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CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF WRITING IN POLISH AND SOUTH AFRICAN LANGUAGE CURRICULA FOR GRADES 4–8 AND 4–9¹

ABSTRACT

This study aims at exploring the conceptualisations of writing in the language-oriented Curricula of Polish and South African education in Grades 4–8 and 4–9, respectively. Using Ivanič's model we show how writing is framed in literacy education in Poland and South Africa. The findings suggest in general that curriculum developers in both countries tend to view writing as a set of genres and skills. Comparisons made between Polish and South African curricula reveal some differences both in conceptualising writing and in the presence of discourses of writing. In comparison to the Polish curricula, the South African ones are much more detailed, which what can mainly be traced back to their different formal structure. Nevertheless, implications for policy and curriculum development in both countries include a need for greater consideration of the complexities of writing.

KEYWORDS: writing, curriculum, literacy, Poland, South Africa

STRESZCZENIE

Celem artykułu jest analiza konceptualizacji pisania w podstawach programowych z zakresu języka obcego w polskiej i południowoafrykańskiej edukacji odpowiednio w klasach 4–8 i 4–9. Wykorzystując model Ivanič, pokazujemy, jak pisanie jest ujęte w ramach kształcenia tej umiejętności językowej w Polsce i RPA. Wyniki badań sugerują, że twórcy podstaw programowych w obu krajach mają tendencję do postrzegania pisania jako zestawu gatunków i umiejętności. Porównanie programów nauczania w Polsce i RPA ujawnia pewne różnice, zarówno w konceptualizowaniu pisania, jak i w obecności poszczególnych dyskursów pisania. W porównaniu z polskimi programami, południowo-

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afrykańskie są znacznie bardziej szczegółowe, co wynika głównie z ich odmiennej struktury formalnej. Niemniej jednak, implikacje dla polityki i rozwoju podstaw programowych w obu krajach obejmują potrzebę większego uwzględnienia złożoności pisania.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: pisanie, podstawa programowa, umiejętność czytania i pisania, Polska, Republika Południowej Afryki

INTRODUCTION

There are various disciplines influencing the issue of defining, teaching and assessing literacy in classroom settings, which contribute in a different way to the understanding of literacy. The role of linguistics is to emphasise the language and/or textual dimension of literacy. As noted by Ivanič (2004), opinions about literacy education are usually supported twofold; on one hand by particular ways of conceptualising writing, and on the other hand by particular ways of conceptualising how writing can be learned. In spite of the extending interest in content analyses of writing curricula in different countries, it has already taken place solely in L1 learning contexts, so far no attention has been paid to L2, L3 or so. Hence, in our study we try to address this gap by analysing Foreign Language Curricula for Grades 4–8 in Poland and First Additional Language (FAL) Curricula for Grades 4–9 in South Africa. In the case of South Africa language related subjects are defined as learning areas. Terms being used are Home Language (HL), which should be ideally the First Language (L1) of the pupils, First Additional Language (FAL) and Second Additional Language (SAL). The FAL and SAL can be a foreign language of the pupils, despite the fact of being still an official language in South Africa or a real “foreign” language. The present study explores the current national school curricula, aiming at clarifying the conceptual framework of literacy education in the policy documents of both selected countries. In particular, the focus is on examining the conceptualisations of writing through the lens of Ivanič’s seven discourses (in short: DoWs), which will be described in detail later.

The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 aims at defining writing as a multi-faceted skill as well as presenting Ivanič’s framework devoted to the teaching of writing. Section 3 presents literature review. The design of the study is outlined in Section 4. The results and their discussions are presented in Section 5 and conclusions in Section 6, respectively.

DEFINING WRITING

Writing as an exceptional characteristic of humans plays an important role for future societal and cultural participation, therefore acquiring adequate writing competencies is crucial in the education process. It is assumed that proficient writers should be aware of the functions of language and the rules for their proper, this means socially accepted, use. A number of researchers have proposed various taxonomies for the functions that language can serve (Bühler 1934; Jakobson 1960; Halliday 1973; Goodman 1996), among which Halliday's list of seven functions seems to be the most connected with literacy being used for different reasons. The instrumental (I want) function consists in the use of literacy to get things, to satisfy material needs (e.g., making a shopping list), whereas the regulatory (Do as I tell you or How it must be) concentrates on controlling the behaviour or attitudes (e.g., laws, rules, traffic signs). The interactional (Me and you/ Me against you) function is the use of literacy to interact with others or to maintain personal relationships (e.g., greeting cards, personal e-mails). Literacy used to express individuality or the sense of self (e.g., diaries, scrap books), represents the personal (Here I come) function. The heuristic (Tell me why) function is the use of literacy to explore the environment, to ask questions, to seek and test knowledge (e.g., research reports, surveys). By contrary, when literacy is used to create new words and "to leave the here and now" (Kucer 2014: 29), we refer to the imaginative (Let's pretend) function (e.g., poetry, jokes). Literacy used as a means of communicating information to someone who does not possess it, represents the informative (I've got something to tell you) function (e.g., textbooks, newspaper articles). Halliday (1973) proposed in his model that the text can express at least one function, although it can also serve multiple functions e.g. an imaginative function is used as a "cover" for informative purposes like in the case of the book *Alice in Wonderland* (1988). Even if there is a number of researchers who have delineated various taxonomies for the functions that language can serve, there is to our best knowledge just one specific taxonomy strictly devoted to policy documents, curricula and pedagogical materials related to the teaching of writing. The framework has been created and developed over a number of years by Ivanič (2004, revised 2017). Although based mainly on research and practice on writing pedagogy in Anglophone countries (Ivanič 2004: 224), it has already been applied to some other contexts, e.g., to an analysis of writing in the curricula designed for L1 in Greek preschool education (Tentolouris 2021), German secondary school education in Year 9 (Müller *et al.* 2021), Norwegian education from Grade 1 to 10 (Skar, Aasen 2021) or Danish compulsory education in Years 1–9 (Elf, Troelsen 2021). Based on a multi-faceted understanding of writing, Ivanič's framework consisted in the initial version (2004) of six discourses (*Skills, Creativity, Process, Genre, Social Practices and Socio-political*); and the seventh discourse, *Thinking*, was introduced at the LITUM symposium (Ivanič 2017). A *Skills discourse* highlights applying knowledge of

sound-symbol relationships and syntactic patterns to construct a text (e.g., spelling, punctuation, and grammar) and in this way defines writing competences as having mastery of conventions. By contrary, proponents of the *Creativity discourse* do not focus so much on the linguistic form, but rather on content and style, encouraging pupils to use their imagination and write on topics of interest to them. Therefore, the view of writing which underlies this discourse considers writing competence as a valuable activity and a creative act of an author. As far as a *Process discourse* is concerned, writing is viewed as a set of steps that begins in the writer's mind. Being a complex process it includes e.g. planning, drafting, revising and editing of the author's work. A *Thinking discourse*, added in 2017, focuses on the cognitive aspects of writing, treating it as a tool for exploring and reflecting on information. It was placed between the *Creativity* and the *Process discourses*. Teachers who position themselves within this discourse tend to emphasise the importance of writing to thinking and learning. In the beliefs about writing which underline a *Genre discourse*, not only the product is of great importance, but also the way in which the form is shaped. Therefore, much attention is paid to the role of mastery in terms of learning how to create text features that are appropriate for the social purposes. Teachers who take up the *Genre discourse* focus on modelling of various text-types, shaped by social context. Similarly like Peterson *et al.* (2018) we argue the *Genre discourse* overlaps in some aspects with the *Social Practices discourse*, in which the social functions of written forms are highlighted. Writing is viewed as a purpose-driven communication needed not only in the classroom, but in a real-life context. This discourse can be seen in other words as "a part of 'literacy' more broadly conceived as set of social practices: patterns of participation, gender preferences, networks of support and collaboration, patterns of use of time, space, tools, technology and resources, the interaction of writing with reading and of written language with other semiotic modes, the symbolic meaning of literacy, and the broader social goals which literacy serves in the lives of people and institutions" (Ivanič 2004: 234). In this regard it overlaps with the *Socio-political discourse* as well, which has not developed from linguistic theory, but through the ethnographic study of literacy in people's life. Teachers who emphasise this discourse view writing as a practice involving identity construction and reflection on socio-political power. Learning to write is connected in this understanding with the question "why different types of writing are the way they are" (Ivanič 2004: 225). One of the teachers' roles is to inspire students to develop a critical awareness towards "conventional ways of thinking about the relative social, political, and economic power and status of particular groups in order to construct more powerful identities for all" (Peterson *et al.* 2018: 503).

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this study, we focus on conceptualisations of literacy education in Poland and South Africa. So far few studies have examined this issue from a comparative point of view. Exceptions to this are the works of Foster and Russell (2002), Peterson *et al.* (2018) and Jeffery and Parr (2021), in which various aspects of writing in L1 were brought to light.

Considering the fact that composition studies in the United States have paid little attention to cross-national perspectives on writing and its role in wider cultural contexts, Foster and Russell (2002) concentrated in their edited book on two basic questions: How do the students in China, England, France, Germany, Kenya and South Africa make the transition as writers in their respective dominant language of schooling from secondary to postsecondary level and how do they deal with the demands of academic and discipline-specific writing. Conclusions drawn from findings provided by researchers working within the analysed contexts showed that the process of transition varies from country to country and depends among others on different writing exam cultures.

Using a similar approach to the one we employ in this paper, Peterson *et al.* (2018) focused on beliefs about writing and approaches to teaching writing for the first formal year of schooling in four different countries: the US-American state of Connecticut, New Zealand, the Canadian province of Ontario, and Sweden. Across four jurisdictions, it appeared that Curriculum developers have been mostly influenced by views of writing as *Skills, Process, and Genre discourses*. Jeffery and Parr (2021) explored in their edited book the issue of literacy education on a larger scale in different continents; Europe (Denmark, England, Norway, Germany), Asia (Uzbekistan, Hong Kong), North- and South America (the USA, Chile) and New Zealand. The case studies presented in nine chapters written by researchers working within selected contexts were on one hand treated separately, but on the other hand they formed the basis of a cross-case comparison of findings, offered in a summarising chapter. The findings are very similar to those obtained by Peterson *et al.* (2018) as well as Jeffery and Parr (2021) who also conclude that the emphases in the curricula are, to the greatest extent, on *Skills, Process, and Genre discourses*. Similarly like in the volume edited by Jeffery and Parr (2021), we argue that even if the importance of the analysis of curricula on a national level is high, comparative analyses have the advantage of bringing to light larger policy-setting trends as they are the ones which offer insights into potential strengths and weakness of different systems.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As discussed previously, existing research into curricula has mainly concentrated on L1 but has so far not addressed L2, L3 or so on. Moreover, given that most of the existing few studies have focused on writing development of students in the early Grades of primary or secondary school, in our study we have decided to consider the least studied area, that is, Grades 4–8 for Poland and 4–9 for South Africa. Therefore, this study aims to answer the following two questions in regard to selected Polish and South African Foreign and FAL Language curricula:

- 1) How is writing positioned within curricula designed for Grades 4–8 in Poland and Grades 4–9 in South Africa, respectively?
- 2) To what extent are the discourses of writing (DoWs) outlined by Ivanič present in Polish and South African documents?

DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND ANALYSIS

In order to explore the conceptualisations of writing in the language-oriented curricula we decided to analyse the relevant Sections from the following documents:

- *Podstawa programowa kształcenia ogólnego z komentarzem. Szkoła podstawowa. Język obcy nowożytny. The General Education Core Curriculum for Primary School with Comment. Modern Foreign Language.* (2017). Ministry of National Education. Poland
- *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement. Grades 4–6. English First Additional Language.* (2011). Department: Basic Education. Republic of South Africa
- *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement. Grades 7–9. English First Additional Language.* (2011). Department: Basic Education. Republic of South Africa

Poland and South Africa have their own education systems and differ in their foreign language concepts, therefore before we turn to the analysis of the curricula, we offer at first an insight into their education systems. In Poland children are usually enrolled in school at the age of seven. The latest school reform, which mainly affirms the move away from a three-tier school system to a two-tier one, came into force on September, 1 2017. The greatest structural difference between the old and the new system is thus expressed in the extension of the primary school period from six to eight years. The now eight-year primary school is divided into two stages: first (Grades 1–3) and second (Grades 4–8). Furthermore, the previous junior high school, which covered Grades 7 to 9, was dissolved. Instead of a three-year senior high school a four-year senior high school was created (Grades 1–4). The South African education system is divided into primary and secondary school and again into four phases, namely Foundation Phase (Grade R (Reception) to Grade 3), Intermediate Phase (Grade 4 to 6) and Senior Phase (Grade 7 to 9). Those

three phases comprise the General Education and Training Band (GET), which equals the compulsory schooling time in South Africa. Such is followed by the so-called Further Education and Training Band (FET) (Grade 10 to 12), which is the condition for an entry into tertiary education. Similarly like in Poland the schooling starts in South Africa with 7 years of age. The figure below depicts the specifics of education in the two countries studied, taking into account the Grades analysed in this article.

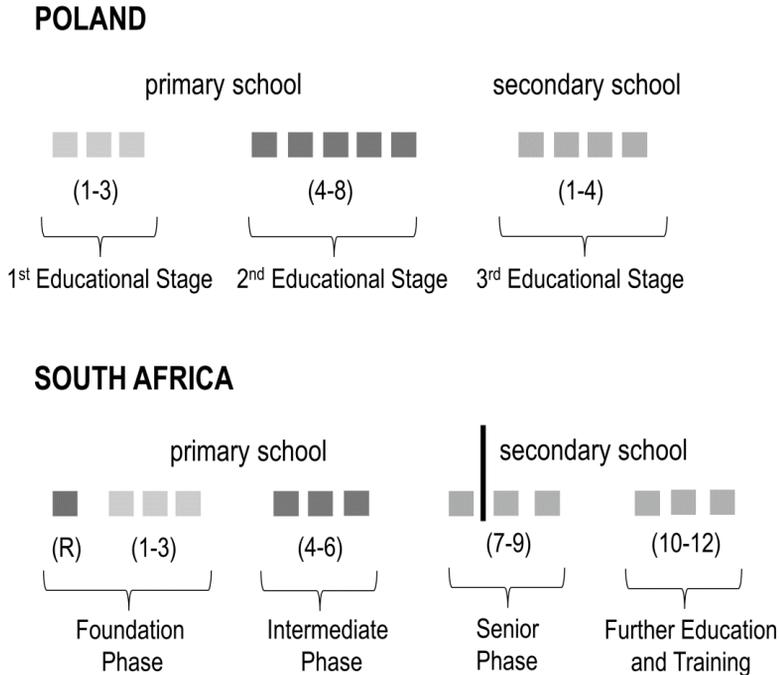


Figure 1. Types of schools and duration of education in years (own elaboration)

THE POLISH CURRICULUM

The current curriculum, *The General Education Core Curriculum for Primary School with Comment. Modern Foreign Language* (hereafter: PP, from Polish: *podstawa programowa*) was introduced in 2017, and consists of a few parts. The first part is rather seen as a preamble to the curriculum, in which overarching aims of primary education are highlighted: “Primary school education is the foundation of education. The task of the school is to introduce the child gently into the world of knowledge, to prepare him or her to perform his/her duties as a pupil and to foster self-development. The school provides a safe environment and a friendly atmo-

sphere for learning, taking into account the individual abilities and educational needs of the pupil. The most important aim of education at the primary school is “the integral biological, cognitive, emotional, social and moral development of the pupil” (PP 2017: 5). It is worth noting that the core curriculum for general education in the field of a modern foreign language is common to all modern foreign languages and covers two educational stages: educational stage I – Grades 1–3 and educational stage II – Grades 4–8. A more detailed picture of the number of lessons to be delivered in a given school year as well as the level of activities and their focus is discussed in Kowalonek-Janczarek (2019). All options (e.g., also bilingual classes included) of the core curriculum for general education in a foreign language have been developed with reference to the proficiency levels for particular language skills specified in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (CEFR) developed by the Council of Europe. The main part consists of three elements: General learning objectives, Teaching content – specific requirements and Conditions and manner of implementation. The curriculum is packaged according to the following elements:

- 1) knowledge of language means
- 2) understanding of utterances (the “equivalent” of reception in CEFR)
- 3) oral and written production (the “equivalent” of production in CEFR)
- 4) responding to oral and written input; oral and written interaction (the “equivalent” of interaction in CEFR)
- 5) processing of statements in oral and written form (the “equivalent” of mediation in CEFR).

THE SOUTH AFRICAN CURRICULA

The recent South African curriculum, the 2011 released *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement* (CAPS) was the answer of the South African government to the quite poor performance at various international assessment tests such as the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (Spaull 2013). Previous curricula based on Outcomes Based Education (OBE) were seen as partly or even mainly responsible for that and seemingly many teachers struggled with the previous so called C2005 or National Curriculum Statement (NCS). Plenty of authors rather saw faulty or not enough support for teachers in relation to language policy (Kretzer 2022). Only one common framework exists for all official language subjects, regardless if HL or FAL or SAL level or if the pupils are L1, L2 or L3 speaker of such language or if the language is a (total) foreign language for them. The English curriculum was only ‘versioned’ into African languages (Heugh 2013) regardless how the teaching of phonics should be different for agglutinative languages.

The analysed curricula are divided into four Sections and a glossary: the first one serves as a general introduction and includes some background information,

general aims as well as time allocation for each and every Phase. It emphasizes the important role of education: The National Curriculum Statement Grades R–12 gives expression to the knowledge, skills and values worth learning in South African schools. This curriculum aims to ensure that children acquire and apply knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful to their own lives. In this regard, the curriculum promotes knowledge in local contexts while being sensitive to global imperatives” (CAPS for Grades 7–9 2011: 4). Interestingly enough both preambles and introductory Sections differ quite significantly. The Polish curriculum does not use any geographical references, unlike the South African ones, which clearly indicate and use geographical terminologies such as *South African schools*, *local context* and *global imperatives*. Even if both emphasize meaningful and applied knowledge or learning, the South African CAPS seem to focus in a stronger way on application of such learning for adulthood or outside of the school environment. While Section 2 provides an overview of language levels, language skills and language teaching approaches, Section 3 is devoted to Content and Teaching Plans for Language Skills in the respective Phases and finally Section 4 deals with informal and formal assessments. The First Additional Language curricula are packaged according to the following skills:

- 1) Listening and Speaking
- 2) Reading and Viewing
- 3) Writing and Presenting
- 4) Language Structures and Conventions.

We read, analysed and coded all three documents independently. The Polish curriculum comprises 47 pages while the South African curricula have together 264 pages. PP (2017), available only in Polish, was translated page by page (to secure the same number of pages) by one of the authors into English. One of the authors analysed the Polish version, whereas the latter the English one. CAPS for Grades 4–6 and for Grades 7–9 (2011) were available in English for both authors. We analysed the curricula first with a search for relevant key terms such as *to write*, *writing*, *written or text*. The next stage of analysis involved a deeper reading, moving beyond the semantic level to focus on the contextual meanings in the analysed texts and more specifically on concepts related to discourses on writing. All references to writing were allocated to their respective DoW. Inter-rater reliability was established through mailing the results and discussing the coding differences until consensus was achieved. After we agreed on common allocations, we counted the total references to writing.

We present the findings in two parts: first, a brief review of writing definitions, and second, an investigation of DoWs represented in the curricula.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: DEFINING WRITING IN THE CURRICULA

The analysis of key terms *writing*, *to write*, *written*, *text* revealed striking differences between Poland and South Africa, which first of all may be traced back to the fact that the curricula differ in their structure as the Polish one is packaged according to the communication modes (reception, production, interaction and mediation) whereas the South African ones according to the skills (listening and speaking, reading and viewing, writing and presenting and language structures). Therefore, it is not unexpected that the term *writing* itself (Polish: *pisanie*) is present in the Polish version of PP (2017) just once (and what is more, only in the Section devoted to Grades 1–3) whereas it appears 177 times in CAPS for Grades 4–6 (2011) and 479 times in CAPS for Grades 7–9 (2011), respectively. As previously noted, the Polish Curriculum is based on CEFR (2001), which replaces the traditional model of the four skills. When the first version of CEFR (2001) was published, splitting writing by distinguishing between written production and written interaction did not meet with much public recognition. The development of e-mail, texting and social media since then shows that, as in many other areas, the CEFR was very forward-looking for its time. “Mediating a text” involves passing on to another person the content of a text to which they do not have access, often because of linguistic, cultural, semantic or technical barriers (CEFR 2020). In this context, it is extremely unexpected to find no instances of the verb *to write* in the infinitive in PP (2017) in comparison to 259 in CAPS for Grades 4–6 (2011) and 158 times in CAPS for Grades 7–9 (2011). Our further analysis shows that while the term *written* in all its forms is present in PP (2017) 24 times, it appears 103 times in CAPS for Grades 4–6 (2011) and 85 times in CAPS for Grades 7–9 (2011). In both countries’ curricula signs of increasing emphasis on the Genre are evident in the frequent use of the term *text*, which emerges with 49 instances in the Polish document, with 1064 in CAPS for Grades 4–6 (2011) and with 780 in CAPS for Grades 7–9 (2011). Table 1 summarises the total number of instances:

Table 1. The total number of instances of the key terms

	The General Education Core Curriculum for Primary School with Comment. Modern Foreign Language. Poland. (2017)	CAPS: Grades 4–6. English First Additional Language. Republic of South Africa (2011)	CAPS: Grades 7–9. English First Additional Language. Republic of South Africa (2011)
<i>writing</i>	1	177	479
<i>to write</i>	0	259	158
<i>written</i>	24	103	85
<i>text</i>	49	1064	780

A closer look at selected allocations revealed that the individual's ability to communicate in a foreign language is the common theme that underpins both the Polish and the South African curricula. The Polish curriculum strongly promotes a communicative approach, which is clearly visible in the summarising Section that states, "the main aim of modern foreign language teaching at all educational levels included in the core Curriculum is effective communication in a foreign language – both in an oral and a written form. The foreign language is a tool that should enable the pupil to achieve his/her communicative goals, appropriate for the given communicative situation and motivation" (PP 2017: 30, translated from Polish by M. K-J).

In contrast to the Polish curriculum, the South African ones are more complex as they focus on four approaches: text-based, communicative, integrated and process orientated. The fundamental starting point is that "the text-based approach and the communicative approach are both dependent on the continuous use and production of texts. (...) The purpose of a text-based approach is to enable pupils to become competent, confident and critical readers, writers, viewers and designers of texts" (CAPS for Grades 7–9 2011: 9). A multi-faceted view of writing therefore includes concerning it on one hand as "powerful instrument of communication that allows pupils to construct and communicate thoughts and ideas coherently" (CAPS for Grades 7–9 2011: 35) and as a tool which enables them to think about grammar and spelling on the other hand. Furthermore, there is a clear gradation of skills across the curricula as writing enables pupils in the Intermediate Phase to learn to write a range of creative and informational texts, using writing frames as support. Pupils in the Senior Phase are therefore expected to write particular text types independently.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: DISCOURSES OF WRITING (DOWS)

In this Section we move beyond identifying explicit references to writing to an exploration of the discourses of writing (DoWs) in the two countries' curricula. The resulting analysis of the discourses demonstrates that some of them are more prevalent within the analysed curricula than others are (with the exception of socio-political). Table 2 shows the total number of references in each document.

The *Genre*, broadly defined, and the *Skills* (even if to a lesser extent) could be seen as the top two. As far as other discourses are concerned, some changes can be observed; while in the Polish document the next three categories are equally *Creativity*, *Thinking* and *Social practices*, in the South African curricula third place is taken by the *Process*. In view of the differences in the length of complete documents in pages on one hand, and on the other hand to get a clearer picture

Table 2. The total number of references in the analysed curricula

	The General Education Core Curriculum for Primary School with Comment. Modern Foreign Language. Poland. (2017)	CAPS: Grades 4–6. English First Additional Language. Republic of South Africa (2011)	CAPS: Grades 7–9. English First Additional Language. Republic of South Africa (2011)
length of complete document in pages	47	122	142
skills	3	12	13
creativity	2	3	2
thinking	2	2	1
process	1	9	9
genre	7	25	28
social practices	2	1	1
socio-political discourses	0	0	0
total number of references	17	52	54

we also counted the percentage distribution of respective DoWs, which is illustrated in Figure 2.

Our analysis reveals that in both countries' documents there are clear references to different types of texts to be produced by pupils. However, it should be noted that the Sections relating to *Genre*, like the whole curricula, vary in their level of detail. Although, based on the analysis of the Polish document, it can be easily ascertained what types of texts are envisaged in the didactic process (e.g., a note, announcement, invitation, greetings, message, SMS, postcard, e-mail, story, blog post), there is a distinct lack of reference to the structure of the text while both the purpose of the text and its linguistic features are presented only implicitly. Thus, despite the prevalence of the *Genre* discourse across the Polish curriculum, the usage of this concept does not include references to each and every text but rather presents a set of activities that the pupil does (e.g., understands and produces short, simple, coherent and logical texts as well as reacts in a written form or processes a text). The purpose of a specific text is not clearly pronounced in the Polish curriculum. Instead, the expectation is that every pupil performs different actions within the above four activities (e.g., describes people, animals, objects, places and phenomena; presents facts from the past and present; uses polite phrases and forms). Therefore, the *Genre* and *Social Practice discourses*, based on the notion that genre involves getting things done through language, are sometimes difficult to

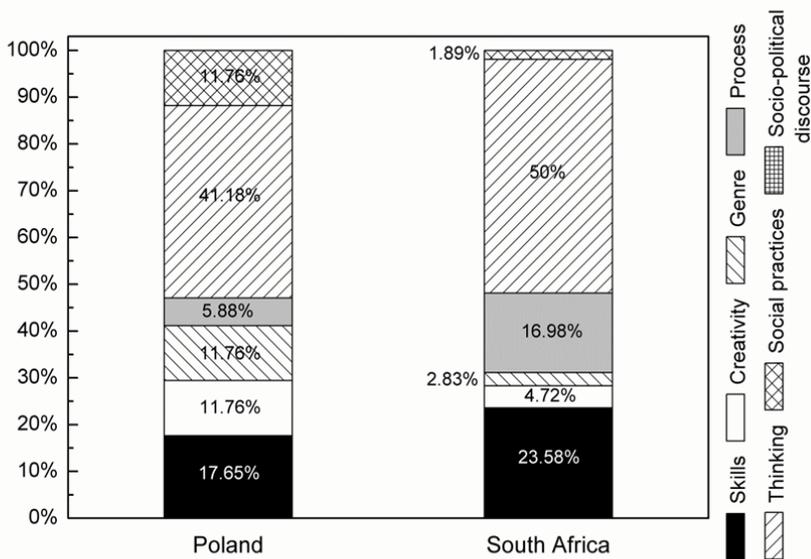


Figure 2. The percentage distribution of respective DoWs (own elaboration)

separate in the Polish context. This implicit discourse may be seen as a consequence of the previously accepted overall concept, around which the whole document is built, that is reception, production, interaction and mediation. Albeit the Polish curriculum clearly stipulates that pupils get to know a variety of texts, no direct connection with the writing purpose exists. Similarly, it is worth noting that in the South African curricula one of the Sections, even if for the respective Grades slightly differently structured, contains a Subsection entitled *Spreads of texts*, which presents the range of text types that pupils should be taught to write. However, we could notice a clear difference: in the South African curricula not only the text type itself is considered, but also other aspects such as: purpose, text structure and language features are covered. A multi-faceted yet clear view of a text as part of the teaching process manifests itself across the whole section. Always when *Genre* is the focus, it describes each and every text (e.g., Curriculum vitae (CV), diary, invitation, sms, essay or letter) in a very detailed way. The analysis further reveals that the *Skills discourse*, which highlights grammar and spelling, is referred to in both countries' documents, even if in a slightly different intensity. In the Polish curriculum, teachers are advised to follow a rather general rule and select grammatical structures carefully so that particular emphasis is placed on such structures that enable the broadest range of requirements set out in the curriculum. The designers of the curriculum inform about the lack of a "list" of grammatical structures, which may seem to be an obstacle. This lack is evident not only because the curriculum is common to all modern foreign languages but also because such a "list" on one hand would not be able to meet the needs of so many different contexts and would limit the creativity of developers of educational materials and

teachers on the other hand. Moreover, it is worth noting that while referring to the pupil, the present tense is being used e.g. The pupil uses a very basic range of linguistic means (grammar, spelling and phonetics) to satisfy the remaining general requirements in the scope of topics indicated in detailed requirements (PP 2017: 20). In this context the present tense is used in South African documents as well. In Sections devoted to *Writing & Presenting* various activities referring to the *Skills discourse* are evident e.g.: A pupil uses appropriate grammar, spelling and punctuation or corrects spelling using a dictionary.

As far as less dominant discourses are concerned, the resulting analysis describes a balanced emphasis on *Creativity*, *Thinking* and *Social practices* in the Polish curriculum. Much attention is paid to developing pupils' creativity, however, the curricula do not state this fact in regard to writing but to different contexts. Both the *Creativity* and *Thinking discourses* would likely be viewed in Poland as part of the broader notion of personal growth through language. Furthermore, we could detect some references directly connected with *Social practices*, however, as previously noted, we identified some overlaps with the *Genre discourse* as well. In the South African context we could detect instances referring to writing creative texts and the usage of creative thinking. Less present references aligning with the *Social practices discourse* are strongly linked with the opportunity to put the process of writing into real-life practice. In South Africa, an explicit discourse on the *Process* exists, with an aim of helping pupils produce well organised texts. Therefore, huge emphasis is put on the process of writing. In the curricula not only are main steps of the whole process (Planning/Pre-writing, Drafting, Revising, Editing, Proofreading and Presenting) described but they are also accompanied by detailed activities within each of them. For example, while planning writing it is crucial to analyse the structure, language features and register of the text type that has been selected, decide on the purpose and audience of a text to be written and/or designed or brainstorm ideas using, for example mind maps, spider web lists, flow charts or lists (CAPS for Grades 7–9 2011: 36). By putting the focus on the *Process*, the South African Curricula emphasize that pupils should be aware of the complexity attributed to writing and acquire the ability to plan and work on their texts in an appropriate way at different stages of this process. In the Polish curriculum, in contrast to the South African ones, almost nothing is said about the procedural character of writing itself. We could detect just one reference implicitly related to planning not only the writing process, but in general various linguistic activities. However, it is worth noting that in the Polish curriculum this assumption is linked with other aspects in view of the fact that planning and analysing the range of linguistic resources and skills needed to perform a given language task fosters not only the development of language skills, but contributes to the development of reasoning in general.

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study was to explore how writing is positioned in the national curricula in Poland and South Africa, focussing particularly on DoWs. We could state that the documents differ both in their formal structure and in the level of detail. The Polish curriculum, based on CEFR (2001), does not include the traditional model of the four skills as the South African ones do. Moreover, the Polish curriculum is considered not to be a methodological guide, indicating the “only right” way to achieve the goals. By its very nature, it provides only a broad framework of education in a modern foreign language (PP 2017: 42). In contrast, the South African curricula are very precise in every aspect. Such conceptualization of writing is indeed not very surprising, but rather in line with the overall much more detailed CAPS curriculum structure for all subjects as a response to the very open and broad curricula C2005 and its (slightly) revised version RNCS. The findings show moreover that although South Africa and Poland are located in two different continents and influenced by different sociocultural and historical factors, they share some common features related to literacy education. Such might be influenced by the fact, that the Post-Apartheid South African curricula were influenced, if not even shaped by international educational discourses as well as the involvement of experts of the Global North, namely European, US-American or Australian educational advisers. The curricula in both countries exhibit strong similarities in terms of two main discourses as signs of great emphasis on the text on one hand, and the ability to communicate in a written form on the other hand, which is clearly manifested in the most frequent references to the *Genre* and *Skills*. These results are in accordance with research results from e.g. Germany, Norway or Uzbekistan. In the South African curricula the *Process discourse* is more present in comparison to the Polish curriculum, therefore more awareness is needed in the latter case as far as the process of writing is concerned. In the Polish curriculum, however, we could identify more overlaps with other discourses. Our study of writing conceptualisations in light of Ivanič’s model allows for a greater understanding of how teachers get either flexible and open or more guided and restricted opportunities to promote writing. The analysed documents undoubtedly create different spaces for developing literacy in their complex views of writing.

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