of the world (e.g. Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Latin-America and Vietnam) a similar trend is noted (Ponilla-Portino 2018).

The fact that governments consider English as a major player in the socio-economic advancement of their countries does not automatically lead to high levels of ESL proficiency in ESL learners (Hamid & Baldauf 2011). For this reason, it remains important to conduct more research into the effects of SES on ESL learning. Hamid and Baldauf (2011) implore scholars in the field to look into this matter, to improve our understanding of why ESL learners, despite the importance of English, are often demotivated to perform in ESL. This matter was also of concern to the researcher in this study, hence the exploration of the influence of SES on the ESL proficiency of the participants in this study. The results from the data for this study indicated no significant influence of the SES on ESL proficiency, even though participants from lower, medium, middle and upper classes were included. A possible reason could be that the sample was too small to realistically represent the population, in other words, a bigger sample would have included more realistic data of all the economic classes, resulting in a clearer representation of the impact.

Other recent studies on this topic yielded mixed results. A recent study in Chile indicated that the SES of the school had a medium-sized impact on ESL learning performance (Pinilla-Portino 2018). There was a significant difference between the upper-middle and high-social class in particular towards self-regulation in ESL, in comparison to students from the low to lower-middle class schools. Another study of 284 Iranian male students indicated no

significant or meaningful relationship between students' SES and their respective ESL learning styles and learning outcomes (Hamid & Baldauf 2011). Related studies in South Africa seem to focus on rural areas where the focus is more on late school entrance ages and extreme poverty, compared to this study where schooling is urbanised. This study has, as an aside, attempted to contribute to the current need for research in this field, but the results were not particularly informative. It would be premature to conclude, based on the limited amount of information available in this study, that SES does not have an effect on learners' ESL learning. It could just be that, in this particular sample, it was not a factor – this could be related to several other factors, such as parent involvement, motivation, and quality of instruction.

6.2.2.5 *The sixth sub-question*

The final sub-question asked whether alternative approaches to SLA, such as Complexity Theory, provide a useful framework for the design of ESL grammar interventions. CT accounts for non-linear language development, incompleteness in language knowledge and non-fixity (Atkinson et al. 2018; Baird, Baker & Kitazawa 2014; Barlow & Kemmer 2014; Dornyei 2005; Holland 2013; Langacker 2015; Larsen-Freeman 2014; Merleau-Ponty 2016; Nelson 2017). With regards to the acquisition of the grammar of a new language, CT suggests that grammar should not be seen as the fixed base of the language, but as an evolving system that changes based on the linguistic choices that are available.

Traditionally, the SLA field was dominated by cognitive theories (Gonsior et al. 2014). Approaches to SLA, including cognitivism, were discussed fully in chapter 2. Cognitivism figuratively refers to a process similar to feeding data into a computer, meaning that the L2 learner will replicate the language that he has been taught. Newer conceptualisations of SLA have recently been proposed. Larsen-Freeman (2007; 2014) proposes CT (as discussed in chapter 2) as a more useful framework to understand and analyse SLA. This study relied on SFL and in particular, SFG for the main theoretical framework, while CT was explored in an attempt to understand why it is necessary to investigate and implement alternative approaches to ESL grammar instruction. The self-help intervention programme used in this study was based on the principals of SFL/SFG, but was infused with the basic idea of CT that language is a complex but adaptive system, which changes constantly to suit new circumstances. CT supports the idea that language is dynamic and offers new ways of analysing L2 learning. CT also motivates SLA scholars to find and assess new approaches to L2 learning (Gonsoir et al. 2014). A shared idea in CT and SFL is that that language evolves and adapts with the changes in its environment. Halliday (2010) feels that a functional approach to language (as described in SFL) accommodates the fact that language changes continually (because the world changes continually) and that natural languages (human language) are not designed but evolved systems. Halliday (1985) thus views text as 'language that is functional'.

In the case of this study the researcher focused on Halliday's SFL/SFG as a dynamic approach to ESL learning and teaching. Meaning is the focus of all communication and meaning is dynamic depending on the context. The problem identified by the researcher was that ESL learners were unable to express meaning clearly (in oral and written tasks), which resulted in poor scores on assessments. The SFG-based self-help intervention programme

therefore included instruction on how to construct meaningful text without ignoring traditional English grammar.

Larsen-Freeman (2014) is also concerned about the fact that language learners are often assessed on what they *do not know* about language, rather than on what *they know*. This type of assessment is problematic in a CT approach, as it does not accommodate deviation in individual learner development. Larsen-Freeman (2014) suggests self-regulated assessment as an alternative way of assessment, which creates awareness of self-progression and correction in learners. ESL classrooms should be treated as dynamic structures and not as static rooms associated with rule-governed instruction and assessment. CT motivated researchers to explore more innovative ways of ESL learning and instruction as part of an ever-adaptive system (Cooper 2104; Gonsior et al. 2014; Larsen-Freeman 2014). Despite the idea that language systems are adaptive, it is not the case that CT refutes the importance of grammar learning. When considering language as an adaptive complex system (CAS), several researchers have found that grammar learning takes place in a fractural manner, meaning that a certain concept of grammar is mastered before a learner moves on to the next concept. The more concepts the learner has mastered, the more variety is to be found in oral and written productions (Baird et al. 2014; Finch 2010; Van Koert 2010; 2015). In other words, high levels of grammar proficiency are beneficial to all other aspects of language use, and can therefore not be ignored. Neither CT nor SFG rejects explicit grammar teaching, but rather support it as one component of a complex system.

For the reasons mentioned above, the researcher can conclude that CT does provide a useful theoretical framework to inform the development of an alternative L2 self-regulated grammar intervention programme. Several ideas from this framework, including that language is adaptive and that the linguistic system changes as a result of the context, that teachers should incorporate alternative ways to assess learner's progress (such as self-correction and self-regulation) and that learning progresses in a fractural manner where the acquisition of one skill supports the acquisition of the next skill were incorporated in the present intervention programme. In sum, the researcher agrees with Larsen-Freeman's view that language teachers must adopt a dynamic perspective to language teaching and learning. Ideally, this should guide teachers to develop activities and assessments that do not assume that learners will develop in static and discrete stages and that will accommodate individual variation in language development, which is the reality in ESL classrooms.

6.3   *Pedagogical implications of the current study*

In terms of grammar pedagogy, a clear distinction is normally made between 'grammatical knowledge' and 'grammatical ability'. Grammatical knowledge refers to the application of the rules of the grammar to produce correct language. The focus is on sentences as units and drilling and practicing are the main approaches towards achieving grammatical correctness (Cullen 2012). On the other hand, grammatical ability refers to the ability to use grammar as communicative resource for spoken and written texts. Grammatical knowledge and grammatical ability correspond closely with the two basic perspectives on grammar teaching,

namely an explicit focus on forms in the classroom versus no overt grammar instruction (meaning that learners acquire grammar implicitly). These perspectives were discussed in some detail in Chapter 2.

According to Richards and Reppen (2014), grammatical ability requires a different pedagogical approach since its focus is not only the sentence, but text. In light of Richards and Reppen's view, grammatical ability includes contextual factors. This echoes Halliday's SFL/SFG approach, where the emphasis is on creating meaningful text, although correctness is not disregarded. There are various manners in which students can be introduced to the concept of 'text', how text works to create meaning and how text reflects grammatical choices (Cullen 2012; Hewings & Hewings 2005; Richards & Reppen 2014). Importantly, learning the grammar of a L2 is a complex process, and it is probably the case that that no single approach to grammar instruction can claim superiority (Ellis 2006). Furthermore, all approaches must consider various learner styles and preferences. Teachers should also keep in mind that not every approach or intervention works for all students, and teachers have to develop the ability to adapt strategies constantly (Schotte 2019).

The pedagogical approach in the current study was based on the researcher's desire to incorporate as many aspects of an 'ultimate pedagogy for teaching grammar' in the intervention programme. The self-instruct lessons aimed to sensitise learners to the idea that the grammatical components of English have a specific function within texts. Although SFG was used to explain traditional grammar concepts, the pedagogical approach used was essentially explicit grammar instruction. Learners in the intervention group were provided with lots of opportunities to practise and refine their grammar skills. In addition, self-regulation formed an important component of the pedagogical approach. As suggested by Panadero, Alonso and Tapia (2014), learners were supported to learn via self-assessment, i.e. they were supported to enhance proficiency through self-editing and correcting tasks in the process of self-regulation. Based on the positive outcome of the current study, the instructional approach used in this intervention has various pedagogical implications for the field of ESL grammar pedagogy. These implications are discussed in the points following below:

i) Curriculum development must consider both explicit focus-on-form and alternative approaches to teaching grammar in classrooms. This suggestion is in line with Uysal and Bardakci (2014), who state that it is the responsibility of policy makers to constantly investigate alternative approaches to teach ESL, or ways to blend existing approaches with alternative approaches. Many types of intervention are available for ESL instruction, but it is advisable to test various options and to even blend approaches, as was the case in the current study. It must however be kept in mind that the same intervention might not always work with in different contexts, and it will require some effort from the teachers to adapt constantly.

ii) SFG-based explicit grammar teaching should be investigated in South African schools as a possible way of improving learners' poor ESL grammar proficiency. SFG-based interventions may be greatly beneficial as alternative or complementary teaching approach. The strong focus on context in SFL and SFG would complement the communicative aspect of language teaching.

iii) Challenges of overcrowded classrooms and limited teaching time could be overcome through implementing self-instruction programmes such as the intervention programme for this study. Even younger secondary school learners are perfectly able to self-regulate their ESL learning. Self-regulation will relieve the load of teacher intervention in class (Khatib & Nikouee 2012; Nassaji 2010).

iv) Learners should be motivated to do more self-editing to enhance their metacognitive interaction with texts. This suggestion is in line with scholars such as Harris and Graham (1999) and Graham et al. (2015), who suggest that teachers should implement self-regulated editing of assignments, in order to promote cognizance of errors. For example, teachers should focus on providing learners with a toolkit (e.g. checklist) to check for common errors, such as the incorrect use of pronouns or an overuse of 'and' as conjunction (own experience). Self-correction of typical errors will immediately lead to better marks, which will motivate the learner to continue with self-regulated editing.

v) As discussed under Dynamic Assessment, the value of on-going assessment cannot be underestimated, since it serves the purpose of measuring progress.

vi) Self-regulation of grammar learning should become a focus in ESL classrooms, since it provides learners with more opportunities to practise grammar concepts in-depth. For example, in a self-intervention programme based on SFG, self-regulation can create opportunities for learners to discover by themselves how meaning is constructed in texts, using participants and processes.

vii) The findings of the current study suggest that a communicative language teaching approach (without explicit focus on ESL grammar instruction) will not enhance learners' ESL grammar proficiency sufficiently and that some explicit grammar teaching might be necessary in most ESL contexts to ensure mastery of grammar rules. This suggestion is in line with scholars like Ayliff (2010; 2012), Batstone and Ellis (2009) and Nassaji and Fotos (2011) who all believe that although communicative language teaching is helpful for enhancing BICS, it does, in practice, not always develop knowledge of grammatical forms, which is also necessary for linguistic proficiency and for the development of CALP.

viii) Teacher training and knowledge cannot be ignored in ESL teaching. If teachers are to successfully design and implement alternative intervention programmes such as the current one, continuous teacher development is crucial. This suggestion is in line with Iipinge (2018) and Atkinson et al. (2018), who also emphasised the role of teacher knowledge in policy making and execution. In the researcher's experience it is the case that ESL teachers often did not study English at tertiary level, and as such teachers struggle to grasp the various theories involved in SLA and ESL.

The listed pedagogical implications should not be underestimated, and should ideally be considered when changes to the ESL curriculum or overarching pedagogical approach is considered by educational authorities.

6.4   Strengths and significance of this study

This study's main strengths lie in i) the uniqueness of the grammar intervention programme that was tested, and ii) in the study's longitudinal quasi-experimental design, which allowed the researcher to control for the effect of normal development and meant that any gains in ESL proficiency in the experimental group could be ascribed to a robust intervention effect. The result of the study, which confirms that self-instruction could be used successfully to close knowledge gaps in ESL grammar is particularly significant in the current ESL teaching context in South African schools, where ESL teachers of secondary school learners face huge challenges in trying to re-teach grammar concepts that learners should have acquired in primary school.

As far as the researcher is aware, no similar study has been conducted in the South African context, or elsewhere in the world. The uniqueness of the study lies in that it not only implemented a grammar intervention programme based on the principles of SFG, but also required that learners complete the intervention via self-instruction and Dynamic Assessment. Furthermore, the study was designed using a quasi-experimental design and the effect of the intervention was assessed with both a post-test and a delayed post-test, which gives extra credibility to the findings. The lasting effect of the tested intervention is a notable strength, since most studies in the field report only a post-test, and fails to assess the longevity of an intervention effect. While the researcher cannot claim that this study provides definite evidence for the effectiveness of a SFG self-intervention in the larger population, the robust results suggest that alternative approaches to ESL intervention should be considered by the Department of Basic Education. This might entail also considering the inclusion of alternative approaches to ESL instruction, such as in SFG.

A further strength of the study is that that the researcher made every effort to blend SFG with traditional ESL teaching approaches in the intervention programme, in order to accommodate the current syllabus. In other words, the complex nature of SFG as a theoretical framework for grammar instruction was considered very carefully, knowing that ESL learners and teachers are unlikely to be accepting of an approach that is too complex to understand. Language teachers often feel that they should be left to do ESL teaching as they best know it, and are often sceptical of trying a new approach. For this reason, the programme was designed to include only the very basic principles of SFG to simplify and clarify the concepts of POS, Tense and Active and Passive voice. The underlying idea was that the programme should be simple enough for both learners and ESL teachers to follow. An added advantage of a self-intervention programme is that it will reduce the time that teachers spend revising grammar concepts in class, and will allow teachers to focus on the syllabus instead of trying to close gaps in ESL proficiency. A somewhat unexpected strength of the intervention programme was that it also improved the participants' writing skills. In the researcher' own experience, the most daunting task in ESL development is to enhance writing proficiency. Learners lack motivation to write purposefully and although writing tasks carry the largest weight in the syllabus (in formal assessments), learners struggle to produce good quality writing. The

evidence that writing skills may improve as a result of a SFG-based intervention cannot and should not be ignored.

A final strength of the current study is that the data was gathered in a real-world setting. As such, the data is representative of what learners in a multilingual ESL class in a South African urban context can achieve. The study included several ethnic groups represented the multilingual composition of South African classes reasonably well. Although the LOLT of all the participants was Afrikaans, they did not necessarily use Afrikaans as L1, which gave a fair and realistic picture of what ESL classes look like in South Africa.

To summarise, the novel contribution of this study lies on the level of methodology. The study generated a unique set of pedagogical implications for ESL teaching and learning in the South African context, as discussed in the section 6.3 above. These pedagogical implications might very well be applicable in the rest of Africa, and in other regions of the world. On a theoretical level, it is worth noting that the study represented a novel attempt to blend SFG with the traditional teaching approach prescribed in the ESL curriculum in South Africa, and that the controlled nature in which this theory was implemented also seemed rather unique. As such, this study provided supporting evidence for previous studies that integrated SFL/SFG in grammar intervention and found positive effects, but that did so in a less rigorous research design.

6.5   Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research

This study has several limitations. First and foremost, the data was collected from Grade 8 learners in one secondary school only, which means that the results cannot be generalised to the larger population. As is often the case in Applied Linguistics research, the researcher's goal was to address a problem which had been identified in the school where she taught. As such, the sample is not representative of the entire ESL learner population. The researcher focused on Grade 8 learners in particular, as learners at this Grade level usually perform poorly in ESL tests upon entering secondary school, and have large gaps in their knowledge of English grammar. ESL teachers in neighbouring schools experience similar problems to those addressed in this study (own experience), which suggests that the present study should ideally be conducted at scale to determine the suitability of the designed intervention programme in the rest of South African Grade 8 ESL learner population. Since the study was conducted in one school only, a related limitation is that the programme was not introduced to other ESL teachers, and thus further research is needed to gauge teacher's willingness to implement an alternative intervention method such as the present programme as part of their regular ESL teaching. More research would also be needed on how to train teachers before implementing a SFG-based intervention programme. It might take a rather focused effort to train teachers in the finer details of SFG, and a lack of trainers with SFG knowledge and expertise could mean that there is no real chance of an SFG-based programme ever reaching ESL classrooms in the South African context.

A further limitation of the current study is that it was not possible to control for all the possible variables that could have affected the outcome of study. Although the effect of the

learners L1 proficiency and SES were considered, the researcher did not attempt to measure affective factors in learners (such as motivation, autonomy or self-efficacy). It could be interesting to investigate whether a self-intervention programme of this nature will lead to higher achievement levels in individuals who are autonomous and who display high levels of motivation, compared to learners who are not motivated to learn English. Another factor that could have affected the intervention, that was not closely monitored, is parental involvement. The researcher asked parents of participants in the experimental group to encourage their children to complete the programme, and parents were invited to also sign off on completed sections of the intervention before turning it in to the teacher for monitoring. The researcher did not attempt to measure to which extent the parents in the experimental group assisted their children in the actual completion of the various sections, and in fact had no option but to trust that the learners were doing the lessons by themselves. Given the positive effect of the intervention, this might actually not be a real concern, as learners naturally had to write the post-test and delayed post-test by themselves.

A third limitation of this study is that the intervention programme focused only on the basic principles of SFG. Ironically, this feature of the programme was also mentioned as strength – however it could be seen as a limitation in the sense that it does not leave much scope for making a theoretical contribution to the field of SFG. The aim of this study was however not to contribute to theory building, but to find pedagogical solutions to real-world problems in the South African education system.

6.6   Conclusion

The present study was born out of the researcher's concern for South African ESL learners who struggle to master traditional POS as the building blocks of English texts at secondary school level. This inspired an exploration into alternative solutions to the problems that language teachers in South Africa face when attempting to teach ESL learners that have not developed grade-appropriate skills. The researcher realised that an alternative manner of teaching traditional POS might be necessary, and after extensive reading decided to teach POS as chunks of meaning in various contexts, rather than as isolated POS of English sentences. Halliday's SFL provided a useful framework to convey the idea of constructing meaning from the whole text to the individual POS (i.e. from the top down), which contrasts with the traditional manner of teaching POS from the bottom up (i.e. from isolated POS to sentences).

The main focus of the study was the design and implementation of a self-help grammar intervention programme, which was based on the principles of SFG, and, inspired by the tenets of CT, included aspects of Dynamic Assessment. The intervention programme provided explicit grammar instruction to learners, but simultaneously focused on learners' ability to self-instruct grammar concepts such as POS, Tense and Active and Passive Voice, and on the importance of developing learners' self-regulation skills. As was demonstrated in this discussion, no other empirical studies were identified that implemented a similar self-intervention programme in the South African context. Further afield, international studies that reported on SFL/SFG interventions are typically not self-regulated interventions. As such, the

current study is unique within the domain of ESL intervention, and represents a unique contribution to current understanding of how SFG-based self-intervention programmes may benefit underperforming in ESL learners.

The current study had the additional goal of not interfering with the prescribed ESL syllabus. Instead, the goal was to complement traditional teaching through the SFG self-instruct programme. The intervention programme did not discard traditional ESL grammar concepts but linked them to SFG strategically, meaning that the very broad and complex SFG theory was implemented to assist participants to view grammar differently. Larsen-Freeman's CT inspired the alternative self-help intervention in the sense that CT looks at language as a complex system that is ever-adaptive. It was the view of the researcher that ESL is ever-adaptive in the sense that teachers have to adapt teaching approaches to suit the ever-changing multilingual ESL class of the 21st century.

The study utilised a quasi-experimental design to assess the effectiveness of the intervention. The results suggest that the intervention programme had a positive effect on ESL grammar proficiency, as the experimental group outperformed the control group in all of the grammar variables tested (POS, Tense and Active and Passive voice), as well as in writing. Considering that the improvement of writing skills was not a primary focus of this study, the positive effect on writing was rewarding, especially since accurate writing is essential in the majority of ESL assessments that learners have to complete. The effect of the SFG-based self-intervention was lasting, as the experimental group continued to improve ESL skills four months after the completion of the programme. The control group in this study also showed some improvement from the baseline assessment to the mid-year examination. However, their gains were much less pronounced, and their development plateaued between the middle and the end of the year. The only tested skill that was not positively affected by the intervention was reading comprehension. As discussed in this chapter, this was probably due to the fact that comprehension is a multifaceted skill, which relies on much more than grammar proficiency.

In light of the positive outcomes and results of this study there are ample directions for further research. This study contributed to the unique ESL classroom dynamic in South Africa by indicating that the need for alternative ESL teaching approaches and the recommendation that follows is that research with bigger samples is necessary. This study further provides solid arguments for why learners should become more involved in their own learning process and progress and therefore also suggest that further research should be conducted in the field of alternative assessment and self-regulated learning, such as Dynamic Assessment. The scope of this study did not allow for an exploration of all the aspects that are potentially collaborating in self-regulated grammar learning, but it paved the way for further research. It is suggested that further research explore alternative assessment, alternative intervention and alternative approaches to ESL learning and teaching for South African schools.

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APPENDICES

Pilot Study Pre-test /Adverbs
6 June 2014

Name……………………………… Grade 8A

Please answer all the questions below on the space provided. This activity will only test your existing knowledge of Adverbs.

a) Identify and underline the adverbs in the following sentences.

1. I eat my hamburger hungrily. [1]

2. My mother, desperately, tried to maintain the peace. [1]

3. Unfortunately, the soccer coach did not show up. [1]

4. We moved without any effort. [1]

5. When Dereck denied the allegation against him immediately, we all indicated without hesitation that he was guilty. [2]

b) Write down the THREE types of Adverbs we commonly deal with.

   1.   ……………………………………………………………….. [1]

   2.   ……………………………………………………………….. [1]

   3.   ……………………………………………………………… [1]

c) Indicate whether the following statements are true or false. Cross out the correct choice.

1. Adverbs qualify Nouns.   TRUE / FALSE   [½]

2. Adverbs qualify Verbs.   TRUE / FALSE   [½]

                                          [10]

This test does not count towards formal assessment and only serves the purpose to test your current knowledge on Adverbs.

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PILOT STUDY INTERVENTION

ENGLISH (ESL)/First Additional Language

ADVERBS

1. Adverbs belong to Parts of Speech and play a very important role in English.
2. Adverbs do exactly what they say; "ad(d) + verb (they add more information to the verb). That means that adverbs give me more information on how, where and when actions take place, for example;
   - ✓ I <u>eat</u> an apple. **Eat** is the action that takes place, but If I want to tell someone **how** I am eating I can say;
     I <u>quickly eat</u> an apple. (This is an adverb of **MANNER**)
   - ✓ I can tell you when I eat an apple;
     I <u>eat</u> an apple <u>in the morning</u>. (This is an adverb of **TIME**)
   - ✓ I can also tell you where I eat an apple;
     I <u>eat</u> an apple <u>in the kitchen</u>. (This is an adverb of **PLACE**)

Now, write down the three types of adverbs you get on the lines below. Check and mark your answers by referring back to the explanations above.
   1. …………………………………………..
   2. …………………………………………
   3. …………………………………………

You have to know that there are THREE different types of adverbs; TIME, PLACE and MANNER, before you move on. ☺

Next! Please write down your own example of an adverb of TIME. (make a sentence)
1……………………………………………………………………………………………..
Write down an example of an adverb of PLACE. (make a sentence)
2……………………………………………………………………………………………
Write down an example of an adverb of MANNER. (make a sentence)
3……………………………………………………………………………………………

Well done! Now check your answers. Use your own examples and answer the following questions.
For sentence number 1: When did the action take place?
1…………………………………………………………………………
For sentence number 2: Where did the action take place?
2…………………………………………………………………………
For sentence number 3; How did the action take place?
3…………………………………………………………………………

Could you answer all the questions from your own examples? There you go…. You have just mastered adverbs!

Now test your knowledge and complete the activity underneath. Identify the adverbs of TIME, PLACE and MANNER by asking WHEN, WHERE and HOW. Write down your answer next to the sentence.

    1. I nervously took the money. …………………………………………..
    2. Mom called me during break. ………………………………………..
    3. Sally ran to school hurriedly. ………………………………………..
    4. In the morning it rained. ……………………………………………..
    5. In the office we saw a bear. ………………………………………

YOU ARE A ☆
RECAP
    ✓ Find the verb in the sentence (the action word)
    ✓ Ask WHEN, WHERE or HOW the action takes place
    ✓ If you can answer any of those three questions from the sentence in front of you, you have your answer!
    ✓ When? = time
    ✓ Where? = place
    ✓ How?   = manner
    ✓ Without adverbs we will never be able to tell people how, where or when we do things.
    ✓ We cannot communicate successfully without ADVERBS.

THE END

°K. Nell 2014

Pilot Study Post-Test /Adverbs
10 June 2014

Name……………………………… Grade 8A

Please answer all the questions below on the space provided. This activity will only test your existing knowledge of Adverbs after completing the Intervention.

a) Write down the THREE types of Adverbs we commonly deal with.
    1.   ……………………………………………………………..   [1]
    2.   ……………………………………………………………..   [1]
    3.   ………………………………………………………………   [1]

b) Identify and underline the adverbs in the following sentences.
1. I eat my monstrous hamburger hungrily. [1]

2. My desperate mother tried to maintain the peace on Sunday. [1]

3. Unfortunately, the famous soccer coach did not show up. [1]

4. We moved the heavy furniture without any effort. [1]

5. Rick left his punctured ball on the soccer field. [1]

c) Indicate whether the following statements are true or false. Cross out the correct choice.

1. Adverbs describe Verbs.   TRUE/ FALSE   [1]

2. Adverbs describe Nouns.   TRUE / FALSE   [1]

                                                 [10]

This test does not count towards formal assessment and only serves the purpose to test your current knowledge on Adverbs.

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Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages
17 April 2014

Ref: AL_KN11_2014

Mrs K Nell
41 Frank Street
Lambton
Germiston
1401

Dear Mrs Nell

Registered D Litt et Phil student: Mrs K Nell (363 92855)

Proposed title:
The effect of a self-instructing grammar programme on English as Second Language in Grade 8

The Ethics subcommittee of the Department of Linguistics hereby approves your proposed research study and your abidance with ethical principles and procedures, as set out in the **Research Proposal Ethical Clearance Form** in Appendix 6 of MLINALL Tutorial Letter 2013, submitted to the subcommittee on 18 February 2014.

- The approval applies strictly to the protocols as stipulated in your application form.
- Should any changes in the protocol be deemed necessary during the proposed study, then you must apply for approval of these changes to the Linguistics Ethics subcommittee.

The date of the approval letter indicates the first date that the project may officially be started.

The Linguistics Ethics subcommittee wishes you everything of the best with your research study. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely

Prof EJ Pretorius
Chair: Higher Degrees Committee and Ethics subcommittee
Department of Linguistics

Open Rubric

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GAUTENG PROVINCE

Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

GDE AMENDED RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	16 January 2015
Validity of Research Approval:	9 February 2015 to 2 October 2015
Previous GDE Research Approval letter reference number	D2015/011 dated 9 April 2014
Name of Researcher:	Nell K.
Address of Researcher:	Postnet Suite 015; Private Bag X1037; Germiston; 1400
Telephone / Fax Number/s:	011 827 2525; 082 732 1477
Email address:	nellmartin200@gmail.com
Research Topic:	The effect of simplified self-instruct grammar programmes on ESL proficiency
Number and type of schools:	ONE Secondary School
District/s/HO	Ekurhuleni South

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to the Principal, SGB and the relevant District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted. However participation is VOLUNTARY.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher has agreed to and may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

2015/01/20

1

Making education a societal priority

Letter of Consent

Dear parent(s)/ guardian

My name is Karin Nell and I am registered for my doctorate degree at the University of South Africa. The school which your child attends and the Department of Education have permitted research to be done with regards to grade 8 learners' performance in English. The aim of my research study is to find ways in which children can be assisted to improve their performance in English. I am supervised by Dr Carien Wilsenach (wilseac@unisa.ac.za; 012 - 4296045). This consent letter is to inform you about the study and to kindly ask your permission to allow your child to participate if he/she is identified as a possible candidate.

We want to assure you that the study will not harm or interfere with the normal teaching programme for English as First Additional Language. In fact, the study aims to support and enhance your child's English proficiency.

Please sign and return this letter as proof of your agreement to the involvement of your child in the study.

I agree that my child..
can participate in the above mentioned study.

☐ (Please tick this box if you agree)

.... (Name of parent) ....(Date)

Thank you for taking an interest in your child's academic development.
Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you require more information.

Yours Faithfully

....
K. Nell
M.A. (Applied Linguistics) UNISA
Tel: (011) 827 2525

....
Date

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND ASSENT FORM

Dear Grade 8 learner

You are now part of a bigger system called 'High School' and you may at times feel a bit lost. As your English teacher, I wish to get to know you and most importantly, I wish to help you with any problems in English. To do this, I need to look at what you already know about English and how you apply what you know about this subject. I want to try and find ways to help making the learning process easier. This is called 'RESEARCH'. I am currently doing research for my doctorate at the University of South Africa.

To be able to do research, I need your help. Let me explain:

√ The research project is all about finding solutions to learning and knowing grammar better.

√ I am a teacher (Mrs K. Nell) but also a student who loves helping learners achieve better English marks.

√ You are invited to take part in this research study because without you it is not possible for me to test new ways for learning English.

√ You will be writing two tests (but you do NOT have to study for them). The first test will help me to see what you know/do not know about English grammar and the second test will be to see if a self-study programme helps learners in any way.

√ You do not have to participate in the study if you do not want to, even though your parents have agreed to your participation.

√ Only the researcher will know your results in the tests. Your name will never be mentioned, but the results will be used in the publication of the study.

√ You will not receive compensation for participation – you will only be rewarded by achieving better marks!

Please tick one of the following boxes:

I understand what this research project is about and I wish to participate in the study.

YES	NO

- You may STOP participating in the study at any time.

....
Signature of Child   Date

Language Background Questionnaire
Participant number……….. Grade 8 ESL

➢ Please answer all the questions below. Note that your response will be handled with confidentiality and that you will remain anonymous in all documents that make reference to the information you have supplied.
➢ Some questions have to be completed by the participant and others by the parent/guardian.

A. Personal information

Year of birth …………………….**(participant)**
Current age in years……………. **(participant)**

1. Please state your average, monthly household income (before deductions). **(parent/guardian)**

R……………………..

2. Please mark **(X)** the highest academic qualification in the household. **(parent/guardian)**

DEGREE ……   GRADE 12 …….   Did not complete Gr 12 ……..

B. Linguistic information (participant)

3. Please rate your linguistic ability of English. Use the following abbreviations as   guidance. Cross out the applicable answer using **X** (**participant**)

☐   L   = low (not good)
☐   I   = intermediate (fairly good)
☐   A   = advanced (very good)
☐   NN   = near-native (you are easily mistaken for a first language speaker of English)

4. Circle your average mark for English (First Additional Language) currently. **(participant)**

20%   30%   40%   50%   60%   70%   80%+

5. Circle your average mark for Afrikaans (home language) currently (**participant**)

20%   30%   40%   50%   60%   70%   80%+

6. Do you think it is important for you to do well in English? (**participant**) Just write down **YES or NO.**

…………..

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

PRE-TEST: 18 January 2015
Grade 8
First Additional Language
Name·· Age ·········

SCORES:
- COMPREHENSION ······/10
- PARTS OF SPEECH ······/22
- TENSE ······/15
- ACTIVE/PASSIVE ······/5
- WRITING ······/10
- SPELLING ······/8
- VISUAL LITERACY ······/10

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QUESTION 1:   COMPREHENSION   [10]
Please read the following text carefully and answer all the set questions.

The Three Billy Goats Gruff
Once there were three billy goats called Gruff. They lived in the mountains, searching for fresh, green grass they loved to eat. On the other side of a river was the freshest, greenest grass they had ever seen. The goats trotted towards the river until they came to a bridge.

"The bridge may not be very strong" said the smallest goat. "I will go first to make sure it is safe." Under the bridge there lived a wicked old troll. When the smallest goat's hooves went trip, trap on the wooden planks, the troll peeped over the edge of the bridge.

"Who's that tip-trapping across my bridge? I am a troll and I'm going to eat you for dinner!" he roared. But the goat replied, "I'm the smallest billy goat Gruff. My brother will be tastier than me." So the

troll let the smallest goat go free. Next the middle-sized goat began to cross the bridge. When he was in the middle, the wicked old troll popped up again.

"Who is that trip-trapping across my bridge?" he roared. "I will eat you up!" But the middle-sized goat replied, "Wait for my brother. He is much bigger!" So the greedy troll let the middle-sized goat go free.

The biggest goat had seen everything that had happened and smiled to himself. His big hooves went trip, trap on the wooden planks. This time the troll jumped out and stood on the bridge.

"Who is that trap-tripping on my bridge?" he shouted. "Dinner at last!"

"I am the biggest billy goat Gruff," came the reply. He lowered his horns and CHARGED! With a great roar, the troll flew into the air and into the river below. The water carried him away, never to be seen again, and the billy goats Gruff, lived happily ever after.

QUESTIONS:
1.   How many goats are in the story?   [1]
....
2.   Describe the place where the goats live.   [2]
....
3.   Why did the goats want to cross the river?   [1]
....
4.   Mention one problem with the bridge.   [1]
....
....
5.   What does the troll threaten to do to the goats   [1]
....
6.   Do you think the goats came up with a clever plan?
         Explain your answer in two sentences.   [2]
....
....
....
7.   What happened to the troll in the end of the story?   [1]
....
8.   Did the troll deserve what happened to him? Why?   [1]
....
....

SECTION B: SPELLING [8]

Please correct the spelling errors in the words below. Find the incorrect words and rewrite the correctly spelled words on the lines provided.

Whing of a bat ....

Shoo of a horse ....

Wool of a lam ....

Tooth of a dragen ....

Green custerd ....

Elefant trunk ....

Milk of a gote ....

Webb of a spider ....

[8]

SECTION C: VISUAL LITERACY

Please study the following text carefully and answer the set questions.
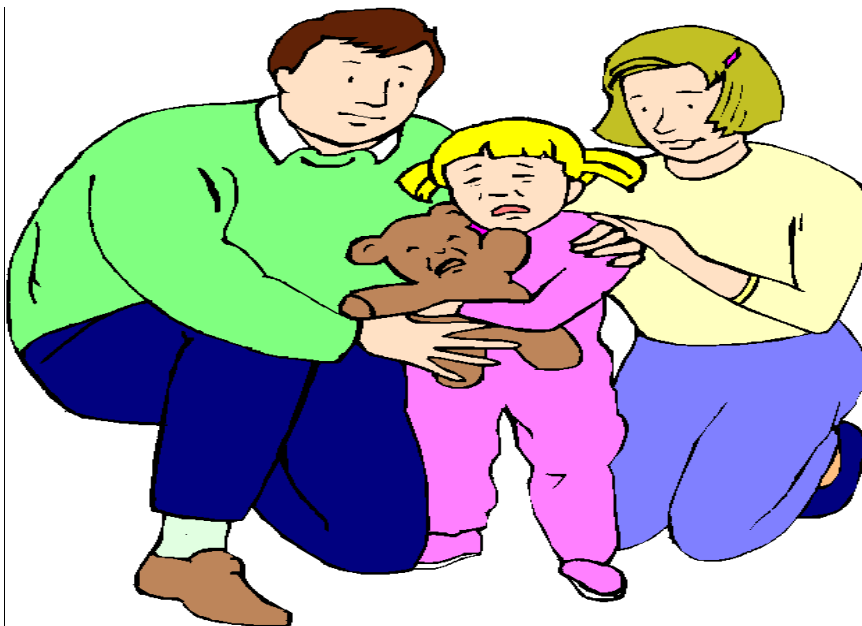
QUESTIONS:

1.   What is depicted in the above picture?
[2]

....
....
....
....

2.   What are the parents doing in the picture?
[2]

....
....

3.   How do you know the child is crying? Describe any two facial clues
in your answer.
[2]
....
....

....
....

                         4.   Give a reason why you think the child is crying.
                                                                    [2]
....
....

....
....

5.   What do you think the parents should do to make the
                                                    child happy again?
                                                                    [2]
....
....
....

                                                                    [10]

SECTION D: GRAMMAR: PARTS OF SPEECH

Please study the sentence below and answer all the set questions.

QUESTION 1

Lindiwe sits quietly on a high chair in front of the new computer to quickly do her assignment.

1.1 Identify and write down the ADJECTIVES in the above sentence.
     ....   [2]

1.2 Identify and write down the ADVERBS in the sentence.
     ....   [2]

1.3 Identify and write down the VERBS in the sentence
     ....   [2]

1.4 Identify and write down the COMMON NOUNS in the sentence
      ....   [3]

1.5 Identify and write down the PROPER NOUN in the sentence
     ....   [1]

1.6 Identify and write down the PRONOUN in the sentence
     ....   [1]

1.7 Identify and write down the PREPOSITIONS in the sentence

....   [2]

1.8 Identify and write down the ARTICLES in the sentence

....   [2]

[15]

QUESTION 2

Please match the Part of Speech in Column A with the suitable definition in Column B.

COLUMN A	COLUMN B
1. Common noun	a) Describes the noun
2. Proper noun	b) A joining word
3. Adjective	c) Names of people and places
4. Verb	d) Names of ordinary, everyday things
5. Adverb	e) Describes the verb
6. Preposition	f) A doing word/action word
7. Conjunction	g) A word that shows the position of one noun an relation to another noun

***Use the column below to answer the above question:

A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B							

[7]

QUESTION 3; TENSE
Please underline the correct tense for each of the sentences below.
a) I am very happy at this moment.
   Past / present / future   [2]
b) We went to the beach yesterday.
   Present /past / present perfect   [2]
c) I have just eaten a burger.

Future / past / present perfect   [2]
d) My mom will bring the shoes next week only.
   Future / present / past perfect   [2]
e) After I had eaten my food, I went to play outside.
   Perfect / past perfect / future perfect   [2]
f) We are singing in the rain.
   Past / present continuous / future   [2]
g) We will be writing tests next week.
   Future continuous/ past/ present perfect   [2]
h) We ate home while we watched television.
   Perfect / past / present   [1]

[15]

QUESTION 4: ACTIVE/PASSIVE
Please rewrite the following sentences into the passive voice.
   a) The teacher posts a comment on Facebook.   [2]
   b) The lions caught a deer and ate it up.   [3]

[5]

SECTION E: WRITING [10]

Please select **ONE** of the pictures below and write a paragraph of at least 6-8 sentences about the picture. Don not describe the picture but create a story about what is happening in the picture. Write down the number of the picture you choose and write your paragraph on the lines provided.

Picture 1
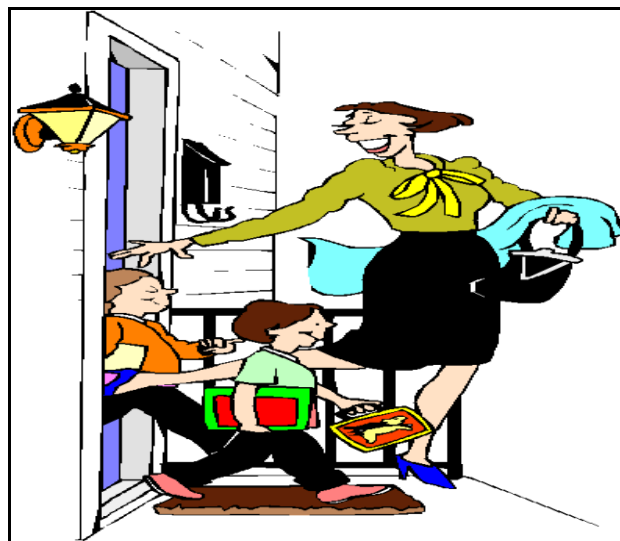
Picture 2
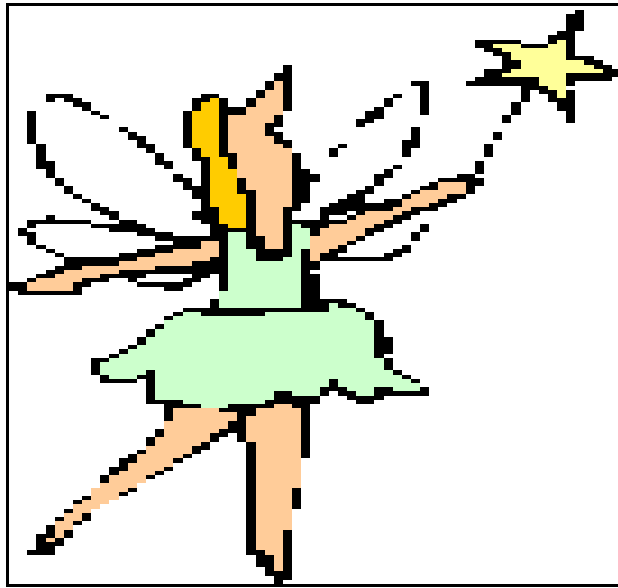
Picture 3

Picture number ......

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....[10]
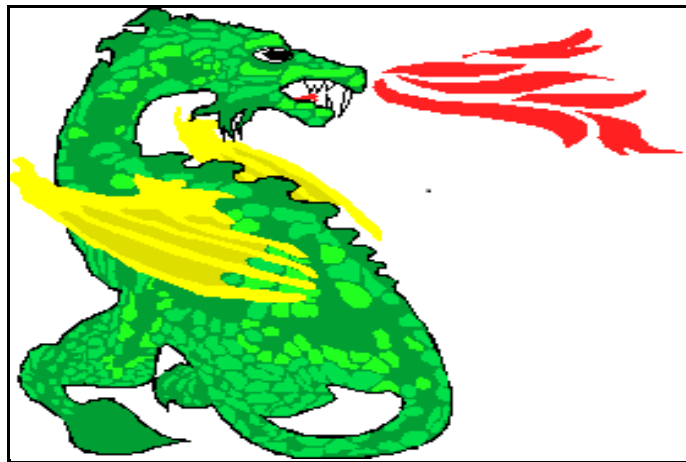
ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

PAPER 1 – GRADE 8

JUNE 2015

TOTAL: 60   TIME: 2 HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS AND INFORMATION

1. This paper consists out of three sections:

   SECTION A – COMPREHENSION (20)

   SECTION B – SUMMARY (10)

   SECTION C – LANGUAGE (20)

2. Begin the answer of each section on a NEW page.
3. Number your answers correctly.
4. Neat work will be rewarded.
5. Staple your answers to the front of the questions.

SECTION A – COMPREHENSION

QUESTION 1

Read the passage printed below and answer the questions that follow:

Wheeling in PEDAL POWER for communities

By Silje Sunde Kroken

1. Inside a shipping container in Lavender Hill, bicycles are being serviced, brakes checked and chains fastened before being washed and polished. The container is one of 17 bicycle-repair workshops in the area. They are all run by owner-managers who have been trained to fix bicycles to make a living.

2. The Bicycle Empowerment Network (BEN) is an organisation with two main aims: to promote eco-friendly, healthy and low-cost pedal power in underprivileged communities, and to create jobs by giving people the

chance to start up their own bicycle workshops, called Bicycle Empowerment Centres (BEC). More than 13 000 bicycles – old and new – have been donated to BEN from countries across the globe over the past decade. Not bad for an organisation started by the aptly named Andrew Wheeldon, who has a passion for peddling.

3. "I love cycling – it is about freedom. A bike is low-cost, healthy, carbon-free and is three times faster than walking.

4. People here come from under-privileged communities. We train people how to ride their bikes safely, how to fix punctures, make sure the brakes work properly and give them a way forward. We give them a sense of hope and, quite literally, mobility so they can go further and find jobs. They also become healthier because they are using their bodies to stay active.

5. We are trying to make the city more cycle-friendly. We want bike lanes where riders are protected from cars, because people will not ride on the roads if it's not safe out there. Our overall aim is to get more bums onto bikes and out of gas-guzzling cars.

6. Another big challenge is the huge distances in Cape Town. If you live in Khayalitsha, you can't ride your bike 30 kilometres or more to work and back every day, it's just too far. We have to think of a clever way to get people from far-away areas to cycle, like cycling part of the way and then changing to public transport to complete the journey. We need safe and free storage for bicycles at train stations.

7. I want to open another 100 BECs in the Western Cape. Come and work with us for a weekend and see the difference bikes are making on a community level."

KEYWORDS:

Serviced: repaired or maintained

Empowerment: to give people control over an area in their own lives

Aptly: someone's name is 'apt' it fits in with, or suits, what they do. Here it means that Andrew is suitably named for his job.

Mobility: if you have 'mobility' you are able to move easily.

QUESTIONS

1.1 Refer to paragraph 1.

1.1.1 Which of the following statements is NOT true?

A. An 'owner-manager' is someone who employs someone else to run his/her business.

B. An 'owner-manager' runs a business which belongs to him/her

C. An 'owner-manager' will work hard to make his/her business a success

(1)

1.1.2 Choose the piece of information which best tells us that the owner of the bicycle repair workshop is probably not a wealthy man?

A. The workshop is not in a permanent building.

B. The manager of the business is also the owner

C. The workshop does not fix cars.

(1)

1.1.3 The fact the bicycles are washed and polished after they have been fixed shows us that:

A. they were very muddy when they came to be fixed.

B. The business takes pride in its workmanship

C. Fixing bicycles is dirty work.

(1)

1.1.4 What information can you find in the text to prove that a lot of people in Lavender Hill ride bicycles?

(1)

1.2 Refer to paragraph 2

Complete the following statements by choosing two words from the list printed below:

Word list: charity, area, finance, environment, uplift, Lavender Hill, healthy

Only write the number of the question and the word you have chosen next to it.

"*Ben's has two main aims. The first one is to encourage cycling because it is affordable, kind to the (1.2.1) and helps people to become fit. The second one is to (1.2.2) communities by giving people the opportunity to be self-employed.*"

(2)

1.3 Look at the definition of "empowerment" (**paragraph 2)** as explained in the *keywords.* List and then say how the workshops or BECs, can empower people.

   Begin your answer as follows: BECs give people control over ...
   (Use your **own words** and **do not quote** from the text.)

(2)

1.4 Refer to **paragraph 2.** If 13000 bicycles have been donated over the past **decade,** how many bicycles have been donated on **average each year?**

(1)

1.5 Refer to **paragraph 2.** Why does the article state that Andrew Wheeldon is aptly named? The keywords list will help you to understand what "aptly" means.

(2)

1.6 According to paragraph 4, how van bicycles give hope to communities like Lavender Hill? Remember to use your own words.

(2)

1.7 Andrew feels negatively towards cars. Quote the adjective from paragraph 5 which includes a present participle that helps to show his attitude.

(1)

1.8 Andrew is concerned about "safe and free storage at train stations" because:
   A. he wants people to take trains rather than buses or taxis.
   B. he wants people to get healthier by riding bicycles rather than sitting on trains.
   C. he wants people to save money by cycling some of the way to work before taking the train.

(1)

1.9 Do you think building bike-lanes in cities is a good idea? Give a reason for your answer. (2)

1.10 Give two reasons why bicycles might be better transport than cars in a city. (3)

[20]

SECTION B – SUMMARY 10 MARKS
QUESTION 2
Carefully read the following text before doing the summarising activity that follows.

Coffee

Coffee is a beverage made by from the roasted seeds of the *Coffea* plant. The seeds, or beans, are found in coffee "cherries", which grow on trees. These trees are grown in more than 70 countries around the world. Coffee is an important export commodity. It was the top agricultural export of Brazil, Vietnam, Columbia and Ethiopia. It was the world's seventh-largest agricultural export in 2005.

Coffee is a stimulant. The story goes that its energising effect was first discovered in the northeast region of Ethiopia, where monks used to drink it. Coffee was first cultivated in southern Arabia. Coffee berries, which contain the coffee seeds, are produced by the *Coffea* plant. Once ripe, coffee berries are picked, processed, and dried. The seeds are then roasted to varying degrees. They are then ground and brewed to create coffee.

Instant coffee is made from coffee beans that have been roasted and ground. The ground beans are extracted with hot water to recover the coffee flavour and aroma. The coffee extract is then dried and bottled.

There have been many studies into the health effects of coffee, and whether coffee consumption has positive or negative effects. The method of brewing coffee is important in relation to its effects on health. For instance, preparing

coffee in a French press leaves more oils in the drink compared with coffee prepared with a paper coffee filter.

1. Summarise the article under the following headings. Use 50 -60 words.
a. Definition:
b. Where grown:
c. History:
d. Production process:
e. Instant coffee production:
f. Health:

QUESTION 3 – ADVERTISEMENT

Look at the following advertisement and answer the questions that follows:

3.1.1   What brand of coffee is this advertisement advertising?

(1)

3.1.2   Which word in the advertisement suggests this coffee is healthy?

(1)

3.1.3   Give three reasons how you know the advertisement is about coffee.

(3)

QUESTION 4 – CARTOON

Look at the following cartoon and answer the questions that follow:

Read the following text and answer the questions.

4.1   Is the man in frame one thinking or talking? How do you know?

(2)

4.2   What do you call a person who rides a bicycle?

    A.   Biker

    B.   Cycler

    C.   Cyclist

(1)

4.3   What is the man's impression of a bicycle helmet?

(1)

4.4   Why are they all wearing helmets?

(1)

[10]

QUESTION 5 – LANGUAGE

Look in the following passage for the answers to the questions that follow:

Text A

1. Dawn was born in Cleveland, Ohio, in the United States of America.
2. Dawn's father was a heavy drinker who physically abused Halle's mother and sister.
3. He left the family home when Dawn was four.
4. Dawn's mother struggled tremendously to raise her daughters but encouraged Dawn to do well at school.

> 5. She was gifted academically and she stood out because she was very pretty.
>
> 6. When she was 17, she won the first of many pageants, and in 1987 she came third in the Miss World Contest.

5.1   Write down two proper nouns from the passage.   (2)

5.2   Write down the adjective in the second sentence.   (1)

5.3   Write down a common noun from the passage.   (1)

5.5   Identify and write down the adverb in sentence 4.   (1)

5.6 Rewrite the following sentences into the passive voice.

5.6.1 Dawn's father abused their mother for many years.

(3)

5.6.2 Dawn won third place in the Miss World Contest.

(2)

5.7. Rewrite the following sentences into the tense indicated in brackets at the end of the sentence.

5.7.1   All the children in the movie theatre love Halle's newest movie. (future tense)   (2)

5.7.2 Dawn is gifted academically and stands out because she is very pretty. (past tense)   (3)

5.7 In sentence 4 there is a spelling mistake. Write down the incorrect word with the correct word next to it.   (2)

5.8   Write down the opposites for the following words:
5.8.1   pretty   (1)

5.8.2	encouraged	(1)
5.8.3	out	(1)
		TOTAL: 60

ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE
GRADE 8 – NOVEMBER 2015
PAPER 1 - LANGUAGE
TIME: 1 HOUR   TOTAL: 60

INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

1.   This paper consists of three sections:

        SECTION A – Comprehension (20)

        SECTION B – Summary (10)

        SECTION C – Language (30)

2.   Answer all the questions.

3.   Begin the answer of each section on a new page.

4.   Leave a line open between each answer.

5.   It is important to write neatly.

SECTION A – COMPREHENSION

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow:

Teaching your children not to litter is a valuable life lesson.

I can no longer simply drive past children who drop their chip packets, cooldrink cans and, sometimes entire fast-foot packaging, as they walk home from school. Something inside me snaps and I tend to stop my car, interrogate them, and demand they pick up after themselves.

"Why did you throw that down in the street, when there's a rubbish bin a metre from where you dropped it?" I yell. The guilty 10-year-old glares at me as though I am insane or dangerous – perhaps I look it?

Curiously, it seems the whole idea of putting discarded wrappers into a bin designed for that purpose is a foreign concept to many of them. When pressed to answer my question, some of the responses have left me flabbergasted. "But I am creating jobs," said one indignant little litter-lout!

And it's not a stab in the dark to conclude that children like him are only doing what children everywhere do best: following the example set by their parents and caregivers in their lives. But attitudes like this are extremely dangerous. According to Alderman Clive Justus, Cape Town's Mayoral Committee Member for Utility Services, there seems to be a growing tolerance by the public, not only of litter, but of those responsible for it. What's more, this attitude is increasingly threatening the city's rating by international tourism organisations as one of the world's most beautiful cities and desirable holiday destinations, as residents continue to dump refuse illegally and indiscriminately fill our outdoor public spaces with litter.

"Children need to develop a sense of responsibility for themselves, others and the world in which they live in order to be contributing members of society," explains Johannesburg – based educational psychologist Melanie Hartgill.

Simply put, littering is dangerous, and when children and parents are aware of this, they have it of picking up after ourselves and even after others become a no-brainer. Several studies have shown that the presence of litter encourages a range of far more heinous social problems, including drug abuse, crime and even cruelty. There is a direct link between the presence of litter in our neighbourhoods and the invitation to criminals and criminal behaviour.

Averting litter casualties has to start with us, the parents. It's not enough merely to make sure your child doesn't witness you tossing cigarette butts out of the window while you are driving. "Spend time outdoors, go for walks and picnics, and spend time in your own garden," suggests Hartgill. "Encourage and help your children to plant and look after their own small patch of garden. (This can even be done as small plants in pots.) These

activities allow children to learn about the environment and provide many opportunities to discuss the delicate balance of nature and our responsibility to preserve it."

New words:

Flabbergasted – very surprised

Indignant – angry

Interrogate – ask questions

Indiscriminately – without thinking of the consequences

No-brainer – something so obvious that it does not have to be thought about

Delicate – fine

Heinous – wicked, deeply criminal

QUESTION 1

1.1   What can the writer of the article not take anymore?

(1)

1.2   Make a list of things children eat while walking home from school.

(2)

1.3   What question does the writer ask a 10-year-old about littering?

(1)

1.4   What makes you think the 10-year-old does not think littering is wrong?

(2)

1.5   Do you think the writer drives past a primary school or a secondary school?

(1)

1.6   Quote an example of alliteration from paragraph 3.

(1)

1.7   Refer to paragraph 3. Explain the reason given by the "little litter-lout" for not using the rubbish bin.

(2)

1.8   Refer to paragraph 4. "A stab in the dark" means:

        A.   a clear indication

        B.   a wild guess

        C.   a promise

D.   a knife in the dark

(1)

1.9   What are the professions of the two experts the writer refers to? (2)

1.10   Quote the research mentioned in paragraph 6 to support the writer's opinion. (1)

1.11   What is the writer's opinion about littering? (2)

1.12   Do you agree with the writer's opinion? Give a reason for your answer. (2)

1.13   In your opinion, does the article present a convincing argument for parents teaching their children not to litter? Give a good reason for your opinion. (2)

[20]

SECTION B – SUMMARY

QUESTION 2

Read the article about the flamingos of the Lakes of Kenya. Write down the main ideas of the following paragraphs: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8.

Number the main ideas 1 – 7. Use your own words and use exactly 65 words. Write the number of words you have used in brackets at the end of your summary.

Sea of pink: Birds of a feather flock together for spectacular annual meeting at the lake dubbed "Flamingo City".

1.   These birds of a feather really do flock together – and while they're at it, create a stunning sea of bright pink as far as the eye can see.

2.   Every year the lakes of Kenya become packed with one of the largest populations of flamingo in the world.

3.   The area around the lakes turns a stunning shade of shocking pink, as millions of flamingos fly there to breed. It's so popular with the birds because of the huge amounts

of algae which grow due to the shallow depth of the water and the powerful sunlight beaming down upon it.

4.   Mr Garvie, from Dunfermline, said: "I was on a family holiday with my wife and daughter and we decided to revisit Lake Bogoria. We'd been there before but wanted to see it in more detail.

5.   "When we arrived it was a truly awesome and jaw-dropping scene. Lake Bogoria was a vivid green soup, with an immense flock of pink-hued flamingos.

6.   "The reserve staff told us that the flock was thought to number between 1.5 and 2 million. The air was tainted with a faintly 'fishy' aroma – there are no fish in Bogoria – while in the background a cackling cacophony was mixed with raucous honking.

7.   "But it was the vast expenses of pink on green that demanded our full attention. I haven't ever seen anything like it before and we stood transfixed by such a wonderful sight.

8.   "As I set up my tripod, I suddenly realised we were completely alone with two million flamingos, witnessing one of the greatest natural splendours Africa has to offer.
9.   "And we had it all to ourselves – this was an experience I will never forget."

SECTION C – LANGUAGE
QUESTION 3 – CARTOON

3.1   Write down a proper noun from the cartoon. (1)

3.2   Why does the speaker think someone in the store is in trouble? (1)

3.3   What does the notice on the door actually mean? (1)

3.4   Who are the two characters in the cartoon? (2)

QUESTION 4 – ADVERTISEMENT

The average smoker needs over five thousand cigarettes a year.
Get unhooked. Call 0800 169 0 169 or visit getunhooked.co.uk

4.1   What is the advertisement advertising? (1)

4.2   If an average smoker needs 5000 cigarettes a year, how many do they smoke every day? (1)

4.3   The term "hooked" has two meanings. Which two meanings are used in this advertisement? (2)

4.4   Why does the girl have a hook through her lip? (1)

QUESTION 5 – LANGUAGE IN USE

Refer to the passage below to answer questions on language that follow:

1.**A Shetland pony trotted into a McDonalds and waited in line to place his order.**

2.**When his turn came, he said in a soft, raspy voice, "I'll have a Hamburger Happy Meal and a Coke, please."**

3.**The woman behind the counter frowned and replied, "Sir, you'll have to speak up. I can't hear you."**

4.**The pony looked at her and repeated in the same soft, raspy voice, "I'll have a Hamburger Happy Meal and a Coke, please."**

5.The woman grew visibly irritated and said sharply, "Sir, I still can't hear you. There are lots of people waiting in line. You'll have to speak up or leave the restaurant."

7.The pony nodded (understanding) and replied in the same soft, raspy voice, "I'm sorry. You've got to excuse me. I'm just a little hoarse."

5.1   Write down a proper noun from sentence 1.   (1)

5.2   Change the following into a question: "I'll have a Hamburger Happy Meal and a Coke, please."   (2)

5.3   Rewrite the following sentences into the passive voice:

5.3.1The pony looked at her.   (2)

5.3.2The pony ordered a burger and Coke before leaving the place.   (3)

5.4   Which word in sentence 4 means the same as "see clearly"?   (1)

5.5   "I'll have a spicy Hamburger Happy Meal and a Coke now, please." Write down the adjective and the adverb from the sentence.   (2)

5.6   Use the tense in brackets and rewrite the sentences below into the correct tense.

5.6.1 The pony speaks in a hoarse voice. (future)   (2)

5.6.2 The pony ate a hamburger before he left the restaurant. (past perfect)   (3)

5.7   Find a synonym for "hoarse" in sentence 7.   (1)

Identify and write down three Proper Nouns from the passage.   (3)

[20]

Total: [60]

APPENDIX 11: POST TEST WRITING

ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

Instructions

1.   **Choose ONE of the topics.**

2.   **Write neatly**

3.   **Staple your question paper to the back of your answer sheet.**

4.   **Write down the number of the question that you are answering.**

5.   **Word count for the essay is 150-200 words**

Topics

1.	My mother was right……	[20]
2.	Technology has changed our lives	[20]
3.	I saw blood on the carpet and I ran.	[20]
4.	The day I met my hero.	[20]
5.	Our first holiday at the beach.	[20]

ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE
GRADE 8
NOVEMBER EXAMINATION 2015
PAPER 3
TIME: 1½ hour / 20 MARKS

INSTRUCTIONS
1. **This paper consists out of two sections.**
2. **Begin the answer of each Section on a new page.**
3. **Answer ONE question from each Section.**
4. **Indicate the number of words you have used in brackets at the end of your writing.**
5. **Write the number of the question you are doing at the centre top of your writing.**

SECTION A – CREATIVE WRITING
Write a creative piece about ONE of the topics below. Use 150 to 200 words.

1. My day from hell

2. I have to tell you this story….
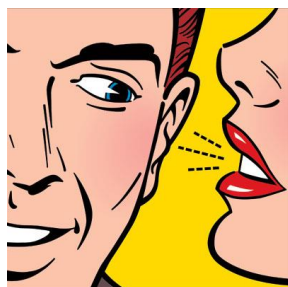
3. Surprise!!!

4. I will always remember him/her because…..

(20)

Traditional English Grammar

PARTS of SPEECH (recap)

Why study the grammar of a language?

The grammar of any language represents the inner working of the language, in other words, how to use the language in a sensible manner so that people around me can fully understand the message I wish to communicate (spoken or written). If you do not know the grammar of a language you will not be able to put together sentences in the correct and proper manner. The next few pages will explain the nature of English grammar in a simplified manner that is easy to understand. The diagrams below indicate how a language is compiled (put together).

```
┌─────────────────────┐
│       SOUNDS        │
└─────────────────────┘
          ↓
┌─────────────────────┐
│  WORDS (vocabulary) │
└─────────────────────┘
          ↓
┌─────────────────────┐
│     SENTENCES       │
└─────────────────────┘
```
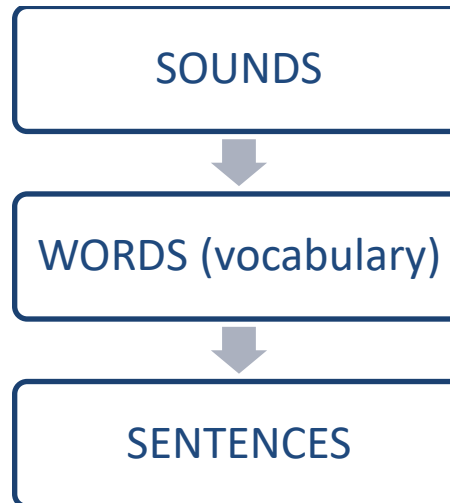
When a language is used, lots of stringing takes place. At first, the sounds we utter need to be strung together to make up swords, for example,

W+O+R+D = WORD

Words are called vocabulary and form the bulk of the language. You must agree that we cannot use random words only to communicate, e.g.

* The cake eats a mouse / *Mouse a the cake eats

You will probably agree that the above sentences do not make much sense if any. What I actually want to say is;

The mouse eats a cake.

How do I then know how to arrange the words of a language so that I produce correct sentences? This is called the **structure for creating English sentences** and is known as the **S V O** sentence structure.

I will revisit the SVO pattern at a later stage, but I want to focus your attention to the words (vocabulary) again. Much like anything else in the world, we need to understand how words work together in sentences. For this we need to categorise (group) all the words, in other words, we must look at the functions of the different words and group words with similar functions together. These categories or groups of words are known as;

2

PARTS OF SPEECH

The main groups of words (parts of speech) are;

NOUNS, VERBS, ADJECTIVES, ADVERBS, DETERMINERS, PREPOSITIONS, CONJUNCTIONS and INTERJECTIONS

Very often we study language in its constituent parts (all the different aspects of the language) and forget that all these different parts make up **ONE COMPLETE LANGUAGE.** I have, therefore decided that you may benefit from looking at all the constituent parts together, instead of learning an aspect of grammar in every different chapter of your text book. I believe that you will understand that all the separate aspects you are taught in class will make more sense when you see how all these aspects interact to form one grammar.

English grammar can only be fully understood once you have mastered Parts of Speech. That means that you need to study them and know all about their individual functions and properties, because you will not be able to analyse or create English texts if you don't. Each Part of Speech has its rightful place in a sentence and that is why the ungrammatical sentences (marked *) are not real sentences.

The chart that follows on the next page is an illustration of Parts of Speech. Study it well until you are able to draw the chart on your own.   3

PARTS OF SPEECH

NOUNS	VERBS	ADJECTIVES	ADVERBS	CONJUNCTIONS	DETERMINERS	PREPOSITIONS
Concrete	**State of Being**	**describe nouns**	**describe verbs**	**also called logical**	**a/an/the**	**describe the location**
Things you	am/is/are/was	i.e only nouns can	i.e. only verbs can	**connectors and are**	**Definite**	**of one noun to**
Can touch	were/will/can	be described by	be described by	**used to link two or**	the	**another**
e.g. table	must/shall/may	adjectives. Thus	adverbs. (Thus	**more sentences,**	**Indefinite**	e.g The book is on
Abstract	could/should	more infor-	more infor-	e.g. and/then/as	a/an	the table.
Things you	might/would	mation about the	mation about verbs)	because/when	when word starts	more examples:
Cannot touch	**Action Verbs**	nouns is provided	**Adverbs of TIME**	although/even	with vowel, use an.	Over/in front of/
e.g. love	play/swim/eat	e.g. the red ball /	when?	though	If word starts with	next to/behind/in
Pronouns		The ball is red.	**Adverbs of PLACE**		consonant, use a	under/underneath
Proper nouns		a sentence is	where?	* Always use comma		on top/besides
Names of things		always a noun.	**Adverbs of MANNER**	before conjunction		
Bill/London			how?			

258

Introduction

to

Functional Grammar

as

Intervention

ESL

PART ONE

A self-help manual to understanding

English Grammar

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This is a set of tools to help you understand how grammar creates meaning.
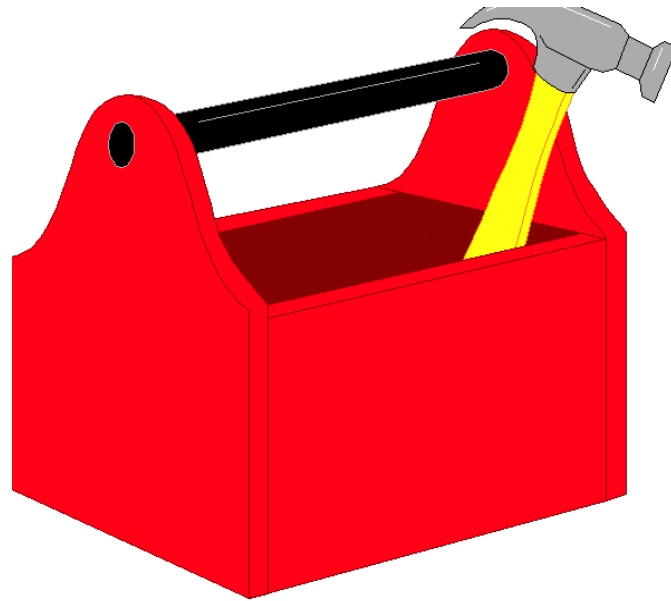
What is Grammar?

We use language to communicate to other people around us. This language (written or spoken) must be organised in some manner so that others understand what we communicate. In other words, we send and receive messages every day, all day long.

2

This means that people, who speak the same language and wish to communicate successfully, must agree on how the language is used. This "agreement" refers to the grammar rules you are taught in school and in your case; English Grammar.

Organise language? How?

When your mother tells you to sort out your messy room, you usually look around the room to decide where you should start this task. This means that you have to look at the

WHOLE room and decide where the messiest spot is so that you can PLAN the cleaning task. If you want immediate order, you should probably start by sorting the stuff that belong together, for example, put all the Lego blocks in a container, put all the socks in a drawer and put your schoolbag next to the desk. Your room will be neat again.

When dealing with grammar (building sentences according to rules), we also need a plan in order to build meaningful sentences. Messy sentences will be misunderstood and might get you into trouble. There are two ways in which you can create neat sentences:

In **_Traditional Grammar,_** we normally start from the bottom and work our way to the top. This means that we look at the words we use to build our sentences firstly and then put together our sentences in meaningful ways.   4

Functional Grammar, on the other hand, is another way of looking at the grammar of a language: top to bottom. In other words, we look at the WHOLE sentence/text and then at how the words work together to create meaning.

Getting back to cleaning your room:

Should you decide to only clean spots here and there all over your room, you are going to skip some messy areas and Mom will think you did half a job of cleaning up. This sort of action might bring you into trouble with her and you don't want that! The same happens when we use language to communicate. If we leave out or switch around parts of the message, people will not understand us and this means we might not get what we wanted or even worse, loose MARKS in the exams

5
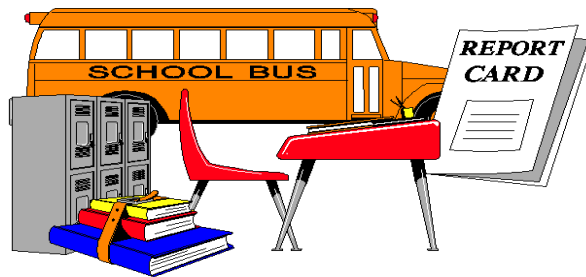
So what now? I'm confused!

There are some very clever people who understand you and know you don't like to learn all those grammar rules. They came up with **Functional Grammar** to make learning and understanding English (and other languages) easier for you.

Of course you cannot ignore grammar rules, but you are already in Grade 8 and therefore I assume that you possess a whole lot of English knowledge, which you will be able to apply to the Functional Approach.

6

SO, where do I start to know ALL about English grammar?

That's the spirit! Before I show you the secret, I want you to understand that language works much like Maths. There is some basic stuff you need to know or understand if you want to do the sums. The same with grammar!

I know what you're thinking...

Just hang in there. I will explain...

7
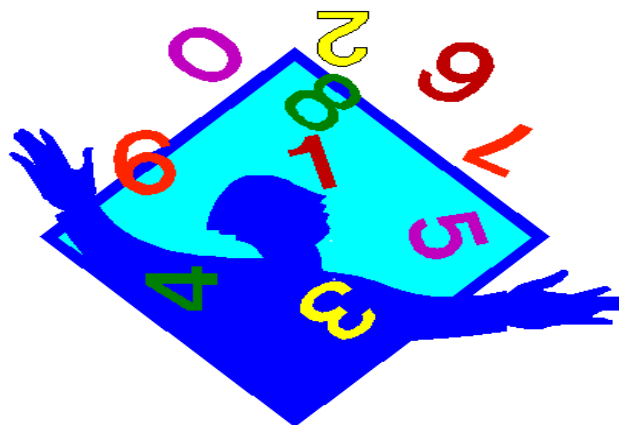
Let's do this!!!

We need all of these
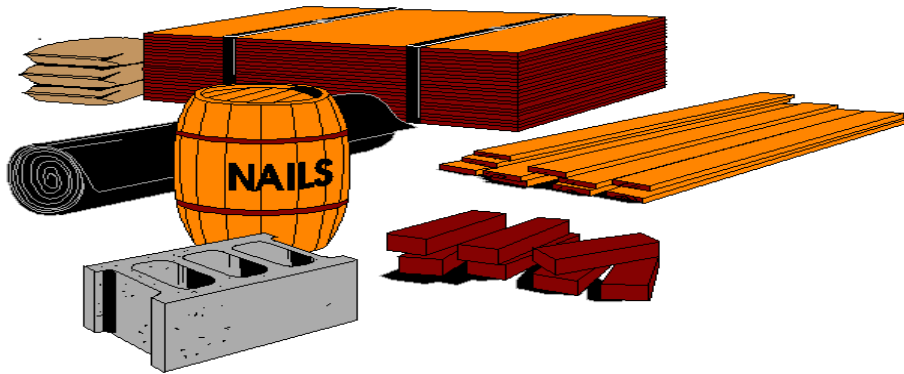
to build this:
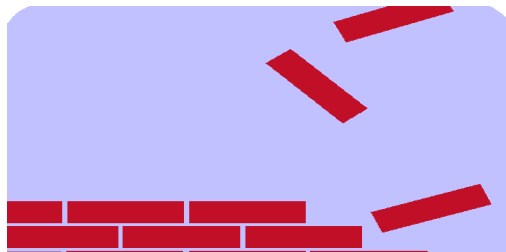
to eventually achieve this:

8

Traditionally you are expected to start with the number of words (vocabulary) you know of English before you can build sentences to write a story or any message, just like needing bricks to build a house.

Functional grammar asks of you to start with the story/message, then to look at the clauses and phrases that make up the sentences, which again are built with words. Even the words are built from letters (morphemes) and are the smallest units you can find in language.

Think of it as standing on top of a mountain looking down on the village below; the trees, the houses and people. You see a **whole** village, but you also understand that the **whole** is made up of all the other little parts such as **houses, roads, parks, trees, people and animals**. You also know that people cannot be bigger than houses, cars bigger than mountains etc... things would just look, well..., out of place and weird!

9

Picture this:

Whole Text

⬇

Sentences

⬇

Clauses

⬇

Phrases

⬇

Words

⬇

Letters (morphemes)

10

What does 'functional' then mean?

✓ Functional grammar looks at grammar rules as a **set of Tools** rather than a set of rules to help us know what 'not' to do when we write/speak messages.

✓ The message that we speak/write is then the outcome of the choices we make.

✓ It looks at the context (reason or environment) of the text and if the text belongs with the context, e.g. if you write about a robbery in a store the text must indeed reflect only that and not a robbery on a ship.

11

Functional grammar looks at:

field	tenor	mode
Subject matter: what is going on in the text?	Interaction: who is doing/saying what to whom?	Construction: how is the text made up (type)?

Instead of each of the nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and determiners as taught in traditional English Grammar.

An illustration of the above table would be:
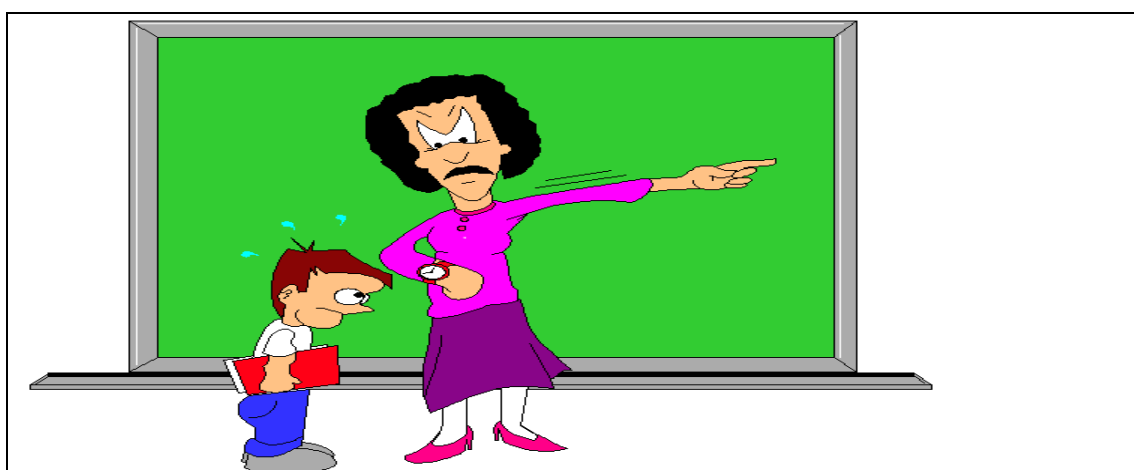
The teacher chased John out of the class.

» Field = chasing John out of the classroom

» Tenor = teacher does action to John

» Mode = sentence

12

Quickly test whether you understand what you have learnt about Functional Grammar so far.

Identify the *field, tenor and mode* in each of the following sentences.

1.Susan met her friend in the coffee shop where they gossiped about Linda.

Field ....

Tenor ....

Mode ....

2.Both the red cars were speeding when they collided at the robot.

Field ....

Tenor ....

Mode ....

Answers

1.Field = drinking coffee and gossiping √

Tenor = Susan and her friend met + they gossip about Linda √

Mode = sentence √

2.Field = speeding red cars crash at the robot √

Tenor = two red cars collide √

Mode = sentence √

Well done! That was easy!

Now that you realise that all the separate words in each sentence work together to convey a particular message, you can start thinking about writing a 13 paragraph in the same manner. In other words, when you write a paragraph, all the sentences in

the paragraph should convey information (field and tenor) about the most important topic of the paragraph.

This means that if you write a paragraph about your favourite sport, each sentence in that paragraph must say something about your favourite sport and not about other sports, for example:

> I love running long distances. I am good at running long distances because I am very fit. Training is important if one wants to do well in running long distances. My coach lets me run 5km every day in order to prepare me for the running season. I am grateful that my coach believes in me and motivates me to my best in each race.

There are 5 sentences in the paragraph above. Here are the five fields of the sentences:

> 1. Love to run long distances
>
> 2. Good at long distance running
>
> 3. Training for long distance running
>
> 4. Prepare for long distance running
>
> 5. Performance in long distance running   14

  *** Note that the field of each sentence in this paragraph relates/refers to **long distance running**.***

When you look at the tenor of each sentence it looks as follows (who does the running and how):

> 1. (the author) loves long distance running
> 2. (the author) am fit for running long distances
> 3. (the author) train for long distance running
> 4. My coach lets me (the author) run 5km every day
> 5. My coach believes/motivates me (the author)

*** Notice that each sentence explains who (the author and the coach) is doing what, but that all the actions can be related in some manner.***

The sentences form a paragraph because the main topic (field) of this paragraph is the author's love for long distance running and all the information in the sentences involve his passion/love for this sport.

In an essay you would now be able to create and develop various other paragraphs in the same manner, keeping in mind the field and tenor of each paragraph.   **15**

RECAP

How do we now relate *field, tenor* and *mode* to what we have learnt about Parts of Speech, tense and number in traditional English Grammar?

- ✓ You know that each sentence carries a main clause (THE MAIN VERB/ACTION) or also known as topic/idea. **(FIELD)**.
- ✓ *NOUNS* (Part of speech) perform actions such as playing, eating, running and sleeping in traditional grammar. The <u>actions</u> performed by NOUNS (e.g. people/animals) are known as <u>VERBS</u> in Parts of Speech. The **TENOR in** a sentence/paragraph can therefore be regarded as **"who" is "doing what" to "whom".** Example:
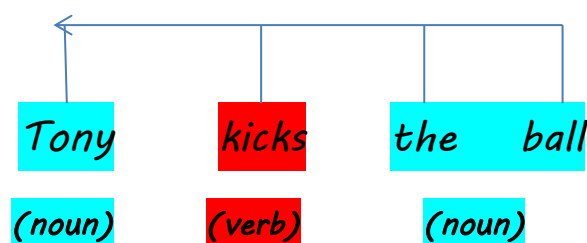
Tony	kicks	the ball
(noun)	(verb)	(noun)

- ✓ The FIELD = kicking a ball
- ✓ The TENOR = <u>Tony</u> does kicking to the <u>ball</u>
- ✓ The MODE = sentence (clause)

16
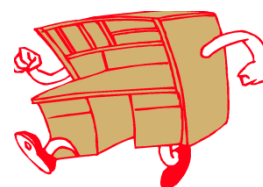
First of all: I want you to focus on TENOR (who/what does what to what/whom).

In the sentence: *Jo kicks the ball*, we know that in traditional English we refer to 'Joe' as the **subject** and 'the ball' as the **direct object**. The **verb** is 'kicks'. In the example sentence below the difference between how we view 'parts of speech' in Functional Grammar is illustrated:

Joe	+	kicks	+	the ball		
Subject		verb		direct object	=	Traditional English Grammar
Participant		Process		Participant	=	Functional Grammar
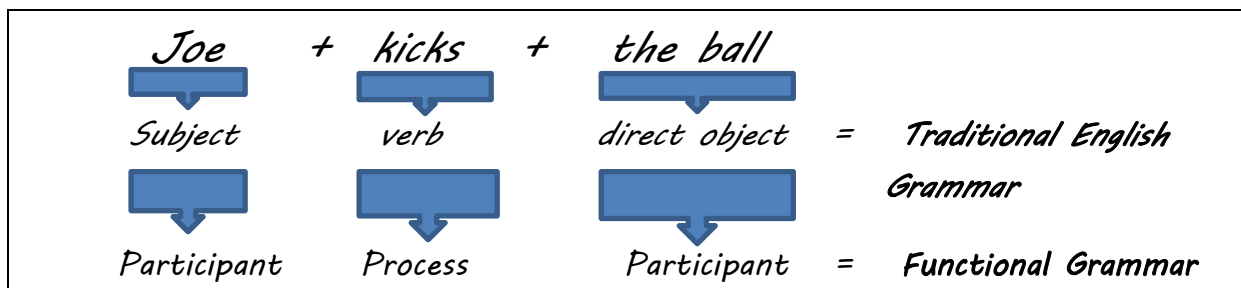
All the nouns (what and who) are called **PARTICIPANTS** and the verbs are called **PROCESS(ES)**.

In other words:

➤ **all the people or things doing things or receiving action =** <u>participants</u> (Joe/the ball) and

➤ **the action(s) =** <u>process(es)</u>(kicks) in English sentences.

This will help you to consider all the participants and processes in sentences you create. It is easier to think about who/what you want to do something to what/whom than thinking of nouns and verbs.

17

Next we are going to take a closer look at

SENTENCES and how you can improve them: -

First of all you need to understand that sentences

are built using *UNITS OF MEANING.* (Go back to pages 9

and 10 to recap). An example sentence:

Units of Meaning

Sentence

Add the eggs to the
mix and beat in well.

Clause

Add the eggs to the mix -
and beat in well.

Group/Phrase

Add - the eggs - to the mix -
and beat in well

Word

Add - the - eggs - to - the -
mix - and - beat - in - well.

Morpheme

Add the egg[s] - to the mix
and beat in well.

Source: Walker. L. and Conner G. Introducing Functional Grammar..
http://eprints.umk.ac.id/1785/9/REFERENCES.pdf. 7April 2017. 12h35.

18

This is now where we really start looking at the difference between traditional grammar and functional grammar...

TRADITIONAL GRAMMAR	FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR
Text is created by: letters + words + sentences + paragraphs = whole text	Text is created by three levels of RANK: CLAUSE/GROUP/WORD
Parts of speech are identified separately: e.g. a verb is for action and noun for person/thing and hold no real connection to who is doing what to whom.	The functions of the ranks are important, e.g action is seen as a process, which involves the participants and circumstances in the process
The emphasis is on single words and the role they play in sentences	The emphasis is on the meaning that clauses, groups and words create in the whole text.

To make sure you understand the table above you need to test yourself quickly.

1. Functional grammar has only three ranks.   TRUE / FALSE
2. Action is seen as processes in functional grammar.   TRUE / FALSE
3. Functional grammar focuses on meaning rather than single parts of speech.   TRUE / FALSE
4. Nouns = Participants   TRUE / FALSE

If all your answers were TRUE, you scored 100%

Certificate Of
Acknowledgement

Name…………………………..
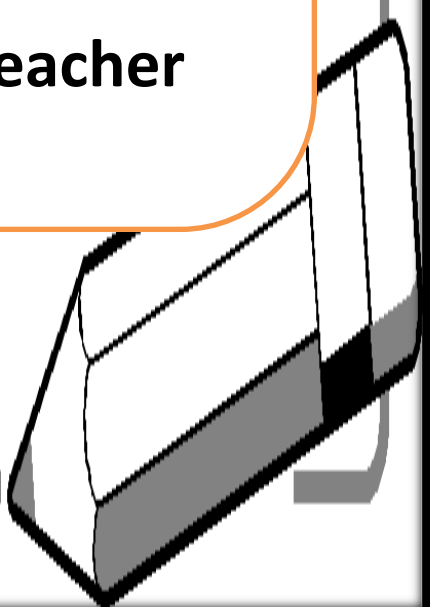
Has successfully completed
THE INTRODUCTION to
Functional Grammar.

………...   ………………..

Date   **Teacher**

PART TWO

Functional Grammar

as

Intervention

ESL

A self-help manual to understanding

English Grammar

© K. Nell 2015

Welcome to the second part of the programme on improving your English grammar!

✓ **Keep Part ONE at hand so that you can refer back to certain aspects of Functional Grammar as we continue.**

This is what you already know about TRADITIONAL English sentences:

1. *Words make up phrases and clauses which make up sentences.*
2. *Phrases contain no verbs (actions) while clauses do:*

SENTENCE

PHRASE

CLAUSE

Contains no verb

Contains a verb

The cat   +   climbs the tree

(determiner + noun)

(verb + determiner + noun)

phrase
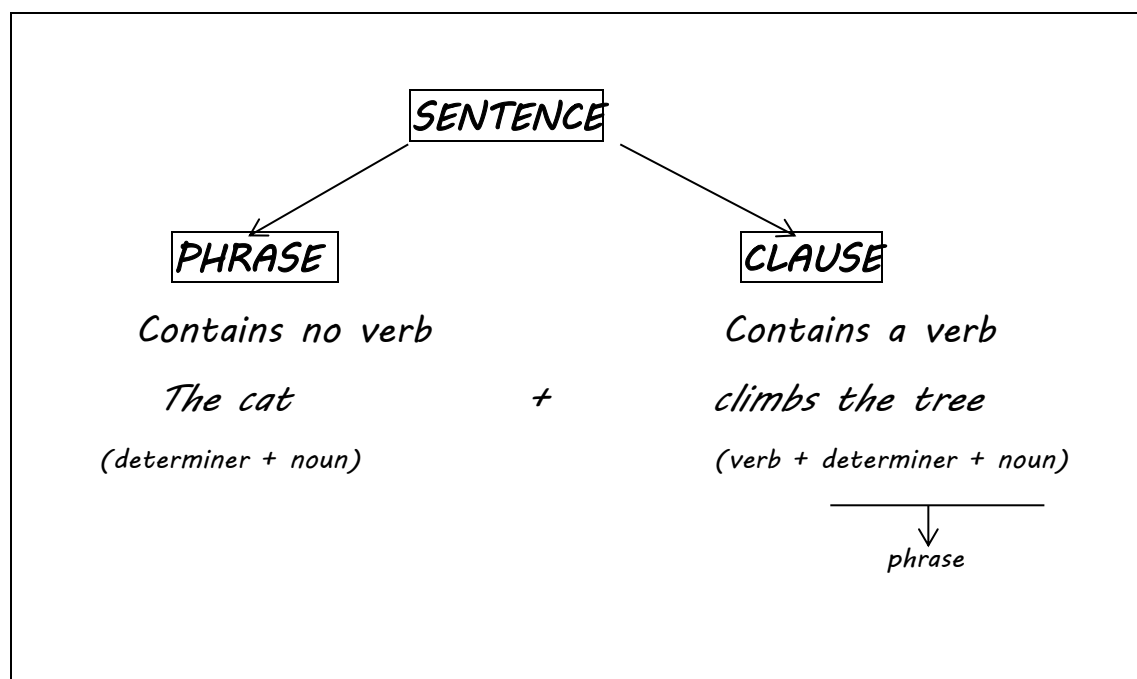
3. *When we analyse sentences in traditional English Grammar, we identify the subject of the sentence and the rest is known as the predicate (the part of the sentence that normally contains information about the subject). This part normally contains verbs and possibly adverbs).*

2

EXAMPLE: 1

Joan	meets her friends at the mall

SUBJECT	+	PREDICATE	= Traditional English Grammar
(THEME)	+	(RHEME)	= Functional Grammar
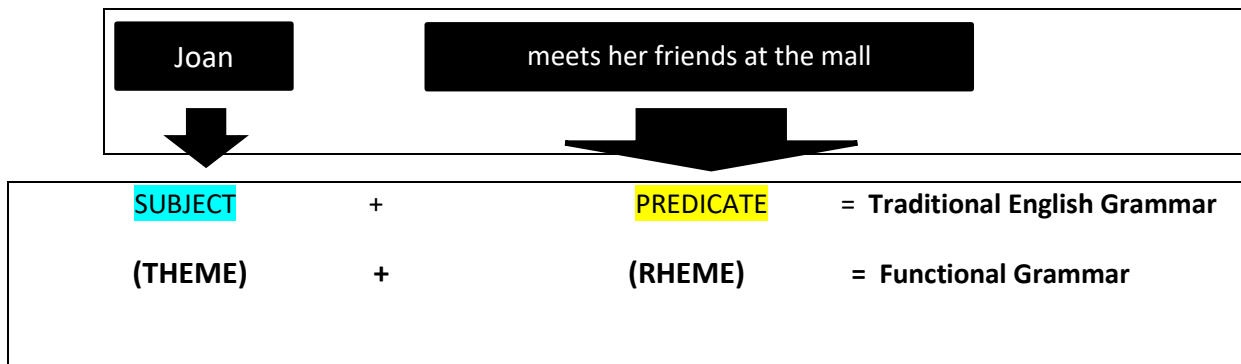
4. In FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR we look at sentences as CLAUSES rather than just as whole sentences.

5. The subject tells us what/who does the action and the predicate contains the verb (action) and extra information.

6. So, when we traditionally refer to the 'subject' of the sentence, you know that we refer to the first noun that appears before the verb (action) in the sentence (the subject normally does the action).

!!!NEWS FLASH!!!

In functional grammar we refer to the subject as *"theme"*, which means that this part of the clause lets the reader or listener know what the clause (sentence) is going to be all about and who the participants (nouns) are. The rest of the clause (sentence) is called *"rheme"* and provides more information about the participants and the processes that they are involved in.   ***(see example 1 above)***

3

7. The rheme provides additional information about the context of the situation in which the sentence/clause appears. This is traditionally where we talk about adjectives, adverbs, determiners, conjunctions and prepositions in English, because they are known as the Parts of Speech that provide more information about the nouns (subjects and objects) and their actions (verbs).

8. In functional grammar we look at what extra information such words/groups give to clauses. In other words how they describe the participants (subjects and objects) and their actions (verbs).

9. In Part One we learnt about the **RANKS (clauses/groups and words)** that make up complete sentences in Functional Grammar.

For example, this is how we would look at ranks:
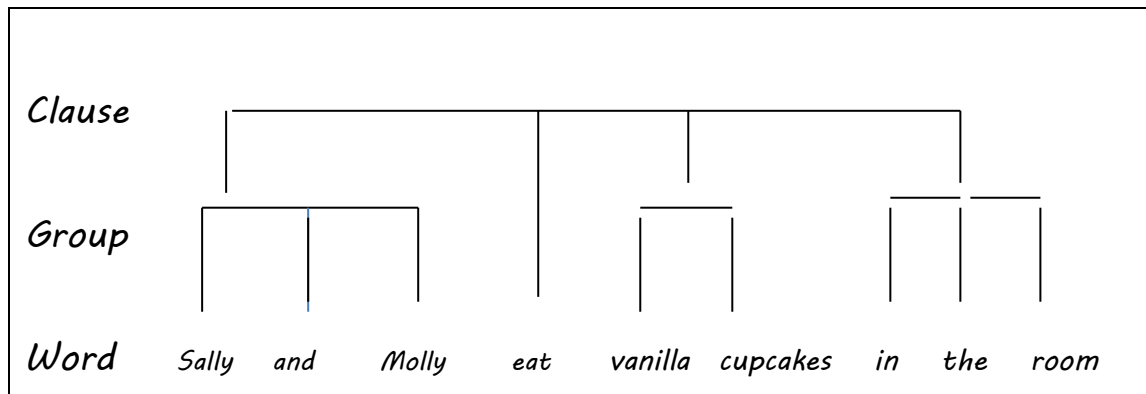
***Remember in Functional Grammar :

Clause   = sentence

Group   = phrase

Word   = part of speech

4

Thus: the clause is: *Sally and Molly eat vanilla cupcakes in the room.*

the groups are: *Sally and Molly / vanilla cupcakes / in the room*

the words are: *Sally/and/Molly/eat/vanilla/cupcakes/in/the/room*

TEST YOURSELF

Study the clause (sentence) below and answer all the questions.

Sally eats a chocolate cupcake in her room.

1. Identify and write down the theme of the clause.
   ....
2. Identify and write down the rheme of the clause.
   ....
3. What is the field of the clause?
   ....
4. Who are the participants in the clause? (all the nouns)
   .... + ... + ...‥
5. What process takes place in the clause?
   ....
6. Write down the word in the clause that indicates
   the process. ....
7. What do you consider to be "extra information" in the
   clause? Write it down...
8. Which question did you ask to determine the extra
   information? Underline the correct choice:
   (who / where / when)

5

ANSWERS:

1. Sally
2. Eats a chocolate in her room
3. Eating a chocolate
4. Sally, chocolate + room
5. Eat
6. Eat
7. In her room
8. Where

!!!YOU ARE SO CLEVER!!!

- ✓ Remember that clauses contain verbs? At clause rank 'eat' is seen as the **process** (action taking place) in the test sentence above.

- ✓ At word rank 'eat' is seen as a verb (as in parts of speech)

- ✓ Extra information in the clause above is provided in the group that tells 'where' they ate the cupcakes: in the room. (This is called an adverbial phrase of place in traditional grammar.) In Functional Grammar the extra information is called and "adverbial group". In other words "a group of words" that has the function of telling where the process takes place.

The type of analysis as done under point 9 (above) illustrates the difference between traditional and functional grammar analysis. In the (clause) sentence: Sally and Molly eat vanilla cupcakes in the room we find: 6

1 x CLAUSE (sentence)

3 x GROUPS (2 X NOUN GROUPS + 1 ADVERBIAL GROUP)(phrases)
9 x WORDS (parts of speech)

Recap Test: Answer the questions on the clause below.

Ron and his dog run on the grass field

1. Write down the clause.

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………..

2. Write down the NOUN GROUPS

   …………………………………………… + ……………………………………………..

3. Write down the process.

   …………………………………………

4. Write down extra information given in the clause.

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………..

5. How many clauses can you identify?   …………………………..

6. How many Noun Groups do you identify? ………………..

7. What would you call the group of words providing extra information in

   the clause? ………………………………………………………………………………..

8. How many words do you identify? …………………………..

9. Can you identify an ADJECTIVE? …………………………..

10. Circle the correct answer. What would you call the group "grass

    field"? (adjectival group / adverbial group)

7

ANSWERS:

1. *Ron and his dog run on the grass field.*
2. *Ron and his dog + the grass field*
3. *Run*
4. *On the grass field*
5. *One*
6. *Three*
7. *Adverbial group*
8. *Nine*
9. *Grass*
10. *Adjectival*

Before we continue you need to make sure you understand all the concepts of Traditional English Grammar versus Functional Grammar.

- Indicate whether the description of the words in the first column (A) match those in the second column (B). Write **TRUE / FALSE** in column C.

COLUMN A	COLUMN B	COLUMN C
1. subject	theme	
2. predicate	Rheme	
3. topic	Field	
4. tenor	Actions	
5. clause	sentence	
6. theme	Subject	
7. rheme	Extra information	
8. phrases	Groups	
9. field	What text is all about	
10. words	Parts of speech	

If all your answers are TRUE, you score 100%

Another very important point about *Functional Grammar* is that you are in command of choosing what you want to say about the participants and the **circumstances** in your clauses. This means that you can **CHOOSE** how the participants (nouns) look and where/when/how/how often etc. the actions (processes) take place.

CIRCUMSTANCES refer to adverbs in Traditional English grammar (time, place, manner, frequency and degree) but Functional Grammar also includes a few extra circumstances such as **the role(s) of participant(s), reasons for the process**. The following circumstances are identified:

How:	the manner (way something happens/ with what it happens)
How far:	the extent or time of the action/participant
How long:	the duration/time of process
How often:	frequency
Where:	place/location/setting
When:	time
With whom:	participants
As what:	role of participant in clause (doing/receiving the action)
Why:	reason for process/action
With what:	how is process done

<center>9</center>

> ➢ **Circumstances** provide you with all of the above options to enrich your clauses, so there is no excuse for boring sentences.
> ➢ **Circumstances** appear as prepositional phrases/adverbial phrases or adjectival phrases or noun phrases in clauses
> ➢ **Circumstances** contain NO PROCESSES (VERBS)
> ➢ **Circumstances** can be left out and the clause will still make sense.

EXAMPLE: 2

Nico and his brown dog play ball in the park every day.

Theme — Rheme

(Who ?) Process (with what?) extra information (where ?) extra information (when/frequency?)

✓ The theme (subject) of the clause is: *Nico and his brown dog.*

✓ The rheme is: *play ball in the park every day.*

✓ In other words, the field of the clause is Nico and his dog that plays with a ball in the park.

✓ The example above illustrates clearly who the participants are: Nico /brown dog/ball/park/day (all the nouns).

✓ The only action is the process of "playing".

✓ Extra information is provided: we know the dog is brown (adjective). We know **where** they play (in the park), which is an adverb of place and we also know how frequently they play in the park (every day) – an adverb of frequency.

10

✓ Circumstances can be moved around in clauses, for example, *Nico plays ball in the park with his brown dog every day.*

✓ We can leave out the circumstances and the clause will still have meaning: *Nico and his dog play ball.*

✓ <u>REMEMBER!</u> Adjectives provide extra information about participants

✓ <u>REMEMBER!</u>: Adverbs provide extra information about processes

You are now equipped with sufficient knowledge to write excellent sentences = paragraphs = essays!

WRITING ACTIVITY: apply your knowledge

1. Write 3 sentences about the picture below. Just write ordinary sentences, e.g. *The dog growls.*

11

Sentence 1

....
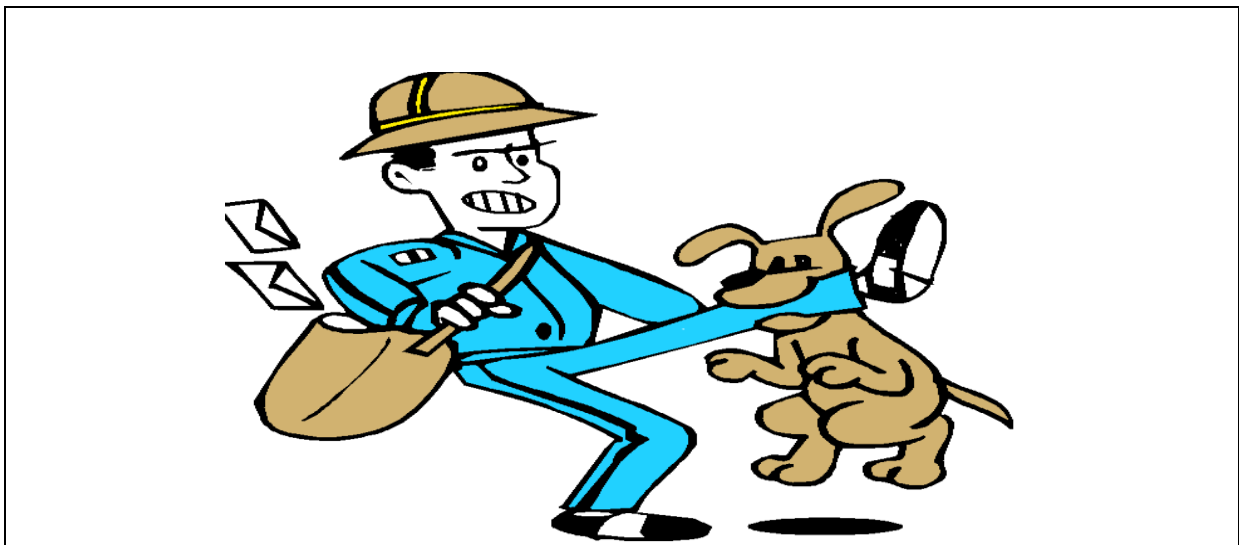
Sentence 2

....

Sentence 3

....

2. Now rewrite the same sentences, but use circumstances to elaborate and 'colour in' your sentences e.g. *The* <u>*brown*</u> *dog growls* <u>*loudly*</u>

Sentence 1

....

....

Sentence 2

....

....

Sentence 3

....

....

....

You have become an empowered writer now

12

The last step in this programme is to help you understand that writing does not happen in isolation. This means that there is always a reason for things to be where they are and why they happen: we call this   CONTEXT.

> ➤ Context can be strongly related to the field (topic) of your writing.
> ➤ Context cannot be ignored
> ➤ Context can be physical or mental (place or thought)

In other words, when you write paragraphs you have to inform your reader of the context in which the events take place constantly. This brings order and logic to writing, e.g. when in an argument, the context is that of conflict/anger/hostility/animosity.

Another important tool for writing is to have your events and relationships follow very logic patterns (one does not put on clothes first and then take a bath).

LOGICAL RELATIONS are shown in the words and phrases used to create relationships between ideas, issues, events and participants (nouns and verbs) in text. In other words, stick to the sequence of events, e.g. _After_ I had eaten the hamburger, I brushed my teeth. _After_ indicates which event took place first and which event followed.

13

The following LOGICAL RELATIONS (also known as *conjunctions* in traditional English Grammar) can be used to create logical writing:

Joining   = and, besides, moreover

Time   = meanwhile, when, as lang as, finally, at first

Cause/effect = because, therefore, so that, otherwise, yet

Contrast   = likewise, similarly, then, whereas, on the

            other hand, other than, despite

The VERY, VERY last point about creating meaningful clauses is to keep your 'stuff' together.

Keep the logic in your writing by focusing on keeping together in a paragraph that belongs together. It serves no purpose to stray from your field. Rather write a shorter paragraph but a meaningful paragraph.

Your VERY, VERY last test in Part Two is to write a short paragraph about the following picture. Hand it to your teacher to mark.

14

....
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....

Teacher comment

....
....
....
....
....

THE END

15
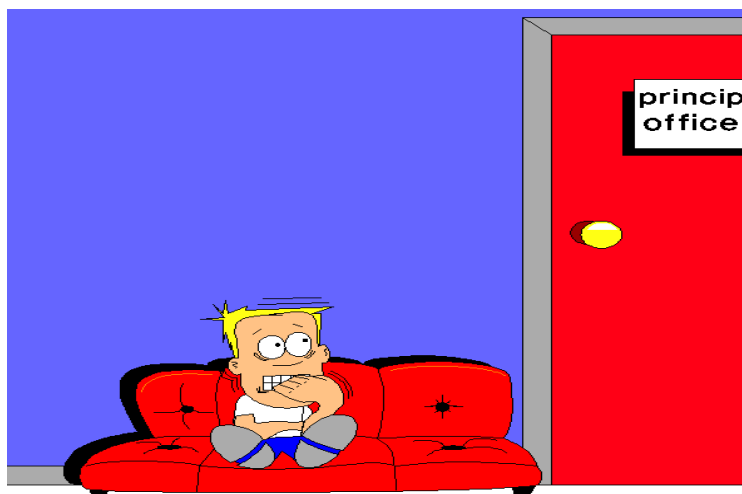
INTERVENTION ACTIVITY (self-study)

LEARNING about TENSE (recap)

Attached you will find a summary of all the tenses of English Grammar that you are required to know.

- ✓ **See if you can name all the tenses without peeking**

- ✓ **See if you can recall all the time words for each tense without peeking**

TENSE

PAST TENSE	PRESENT TENSE	FUTURE TENSE
➤ **Simple Past** = to indicate single events	➤ **Simple Present** = to refer to regular things that take place everyday/usually,	➤ **Simple future** = to refer to single things in the future
that took place,	e.g. I eat breakfast and lunch every day.	e.g. I will eat tomorrow.
e.g. I ate pizza.		(will/shall + infinitive)
➤ **Past Progressive (continuous)** = when we	➤ **Present Progressive (continuous)** = action that is currently still going on (am/is/are + ing)	➤ **Future Progressive** = action that will continue to take place
tell stories and when two things happened		(will/shall + be + ing)
at the same time in the past (was/were + ing)	e.g. I am (still) eating.	e.g. He will be eating tomorrow
	am/is/are being naughty shows that it doesn't	
e.g. I was eating when the dog ran past me.	happen every day.	
➤ **Past Perfect** = to show which action took	➤ **Present Perfect** = to show action is completed	➤ **Future Perfect** = to show that
place further back in the past, e.g.	(has/have + participle)	an action will be completed in the
(had + participle)	e.g. I have eaten already.	future (will/shall+have+participle)
After I had brushed my teeth, I ate breakfast.		e.g Tomorrow at 10;00 she will have eaten her burger.
➤ **Past Perfect Progressive (continuous)** = when	➤ **Present Perfect Progressive (continuous)** = to show something has been going on for a while but we expect it to change	➤ **Future Perfect Progressive (continuous)** = to show an action will take place over time but we don't know for how long
things had been going on for a while before it stopped or something else happens	(has/have been + ing)	(will/shall + have + been + ing)
(had + been) + (past + ing) e.g. You had been tired, but then you started going to bed earlier.	e.g. We have been going to the same school for ten years now, but not for much longer.	e.g. By next week they will have been painting the wall for a week already.
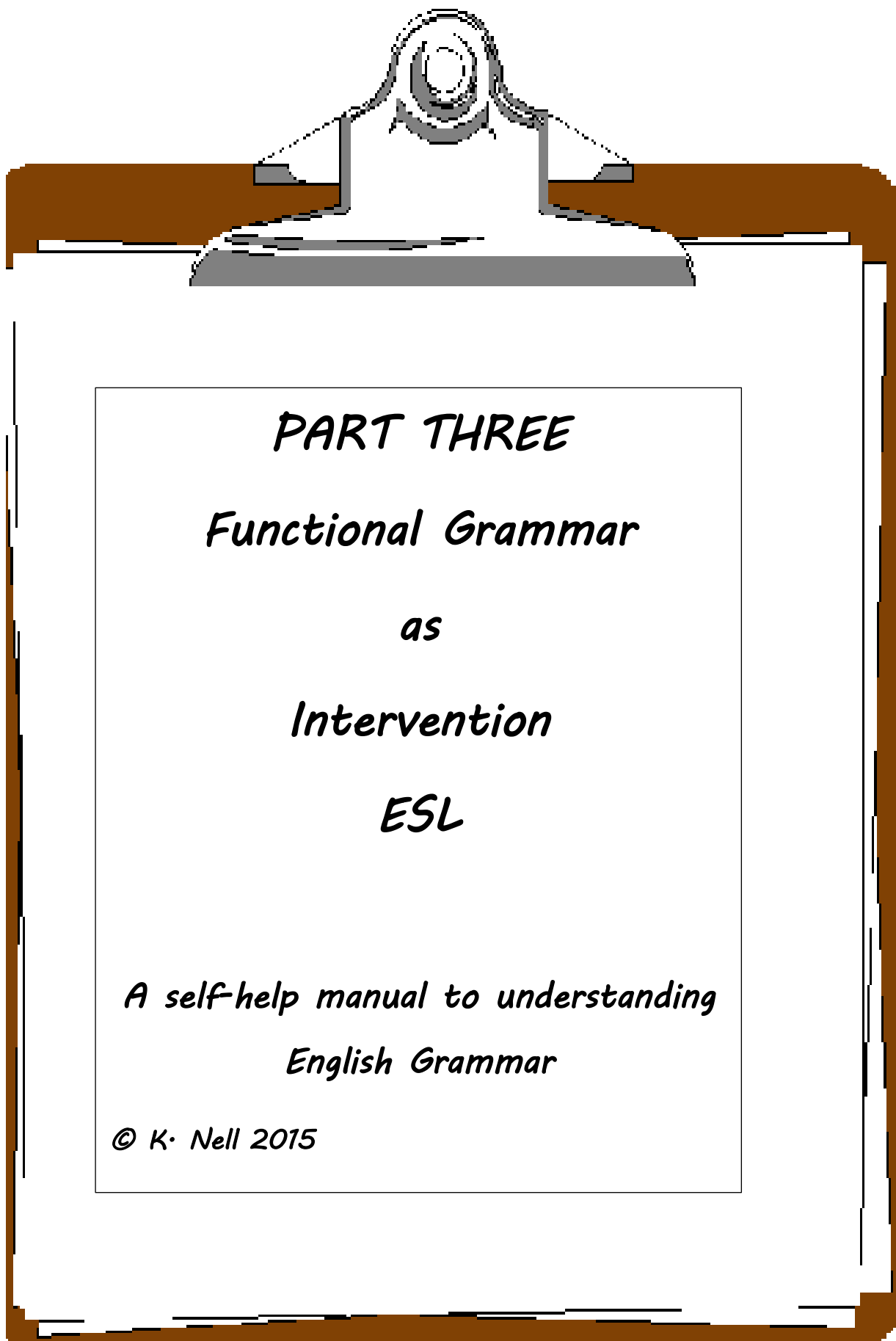
PART THREE

Functional Grammar

as

Intervention

ESL

A self-help manual to understanding English Grammar

© K. Nell 2015

Welcome to the THIRD part of the programme on improving your English grammar!

- ✓ Keep Part ONE and TWO at hand so that you can refer back to certain aspects of Functional Grammar as we continue.

In this section we are going to address some of the English Grammatical concepts that most learners struggle with.

You are going to look at a more FUNCTIONAL approach to help you understand and apply complex concepts better.

2

This is what you already know about English sentences:

> - CLAUSES (sentences) in TRADITIONAL English all contain a SUBJECT + VERB + (OBJECT).
> - In FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR the **subject = theme** and the **verb + other information = rheme**
> - You also know that all clauses contain **participants** and **Processes + extra information**.

> ## We start with :

Active and Passive Voice

(tense)

You are now going to work with VERBS (PROCESSES) again. Remember VERBS/PROCESSES indicate how, where and when actions take place. The next aspect of TENSE you will learn is VOICE.

This is not the voice you speak with ☺ but refers to the **relationship** between **the subject (participants)** and the **verb (process)** in a clause.

***Quick recap…….

Example 3.1

Clause: (senthence)	John	eats	a pizza
Traditional English	Subject	VERB	Object (direct)
Functional Grammar	PARTICIPANT	PROCESS	PARTICIPANT
	theme	rheme	

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The rules for ACTIVE and PASSIVE Voice state:

1). There must be a *DIRECT OBJECT* for passive to take place

2). The tense stays the same for the passive voice

So, in the sentence (example 1 above):

S	V	O
John	/ eats /	a pizza.

We traditionally say this is the active sentence, because the action is taking place – "eats". It is also clear who does the eating: JOHN

*Note that the action takes place in the present.

In the sentence:

O	V	S
A pizza	/ is eaten /	by John.

The **SUBJECT** of the **VERB** is now the pizza. ***(Remember that everything in front of the VERB is always the SUBJECT?)

What does this now mean?

*** It simply means that if you want to know **What** was done by **WHO** to the pizza, this would be the best way to answer the question. This is called **PASSIVE VOICE.**

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If you stick to the following quick rule for forming Active and Passive you will never have a problem (in traditional English Grammar)☺

S   V   O   (- tense) + (3ʳᵈ column verb)

THUS: John eats a pizza.   (active)

A pizza is eaten by John.   (passive)

- ✓ This means that when you are asked to rewrite a sentence into the Passive in an exam, you simply make use of this model.
- ✓ The model illustrates what happens when you turn an active verb into a passive verb.
- ✓ The **SUBJECT** and **OBJECT** switch places (S becomes O and O becomes S)
- ✓ The **(- tense)** means that you **NEVER CHANGE THE TENSE.**
- ✓ This means that the tense of the active sentence stays the same for the passive sentence.
- ✓ The + (3ʳᵈ column verb) means that you need to use the 3ʳᵈ column form (perfect tense) of the verbs for the passive, e.g. eat / ate/= is/was eaten
- ✓ A sentence without a **DIRECT OBJECT** cannot be written into then passive.

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From a **FUNCTIONAL** point of view active and passive is seen as follows:

EXAMPLE 3.2

Clause:	John	eats	pizza
active	Participant 1	Process 1	Participant 2
passive	Participant 2	Process 1	Participant 1

Thus:

- ✓ Participant 1 switches places with participant 2
- ✓ The tense does not change
- ✓ The process follows the same rule a for traditional English: the 3rd column verb is used
- ✓ The reason for numbering the participants: all nouns are participants in a functional clause
- ✓ The reason for numbering the process: some clauses contain more than one process (verb)

WAIT! THERE IS MORE

BUT FIRST:

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Activity Time ☺☺☺

Rewrite the following active sentences into the passive by using the model.

1. Sue loves her mother.

   ....

2. The dog chased the cat.

   ....

3. Bill and Chad were singing songs.

   ....

ANSWERS:

1. Her mother is loved by Sue. ✓
2. The cat was chased by the dog. ✓
3. Songs were sung by Bill and Chad. ✓

GREAT JOB!!!!!

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Of course things do not always stay this simple ☹

What happens when you get a sentence with more than two participants (nouns/doers) and PROCESSES (verbs)?

EXAMPLE 3.3

CLAUSE	John	eats	pizza	but	Mary	washes	dishes
active	Participant 1	Process 1	Participant 2	Conjunction	Participant 3	Process 2	Participant 4
passive	Pizza	is eaten	by John	but	dishes	are washed	by Mary
	Participant 2	Process 1	Participant 1		Participant 4	Process 2	Participant 4

EASY PEASY

> **My suggestion is to:**
>
> ➢ Isolate all processes as your first step
> ➢ Highlight all the participants (nouns) in blue
> ➢ Highlight all the verbs in yellow
> ➢ Some verbs might not have an object (this means there is no passive form of the verb and it cannot change)
> ➢ Now you simply apply your model for active/passive for each of the SVO structures in the sentence.
> ➢ The sentence must still make sense after the changes

Let's try: rewrite the following into the passive

1. Manny eats a pizza while Steven does homework.

2. The birds ate seeds but Polly chewed an apple.

....

3. John and Mary wash dishes but Mom watches television.

....

....

Answers:

1. Homework is done by Steven, while a pizza is eaten by Manny.✓
2. Seeds were eaten eaten by the birds but an apple was chewed by Polly.✓
3. Dishes are washed by John and Mary but television is watched by Mom.✓

SUPER WORK !!!!!

Remember: ask the question

What is done to what/whom by what/whom?

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Direct Object

You will have noticed that an active clause cannot be written in the passive voice if there is no DIRECT OBJECT.

No need to feel under the weather because you can't remember what a *direct object is.*

I will explain…..

➢ There are two types of objects:

Direct Object (DO)	Indirect Object (IO)
Answers WHO/WHAT after the process (verb) e.g. Anne bakes <u>a cake.</u>	Always tells you : To whom/what OR for whom/what e.g. Anne bakes a cake for <u>her mom.</u>
Thus the participant directly following the process.	Thus the participant following the words **to/for**

Quickly identify the direct object and indirect objects in the following clauses:

1. John kicks the ball. (DO) …………………………………………….
2. I write a letter to my friend. (DO) …………………………………… (IO) ……………………………………
3. Mary opens the door for her mother. (DO)…………………………. (IO) ……………………………………………..

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Answers:

1. The ball

2. (DO) a letter   (IO) my friend

3. (DO) Mary   (IO) her mother

WINNER

****What does this then mean for active and passive voice?****

Look at the clause below:

Sam writes to her mother.

✓ Can I answer **WHAT** is written?   NO = no direct object

✓ Can I answer **TO WHOM** is written?   YES = indirect object

✓ Thus: her mother is an indirect object.

✓ I cannot rewrite this clause in the passive:

*Her mother is written by Sam (ungrammatical clause)

Ready to
Move on to
TENSE

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INTERVENTION ACTIVITY (self-study)

LEARNING about TENSE

*** You need to be able to use the correct verb tense if you want to express yourself clearly when speaking or writing. ***

☺ ☺ ☺

In this activity you will be revising when to use which tense and where. I have attempted to simplify the rules of the different tenses so that you may find it easier to understand when studying on your own. I hope that you enjoy this fun way of dealing with tense. I love taking short cuts! I hate learning rules and I know you do too. Let's go! ☺

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3. WHAT YOU ALREADY KNOW …

By now you already know that there are THREE basic tenses. Those are: PRESENT simple, PAST simple and FUTURE simple. These tenses are also known as indefinite tenses because the actions **DO NOT HAPPEN AT A SPECIFIC (definite) TIME**, but regularly, always or often. There are **TIME WORDS** to help you identify the indefinite tenses.

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4. There are 12 different tenses in English Grammar.

This means that there are specific times and less specific times when actions start and finish. Refer to your tense diagram to review the 12 different tenses.

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Summary of the Indefinite tenses (SIMPLE TENSES)

	Present	Past	Future
When to use	Actions that happen regularly/often/always.		
Clue words	Today Often Always Everyday Usually	Yesterday Last week Previously In the past	Tomorrow Next week Soon In the future

☺ Close the columns with a piece of paper and see if you can repeat the clue words without peeking.

☺ Then see if you can redraw the whole column on your own. Keep on trying until you succeed!

You are now ready to move on …

I want you to think '**TIME**' when dealing with tense. It makes sense to make use of a **TIMELINE** when working with tense. Let's see how this works.

✲✲✲

Remember that SFG refers to *participants* and *processes*? Participants are all the "doers" in clauses and processes are all the "actions" of the doers in clauses.

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☞ **PRESENT, PAST and FUTURE TENSES:** **TIMELINE**

Example: I brush my teeth every morning.

Past (before Present)	Present	Future (after Present)

brushed   **brush**   **will brush**

- ✓ A timeline will help you to identify and place the time that an action took/takes/will take place. The Present is always in the middle of the line, the past to its left and the future to its right.
- ✓ Remember to use your **TIME WORDS (page 1)** to guide you towards using the correct tense.

► ACTIVITY 1

Draw your own timeline on paper for each of the following sentences. Indicate the tense of the verb with an X on the line.

1. I <u>love</u> hot chocolate.
2. Lee <u>took</u> her dog to the parlour last Saturday.
3. Mom <u>cooks</u> supper every day.
4. We <u>will go</u> to the mall soon.
5. John <u>met</u> Kyle previously.

*ANSWERS

1. Example answer

Past   √   PRESENT   Future

Love

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2. Past tense   √

3.Present tense   √

4.Future tense   √

5. Past tense   √

Seeing the light? You are now ready to look at tense in a different manner. We will investigate how SFG can make tense easier.

➢ **Remember that in SFG:**

➢ **we refer to "doers" (nouns) as PARTICIPANTS**

➢ **We refer to "actions" (verbs) as PROCESSES**

When dealing with tense you may think of asking the question: When does the process take place in the clause?

Use your tense diagram to identify the clue words which tell you when the process takes place.

When dealing with more than one participant and more than one process in one clause it is often very hard to apply the correct tense. In the example sentence below there are TWO processes taking place at TWO different times. How do you decide what tense belongs where in such a clause?

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EXAMPLE:

*After Sally **had eaten** a sweet, she **brushed** her teeth.*

Past perfect / **past** / *present perfect* / *present continuous* / **present** / *future continuous* / *future perfect*

1   **2**

(had eaten)   *(brushed)*

STEPS: **a) Write down all the participants in the clause**

         b) Write down all the processes in the clause

         c) Now look at the processes and determine which process

            took place first / second and number the processes accordingly.

In the example clause, the process of "eating" took place before the process of "brushing". It is then correct to say that process 1 (eating) happened furthest away from the present and process 2 happened closer to the present but still in the past. Indicate the processes on the timeline accordingly and you will see how easy it is to identify the correct tense.

You further have to remember that continuous tense contains -ing connected to the verb. This means that you cannot lose the -ing when changing from one tense to another. The -ing simply indicates that a process is not incomplete. For example:

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We *are eating pizza.*

Past continuous	Present continuous	Future continuous

✓ The tense is present (are)

✓ You cannot tell when the eating will be finished; therefore the arrow is drawn parallel to the time line and does not touch it.

✓ The verb (eating) carries -ing to indicate that the action is incomplete.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE ON TENSE!

Rewrite the following clauses into the tense indicated in brackets.

Use the tense
sheet and
draw time
lines to answer
the questions

ohn runs to school. (present perfect tense)

amara is going to the mall. (past)

e booked tickets. We went on holiday. (link the two clauses

th after and correct the tense)

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Example answer: Sarah has just eaten a pizza.

Participants	Processes	Extra information
Sarah + pizza	has eaten	When: just now = present perfect tense
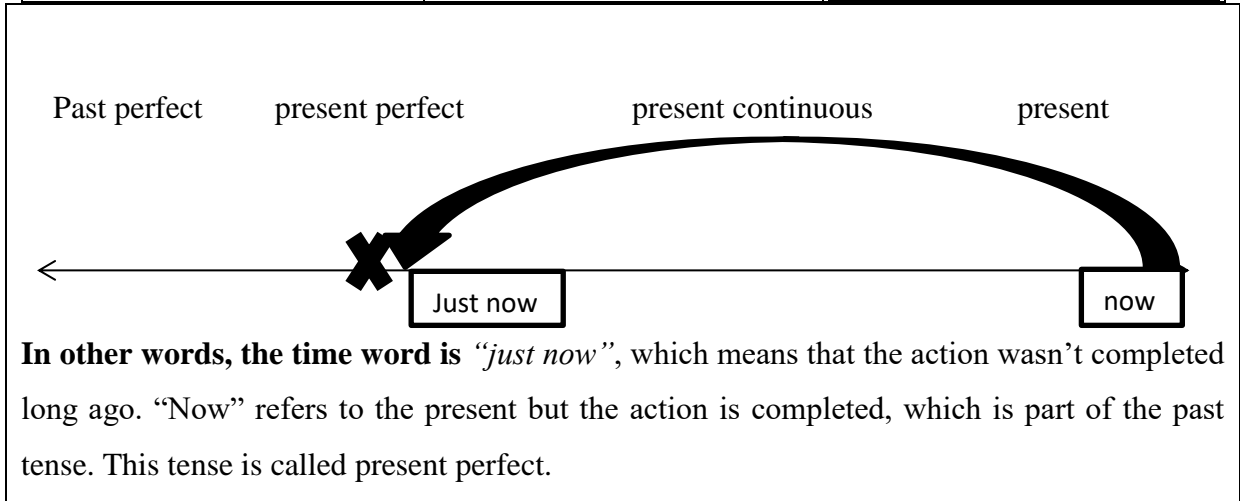
Past perfect   present perfect   present continuous   present

X

Just now

now

In other words, the time word is *"just now"*, which means that the action wasn't completed long ago. "Now" refers to the present but the action is completed, which is part of the past tense. This tense is called present perfect.

The answers to the tense questions follow below.

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Answers to tense test

1. **Participant: John + school**

   Process: runs

   When: at present = present tense

Past perfect	Present perfect	Present

   Has run — **runs**

   John *has run* to school. √

2. **Participants: Tamara + mall**

   Process: is going

   When: currently = present continuous tense

   Past continuous — Past tense — present perfect — Present

   was going — is going

   Tamara was going to the mall.√
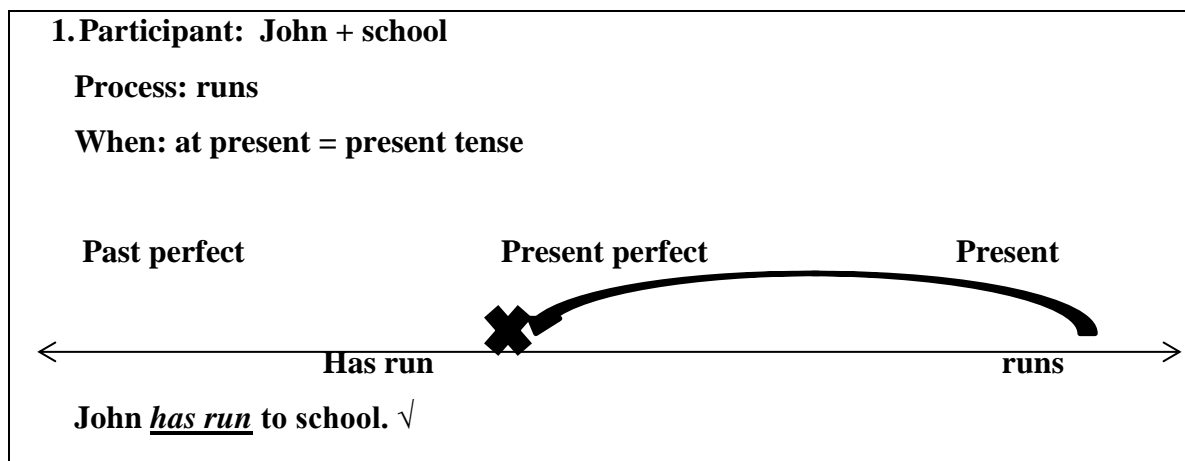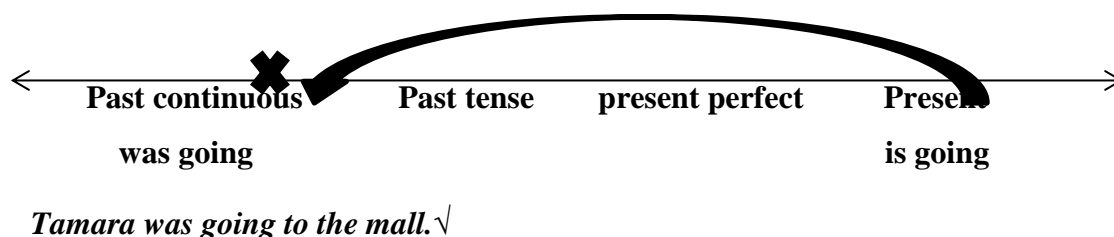
3. **Participants: we + tickets + holiday**

   Processes: booked (process 1) + went (process 2)

   Extra information: when? = after = past perfect

   Past perfect — Past — Present Perfect — Present — Future

   After / had bought — went

   PROCESS 1 — **PROCESS 2**
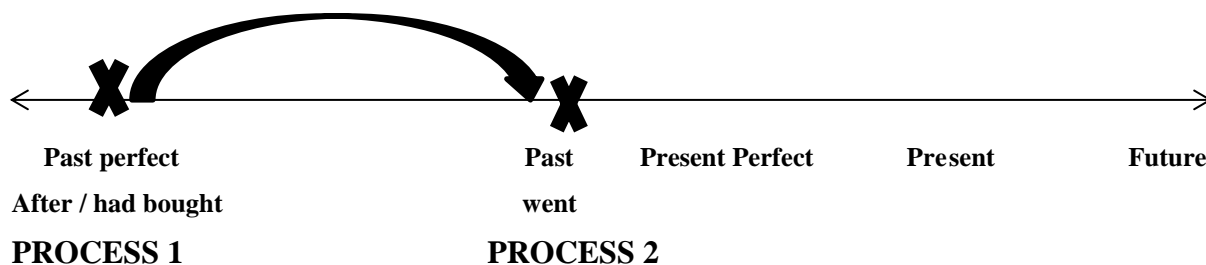
   After we had bought tickets, we went on holiday.

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You have done an amazing job learning all on your own!

The final test is to see how well you understand what you have learnt so far.

Look at the picture below and complete all the set activities. The following activity will require you to make use of the separate tense table sheet in order to identify the correct tense.

PICTURE 1

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1. Write down all the participants, processes and circumstances from the picture in the table below:

Participants (who and what is in the picture)	Processes (what are they doing/is happening in the picture)	Circumstances (how/where/when/how long/why/for what/as what/reason/description of participants and processes)

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For every process there can be one or more participants.
Use the table above to answer the following questions.

2. *Write down one process from the picture as well as one participant.*

....

....

3. *Write down another process from the picture as well as two participants.*

....

....

....

4. *Write down possible circumstances for the two processes and participants you chose in number 2 and 3. Create two clauses (sentences) in which you add extra information (circumstances).*

Example: The mother wears a pink suit while she is thinking of wearing a warm coat.

4.1   ....

....

....

....

....

4.2   ....

....

....

....

....

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5. Use picture 1 above to write a paragraph about all the participants, processes and circumstances. Your paragraph must:

- ✓ Have 5 clauses (sentences)
- ✓ Contain one or more participants in a clause
- ✓ Contain one or more processes in a clause
- ✓ Contain circumstances in the form of adjectives (description of participants) and adverbs (description of processes) for all clauses.
- ✓ Must keep the same tense throughout

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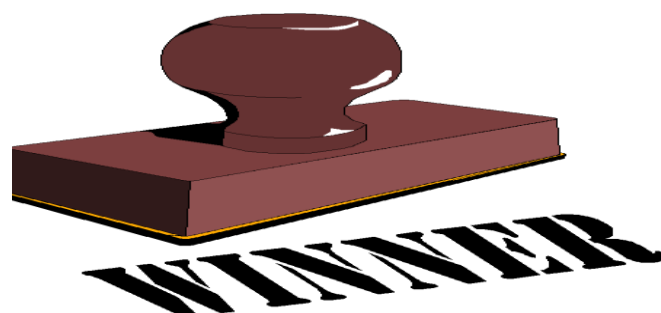
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Please hand in your completed test to be assessed by your teacher.

Well done! You have successfully completed Part Three of Functional Grammar.

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Name ....

Has successfully completed

PART THREE

Of the Self-help Intervention

Programme