

**Who Did What to Whom:  
A Transitive Analysis of Amnesty Hearings in South Africa**

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Tässä Pro Gradu – tutkielmassa analysoin kymmentä pöytäkirjaa Etelä-Afrikan totuuskomission amnesty komitean istunnoista. Pöytäkirjat ovat transkripteja oikeudenistuntoa muistuttavista istunnoista, joissa hakija osapuolet ovat osallistuneet väkivaltaisuuksiin apartheid – ajalla. Analyysiin on otettu kohdat, joissa hakijat kertovat väkivallanteoista omin sanoin. Tarkoitus on selvittää, kuinka hyvin kertomukset vastaavat kysymykseen *kuka teki mitä ja kenelle*, sekä mitkä kielelliset ominaisuudet luovat kysymykseen liittyviä epäselvyyksiä.

Teoreettisena viitekehyksenä on M.A.K. Hallidayn funktionaalinen kielioppi (functional grammar), jota on laajalti käytetty muun muassa media-analyyseissa selvittämään kirjoittajan ja tämän edustaman lehden ideologista taustaa ja kokemusta maailmasta. Teoreettisen viitekehyksen lisäksi esitän aluksi yleiskuvauksen totuuskomissiosta ja sen taustalla olleesta tilanteesta Etelä-Afrikassa.

Kolmannessa luvussa analysoin edellisessä luvussa esiteltyä teoriaa käyttäen esimerkin omaisesti yhden tapauksista. Tämän tapauksen teksti on esitetty kokonaisuudessaan, jotta lukija saisi kuvan analysoidusta materiaalista. Tapauksen hakija, poliisi Jeffrey Benzien, haki armahdusta osallisuudestaan ampumisvälikohtaukseen 1980-luvulla, jossa hän ampui terroristina pidetyn vapaustaistelijan. Benzien väitti tapauksen olleen onnettomuus, jolla linjalla hän systemaattisesti pysyy selostuksessaan. Benzien selostaa tapahtumia hyvinkin yksityiskohtaisesti ja selkeästi. Kielelliset epäselvyydet keskittyvät kohtaan, jossa hän selostaa itse ampumista. Hän tekemänsä kielelliset valinnat tekevät hänestä tältä osin tarkkailijan omassa kertomuksessaan ennemmin kuin aktiivisen toimijan. Kausaalisuuhde hänen, ampumisen ja uhrin kuoleman välillä jää epäselväksi.

Neljännessä luvussa esittelen loput analyysin tulokset vertaillen näitä Benzienin tapaukseen. Nämä tulokset on yhteenvedon omaisesti esitetty taulukoissa ja vastaavat yleisesti ottaen Benzienin tapauksesta saatuja tuloksia. Kielelliset epäselvyydet keskittyvät näissäkin tapauksissa varsinaisten väkivaltaisuuksien kuvaukseen. Hakijoiden ja tapahtumien taustaa käytetään selittämässä kielellisiä valintoja. Yleisesti ottaen hakijat vastaavat kysymykseen *kuka teki mitä ja kenelle*, mutta kun kysymystä tarkastellaan osasina, esiintyy epäselvyyksiä kaikissa tapauksissa. Vaikka kausaalisuuhde tekijän, teon ja teon tuloksen välillä jääkin usein näin tarkasteltuna epäselväksi, saattaa selostus kokonaisuutena vaikuttaa huomattavastikin selvemältä. Koska analyysi tehdään lause-tasolla, tulevat epäselvyydet esille hyvin yksityiskohtaisesti. Tutkimuksessa ei ole tarkoitus ottaa kantaa selostuksien totuudenmukaisuuteen, joten analyysi keskittyykin näihin lausetason löydöksiin ja kommentoi suurempia kokonaisuuksia vähemmän.

## Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	5
2. Background.....	9
2.1. An outline of Halliday’s model.....	9
2.2. Transitivity.....	12
2.2.1. Process types .....	13
2.2.2. Participants.....	19
2.2.3. Circumstances .....	21
2.2.4. Agency and voice: the ergative analysis.....	23
2.3. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission.....	25
2.4. Material and methods .....	27
2.4.1. Analysed material.....	27
2.4.2. Method of analysis.....	29
3. Analysis of the Jeffrey Benzien case .....	31
3.1. Background.....	31
3.2. Participants.....	35
3.3. Processes.....	37
3.4. Agency.....	42
3.5. Summary of the Benzien case analysis.....	45
4. Analysis expanded .....	47
4.1. Participants.....	49
4.3. Processes.....	54
4.4. Agency.....	60
5. Conclusion.....	64
5.1. Who did what to whom?.....	66

5.2. Ambiguities explored .....	68
Bibliography .....	71

## 1. Introduction

In this Pro Gradu thesis I analyse transcripts from the hearings of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Amnesty Committee. My aim is to see how well the analysed hearings answer the question *who did what to whom* and try to determine which linguistic features create ambiguity in relation to this question. The theoretical framework for the analysis comes from the functional grammar developed by M.A.K. Halliday.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its committees were established to reveal truth of past atrocities and to help reconcile a nation on its way towards democracy. The commission and its various hearings have been the source of many studies of a variety of academic fields, and they provide an excellent source also for linguistic analysis. They are filled with all human emotions and experience and represent the personal experience of the perpetrators seeking for amnesty. Human experience is a major factor determining language use, and this influence is also central in this study.

Language is a means of representing the world. Or, more precisely, a means of representing 'worlds', perceived or imagined (Bloor, 1995, 105). Halliday's transitivity model and critical linguistics in general have been used to investigate how experience, beliefs and values are encoded in language. This is also the aim of this study. I am going to investigate how the amnesty applicants see their own actions, role and also responsibility in the events they are applying for amnesty. Their experience of the situation is of course subjective. This is interesting especially because the nature of the applicants' jobs or roles in the organisation they functioned for, in the power structures of the time, were such that it required them to use violence. Often it is not a question of the applicants not being aware of the violent nature of their function in the power struggle of the apartheid era society, but whether they have been able to accept the reality as it is seen afterwards in a society that now sanctions such use of violence.

The way an individual experiences an event brings one very close to the concept of truth and the truthfulness of a person's account of his or her experience. The aim of this study as such is not to try and value how truthful the amnesty applicants' stories seem to be. This would require a completely different approach from the one I am taking here. Truth is always a very complicated issue and often linked closely with justice. One could claim that there cannot be justice without truth, and this is also one of the main ideas behind the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, but then the question arises, what is truth? It seems to be a similarly subjective concept as experience, and often the judging of the presently applicable truth is left to a court of some kind. Because of the complicated nature of truth, I have limited the approach of this study to culminate in the following question: how well do the testimonies answer the question *who did what to whom?* This is a question that encompasses the purpose of any testimony or hearing. Full disclosure of past events is one of the central reasons for the founding of the TRC and one of the amnesty requirements.

The experience, beliefs and values encoded in language can be expressed in several ways. Motives and the communication situation also shape the way language is used. The situation here is a courtroom, where the applicants' primary motive is to gain amnesty. The requirements for amnesty are easily accounted for, since they are clearly indicated in the legislation behind the TRC. Logically, one would assume that the primary motive would be to fulfil these requirements. However, how the applicants understand these requirements and what they need to do to fulfil them, depends on various factors to do with the individual applicants. Their education, the quality of their legal representation and even political issues influencing the TRC process as a whole are obvious factors, but more interestingly, the experience of their own guilt and responsibility in the case, their beliefs and values of what is right and wrong plays an important part in the way the applicants understand what would satisfy the amnesty committee.

Van Dijk (1988, 10) points out in his news analysis that when analysing specific discourse types, one's goal is not focused merely on the possible, but on the preferred or typical grammatical structures that characterise language use in such a form of discourse. This is true here too. When one thinks of a court hearing, which the amnesty hearings basically correspond to, one has a certain idea of what the argumentation will be like. One would expect the applicant to try and present his case in a way most favourable to himself. In the case of amnesty hearings, this would include full disclosure of what happened, which then would be realised by clear causal linguistic structures. Therefore, a good question for measuring the fulfilment of this requirement, and through it the experience, beliefs and values of the applicant, is asking how well the applicant's testimony explains *who did what to whom?* This question has been used in studies on news language, which often are interested in questions of how causal relations are presented in differently motivated newspapers.

As mentioned above, the analysis is based on the system of transitivity developed by M A K Halliday in his functional grammar, with some modifications and additions from other linguists like Roger Fowler, Paul Simpson and Tony Trew. The Hallidayan model suits this study well, because an important feature of Halliday's approach is its insistence on studying actual instances of language that have been used by speakers and writers. A text in Halliday's terminology is a chunk of language that is actually spoken or written for the purposes of communication by real people in actual circumstances (Bloor, 1995, 4). The material studied here are exact transcripts from actual amnesty hearings, i.e.- transcripts of the oral court hearings. Both spoken and written texts are equally valid as objects for analysis in the Hallidayan approach. The studied material includes only spoken texts, although also written statements were occasionally read out in the hearings.

The structure of this study is as follows: first presented are the theoretical background for the analysis and other background issues for the study. Second, one hearing case is analysed

in detail, and third, the rest of the cases are studied in a similar manner as the first case. Finally, the conclusion part summarises the findings and tries to answer the questions presented in this introductory chapter.



## 2. Background

In this chapter I will present the theoretical background for the study. This chapter also gives a short introduction to the background situation in South Africa during the time of the Amnesty committee hearings. The *Material and Methods* part of this chapter gives more information on the analysed material, explains further the choice of this particular material as the source and describes the actual method of analysis.

As already mentioned, the analysis in this study is based on the functional grammar of M A K Halliday. Halliday's grammar model has been used widely, ranging from analysis of media language to studies of early language development in children. The most popular sources for media language analysis have been newspaper topics dealing with politics and the way violent events in Europe and Africa have been reported. For example Tony Trew (1979), Roger Fowler (1994) and Paul Simpson (1993) have used modified versions of Halliday's model for this purpose. These studies concentrate on analysing the beliefs and values reflected in the way newspapers choose to write their reports, a goal very similar to the one in this study. Therefore some of the adaptations of Halliday's model used by these linguists are used in this study and explained in this chapter and later in the actual analysis chapters.

### **2.1. An outline of Halliday's model**

According to Halliday (1994, 25), there are two significant ways of labelling a linguistic unit, one is to assign it to a class; the other is to assign a function to it. Many familiar linguistic terms are either class names or function names. Terms such as verb, noun and adjective are names of classes and terms such as subject, object and complement are names of functions. Halliday calls his approach to grammar functional, because "it is designed to account for how the language is used". This includes trying to find out what are the purposes

that language serves for us, and how we are able to achieve these purposes through language use. More than this, Halliday (1976, 9) explains the functional approach to mean seeking to explain the nature of language in functional terms: seeing whether language itself has been shaped by use, and if so, in what ways – how the form of language has been determined by the functions it serves. Functional grammar and its terms have been created for this purpose. As explained by Halliday (1994, 29), the purpose of functional labelling is to provide a means of interpreting grammatical structure in such a way as to relate any given instance to the system of the language as a whole.

The word function in linguistics is broadly associated with grammatical functions and the communicative function of utterances. To these, Halliday associates metafunctions, or purposes, which underlie all language use. He proposes that language performs three functions: ideational, interpersonal and textual.

The interpersonal function of language allows for the interaction between people. It enables people to participate in communicative acts with others, to take on roles and to express and understand feelings, attitude and judgements (Bloor, 1995, 9). To paraphrase Halliday (2002, 175), with this function, language serves to establish and maintain social relations, to express social roles, including the communication roles created by language itself such as the roles of questioner or respondent.

The textual function means that language is used to relate what is said or written to the real world and to other linguistic events (Bloor, 1995, 9). This function enables the speaker or writer to construct “texts”, or connected passages of discourse that is situationally relevant; and enables the listener or reader to distinguish a text from a random set of sentences (Halliday, 2002, 175).

The ideational function has also been called the representational function. It denotes that language is seen to be a means of representing the world. Or, in Halliday’s (2002, 175) words:

in serving this function, language gives structure to experience. This function has been defined by Halliday (1971, 332-333) in the following way:

It is through this function that the speaker or writer embodies in language his experience of the phenomena of the real world; and this includes his experience of the internal world of his own consciousness: his reactions, cognitions, and perceptions, and also his linguistic acts of speaking and understanding...

The ideational function can be further divided into experiential and logical components. The experiential part covers meaning as organisation of experience, which is of main interest here. The logical component refers to the generalised logical-semantic relations that are encoded in natural language (Halliday, 1994, 191). This division bears no significant meaning for the purposes of this study, and is therefore not explained any further.

Halliday's functional grammar is based on the notion that all the above-mentioned functions are reflected in the structure of the clause. According to Halliday (2002, 175), a clause serves for the realisation of a number of very general meanings, or semantic options, relating to the interpersonal, ideational and textual functions of language; and these are expressed through various configurations of structural "roles" – functional elements such as process and actor that derive from these basic functions. There are three clause structures that serve to express these largely independent sets of semantic choice: 1) Transitivity structures express representational meaning (the ideational function): what the clause is about, which is typically some process with associated participants and circumstances; 2) Mood structures express interactional meaning (the interpersonal function): what the clause is doing, as a verbal exchange between speaker-writer and audience; 3) Theme structures express the organisation of the message (the textual function): how the clause relates to the surrounding discourse, and to the context of situation in which it is being produced (Halliday, 1994, 179).

The ideational function and with it transitivity structures are used in the analysis in this study. The system of transitivity, its usage in linguistic analysis and especially its functional elements are explained more in detail in the next chapter.

## **2.2. Transitivity**

Transitivity is the grammatical system through which the ideational function of language is realised. To paraphrase Simpson (1993), the system of transitivity is formed by the selections we make between the different ways of encoding in language our experience of a particular event. Transitivity is a central part of the analytical toolkit in critical linguistics. Simpson (1993, 104) describes its usage:

It has been employed to uncover how certain meanings are foregrounded while others are suppressed or obfuscated. In this way, the transitivity model provides one means of investigating how a reader's or listener's perception of the meaning of a text is pushed in a particular direction and how the linguistics structure of a text effectively encodes a particular 'world-view'.

Simpson refers mainly to written text here, but the same can be said to apply to the type of language analysed in this study, which basically combines written and spoken language.

Although the hearings are based on spoken language, the applicants' arguments have also been available in written format and it is quite likely that their oral statements are fundamentally based on the written applications. More importantly still, the applicants' main object is to convince their audience of the acceptability of their perception of reality.

A central concept of transitivity is that reality is made of processes. According to Halliday (1994, 106), the world of experience is construed into a manageable set of process types. He explains the notion of process further:

Our most powerful impression of experience is that it consists of 'goings-on' – happening, doing, sensing, meaning, and being and becoming. All these goings-on are sorted out in the grammar of the clause.

Processes have potentially three components; the process itself, participants involved in the process and circumstances associated with the process. These components are expressed by verb phrases, noun phrases and adverbial or prepositional phrases respectively, for example:

PARTICIPANT	PROCESS	CIRCUMSTANCES
The cat	sat	on the mat

In this example the process components are expressed by the most typical word classes. There are also incongruent forms of expression, with process components of one type expressed by classes primarily associated with another type (Halliday 2002, 180), for example:

Dinner of roast beef was followed by a swim

Here the processes of eating and swimming are expressed by nouns; the temporal relation between them by the verb *follow*, and of the two participants, one is omitted and the other (*roast beef*) is made to qualify dinner (Halliday 2002, 180). These kinds of deviations from the norm are of course extremely interesting from the analysis' point of view because they may reveal more about the speaker's experience behind language use than more generic forms of expression.

There are different types of processes, classified according to the type of a verb that represent them, and different types of participant depending on the process type. The circumstantial clause elements express time and place of the event described in the process and occur regardless of the process type.

### **2.2.1. Process types**

Halliday (1994, 107) classifies processes into three main categories: material, relational and mental processes. This division is based on the basic difference between inner and outer experience: between what we experience as going on in the world around us, and what we experience as going on inside ourselves, in the world of consciousness and imagination (Halliday 1994, 106). The grammatical categories of inner and outer experience are those of

mental and material processes. The need for adding one more category, namely that of relational processes, is explained by Halliday (1994, 107) in the following:

...there is a third component to be supplied, before this can become a coherent theory of experience. We learn to generalise: to relate one fragment of experience to another...Here the grammar recognises processes of a third type, those of classifying and identifying...

Grammatically, the process types differ mainly from each other in the kinds of participant roles associated with them. These participant roles are defined in the following sections of this chapter. It is to be noted that the systematic construction of processes is accommodated differently in the grammar of every language. Halliday's model presented here therefore naturally describes how the English system operates and is not to be taken as linguistically universal.

Halliday (1994, 107) also defines three additional process categories, which can be placed on the boundaries of the three main process types: 1) existential processes, located between material and relational processes, 2) verbal processes between relational and mental, and 3) behavioural processes between mental and material ones. Existential processes, as the name suggests, are the processes concerned with existence, by which phenomena of all kinds are simply recognised to 'be' – to exist, or to happen. Verbal processes are symbolic relationships constructed in human consciousness and enacted in the form of language, like saying and meaning. Behavioural processes represent outer manifestations of inner workings, the acting out of processes of consciousness and physiological states.

Several modifications of Halliday's process type division have been used by linguists. For example, according to Simpson's (1993, 88) simplified classification of process types, "processes can be classified according to whether they represent actions, speech, states of mind or simply states of being." These correspond to Halliday's material, verbal, mental and relational processes respectively. For this study I will use the three main process categories of Halliday's classification, i.e. - material, relational and mental processes.

### 2.2.1.1. Mental processes

Mental processes are processes of sensing. They are processes of feeling, thinking and seeing that cannot be substituted by *do*. These three – feeling, thinking and seeing Halliday (1994, 118) sees as sub-types within the category of mental processes. He labels them in the following terms: 1) PERCEPTION processes (‘seeing’, ‘hearing’), 2) REACTION processes (‘liking’, ‘hating’) and 3) processes of COGNITION (‘thinking’, ‘understanding’). Participant roles associated with mental processes are SENSER and PHENOMENON. SENSER is the participant who experiences the process. The nature of mental processes requires that the SENSER participant is human, or human-like; the significant feature of such a participant is that of being ‘endowed with consciousness’ (Halliday, 1994, 114). The participant role PHENOMENON is that which is ‘sensed’ – felt, thought or seen. The mental process type and its participant roles can be illustrated with the following example from Bloor (1995, 117):

SENSER	PROCESS	PHENOMENON
I	heard	the shots

The process in this example is a perception process. The PHENOMENON is what is been felt or perceived, in this case heard. This example also illustrates the need for a conscious being in the participant role SENSER.

PHENOMENON can also be realised as a full clause, which in its turn expresses a process. This can be seen in the following example from an amnesty hearing transcript analysed in this study:

SENSER	PROCESS	PHENOMENON
I	realised	that Kriel had been wounded

Here the SENSER, *I*, is not sensing a thing as in the previous example, but a fact, i.e. *that Kriel had been wounded*. Halliday (1994, 115) calls this a METAPHENOMENON, which he defines as “something that is constructed as a participant by projection – that is, as indirect or ‘reported’ discourse, typically in the form of a *that* clause”.

### 2.2.1.2. Relational processes

Relational processes are processes of being. This is not ‘being’ in the sense of existing however. Relational processes signal that a relationship exists between two participants without suggesting that one participant affects the other in any way (Simpson 1993, 91). Halliday (1994, 119) distinguishes several subcategories of relational processes depending on the kind of relationship existing between the two participants. Also several participant role pairs can be identified depending on the type of relational process. Relational processes will be treated as an undivided category for the purposes of this study, because a more detailed analysis consisting of subcategorising the different processes within the relational process type would not add any extra value to the results of the study. However, the subcategories are briefly explained here to give an overall picture of the types of processes falling under the relational process category. Halliday’s (1994, 119) model identifies three main types of relational processes: 1) intensive (‘*x* is *a*’), 2) circumstantial (‘*x* is at *a*’) and possessive (‘*x* has *a*’) processes. Each of these comes in two distinct modes: attributive (‘*a* is an attribute of *x*’) and identifying (‘*a* is the identity of *x*’). Altogether this gives six categories of relational processes as illustrated by the examples in the following table. The examples are from Halliday (1994, 119 - 133).

**Table 1 Categories of relational processes**

<b>Type:</b>	<b>Mode:</b>	<b>Attributive</b>	<b>Identifying</b>
<b>Intensive</b>		Mice are timid creatures	Alice is the clever one
<b>Circumstantial</b>		The cat is on the mat	The best place is on the mat
<b>Possessive</b>		Peter has a piano	The piano is owned by Peter



Halliday distinguishes several participant roles associated with relational processes, of which the main ones are CARRIER and ATTRIBUTE for attributive processes and IDENTIFIED and IDENTIFIER for identifying processes. These are illustrated by the following examples of analysis of relational (intensive) processes:

CARRIER	PROCESS	ATTRIBUTE
Mice	are	timid creatures

IDENTIFIED	PROCESS	IDENTIFIER
Alice	is	the clever one

### 2.2.1.3. Material processes

Material processes are processes of doing, or of action. They express the notion that some entity does something – which might be done to some other entity (Halliday 1994, 110). Hence the participant roles, ACTOR and GOAL. ACTOR is the participant that does the deed. Every material process must have an ACTOR. The second participant, GOAL, is not compulsory. It implies that the action is directed at this participant. GOAL has also been called PATIENT, with slightly different implications. This terminology issue is dealt with more later in chapter *Participants*.

Material processes are not necessarily concrete, physical events; they may be abstract doings and happenings, for example ‘the mayor resigned’ or ‘the mayor dissolved the committee’ (Halliday 1994, 111). Material processes, even the abstract ones, can be ‘probed’ by asking questions such as ‘what did the mayor do?’, thus replacing the process with ‘do’. Halliday (1994, 111) divides two types of material processes, the DISPOSITIVE and the CREATIVE type. The DISPOSITIVE type covers processes where something is done to some other entity, for example, ‘the tourist shot the lion’. The CREATIVE type covers processes where the other entity is brought into being by the process, for example, ‘John built a house’. Because material processes are typically frequent in action-oriented texts, they are the most interesting

process type for this study where the analysed material consists of mainly descriptions of action.

Simpson (1993, 89) makes a more detailed subdivision of material processes, which is used in this study. Firstly, he distinguishes between ACTION processes and EVENT processes based on the type of actor performing the process. ACTION processes are performed by an animate actor, for example:

The lion sprang  
 ACTOR PROCESS

EVENT processes are performed by an inanimate actor, for example:

The lake shimmered  
 ACTOR PROCESS

The police van arrived  
 ACTOR PROCESS

As can be seen from these two examples, using the term ACTOR in both process types is somewhat misleading since it denotes at least some degree of active participation. Simpson, however, does not comment on this or explore the differences between the process types any further. The second of the two examples of EVENT processes is from the analysed material. It illustrates why this further division of material processes is of importance for this study. The ACTOR of the process, *the police van*, is used in a similar way as one would expect an animate actor being used.

Simpson (1993, 89) then divides action processes further into intention processes and supervision processes. Intention processes are performed by an animate actor, who performs the act voluntarily. In the following example from an amnesty hearing, *I* is the animate actor who does something (*hit*) intentionally:

I hit him on the forehead  
 ACTOR PROCESS GOAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Supervention processes also have an animate actor, but the process just happens, regardless of the actions of the actor. In the following example from an amnesty hearing, *we* is the animate

actor, and *had fallen* the supervention process, having happened without the intention of the actor(s):

We	had already fallen	to the ground
ACTOR	PROCESS	CIRCUMSTANCES

Supervention processes present action that denotes that they cannot be performed intentionally, such as *to fall* is this example.

Halliday (1994, 110) talks of a similar phenomenon, but does not categorise material processes according to this feature. He explains that depending from the point of view of the participant (ACTOR or GOAL) some processes are not processes of doing but ones of ‘happening’. This is illustrated by the following example:

The lion	caught	the tourist
ACTOR	PROCESS	GOAL

From the lion’s point of view, this is a process of ‘doing’, one can ask ‘what did the lion do?’, but from the tourist’s point of view it is a process of ‘happening’ and the accurate question would be ‘what happened to the tourist?’.

As mentioned earlier, Simpson’s subdivision of material processes is used in this study, but as Simpson (1993, 90) himself points out, it is not always easy to separate out these subdivisions, it is not always clear, for instance, whether a particular participant role exhibits animacy or inanimacy, or whether a process has been done intentionally or not. These subdivisions should therefore be regarded as a handy approximation rather than as a strictly delineated category.

### **2.2.2. Participants**

The participant functions are the specific roles taken on by persons and objects involved in the process. As has been seen they are not necessarily human or even animate, but can also be inanimate. The main participant roles classified according to the process type they occur in have been presented in the previous chapter. This chapter goes further into the two

participants associated with material processes, ACTOR and GOAL. These can be seen as basic participant roles on which all the other participant terms have been developed from. As said before, ACTOR is the participant who does something to someone or something, whereas GOAL is the optional second participant in the process, the one the process is extended to. However, goal is somewhat too broad a concept for the purposes of this study. Fowler (1994, 75) talks about *affected participants*, a term that covers the same group of participants as the term GOAL. He defines the following roles associated with material processes: OBJECT, PATIENT and RESULT. The two first ones are of interest here. Fowler describes these in the following way:

The most neutral is object, where someone or something is affected in a material way by an action or process, and is considered as a physical entity.

The term patient is generally used to refer to the role of an affected participant who/which is human, or at least animate, and who has something done to them.

The lack of accuracy of GOAL for this study is illustrated by the following example from an amnesty hearing:

I drew the pistol at this white man.  
 OBJECT                      PATIENT

The concept of GOAL would cover both *the pistol* and *this white man*. A more accurate analysis achieved when dividing GOAL further into OBJECT and PATIENT allows for a more specific analysis on the use of the role of PATIENT by the applicants.

Terminology used in the analysed testimonies, especially in reference to the different participants is a worthwhile target of study, because the use of terms can reveal underlying values and beliefs. As Fairclough (1989, 114) says, some words are ideologically congested as such. Terminology analysis could be extended to cover all kinds of words in the material as Fairclough does in his study, but in this case I will concentrate on the nouns used in reference to the participants.

### 2.2.3. Circumstances

Circumstantial process elements provide extra information on the ‘how, when, where and why’ of the process, although they are normally grammatically subordinate to the process (Simpson 1993, 90). Unlike the different participant elements, circumstantial elements occur typically freely in all types of processes and with essentially the same significance wherever they occur (Halliday 1994, 159 – 150). This means that circumstantial elements are often deletable, as is illustrated by the following examples from Simpson (1993, 90):

John kicked the ball hard  
 ACTOR PROCESS GOAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The lion sprang from the bushes  
 ACTOR PROCESS CIRCUMSTANCES

In both of these examples the circumstantial element can be omitted and the remaining clause still makes sense at least grammatically, it is another matter whether omitting the circumstantial element would make the clause meaningless when seen in the context it was used. Halliday (2002, 180) talks of the “peripheral status” of circumstantial elements and says that they seem less central to the process. This may well be so, especially when seen from a purely grammatical point of view, but for an analysis of real language the circumstantial elements may be more important than that. At least in the analysis in this study circumstantial elements carry valuable information, for example, of the terminology used by applicants and even how much they use circumstantial elements to describe the overall scene of events.

Halliday (1994, 151) distinguishes altogether nine types of circumstantial elements. These are presented in the following table collected from Halliday (1994, 152 – 158) to illustrate the kind of information covered by circumstantial elements in a process.

Table 2 Types of circumstantial process elements

<b>Type of circumstantial element</b>	<b>Expresses</b>	<b>Expressed by</b>	<b>Interrogative forms</b>
<b>Extent</b>	Distance, duration	A unit of measurement	<i>How far? How long? How many?</i>
<b>Location</b>	Place, time	Typically an adverbial group or prepositional phrase, for example: <i>down, by the door, Canberra, among friends</i>	<i>Where? When?</i>
<b>Manner</b>	Means, quality, comparison	Prepositions <i>by</i> or <i>with</i> , adverbial group with <i>-ly</i> adverb, prepositional phrases with <i>like</i> or <i>unlike</i>	<i>How? What with? What...like?</i>
<b>Cause</b>	Reason for which the process takes place, intention behind an action, entity on whose behalf action is undertaken	Prepositional phrases, for example: <i>because of, thanks to, for the purpose of, for the sake of, on behalf of</i>	<i>What for? Why? How? Who for?</i>
<b>Contingency</b>	Condition, concession, default	For example: <i>in case of, in spite of, in the absence of</i>	
<b>Accompaniment</b>		Prepositional phrases with such prepositions as <i>with, without, besides, instead of</i>	<i>Who/what else? Who/what with?</i>
<b>Role</b>	Construes meaning of 'be' and 'become'	Typically prepositions <i>as, into</i>	<i>What as? What into?</i>
<b>Matter</b>	That which is described, referred to etc.	Prepositions such as <i>about, concerning, with reference</i>	<i>What about?</i>
<b>Angle</b>	Meaning 'as...says'	Preposition <i>to</i> , or phrases <i>according to, in the view/opinion of</i>	

My intention is not to classify all the circumstantial elements in the analysed material according to these categories. I do not think that would give insight into the way the applicants' experience and help answering the question 'who did what to whom?'. As mentioned earlier, the purpose of the above list is just to give an overall picture of what is expressed as circumstantial elements.

#### **2.2.4. Agency and voice: the ergative analysis**

In addition to the basic transitive analysis described in the previous chapters, Halliday introduces the ergative analysis. It concerns especially material processes and deals with causation and the agency in the clause. The central question in ergative analysis is: is the process brought about from within, or from outside? (Halliday 1994, 162). In other words, is the process brought about by the participant engaged in the process or by some other entity? The following example borrowed from Simpson (1993, 92) illustrates this on clause level:

I broke the vase  
The vase broke

These two clauses are said to have an ergative relationship. A standard transitive analysis classifies 'I' in the first sentence and 'The vase' in the second as ACTORS and 'the vase' in the first as GOAL. Despite this, it is the vase that breaks in both clauses. In the first clause the breaking is caused by an external agency, 'I' but in the second clause no external agent is present, which suggests that the vase broke by itself. This is because there is a set of verbs in English (like *to break*), which can express both patterns and each pattern is said to bear an ergative relationship to the other (Simpson 1993, 93).

'The vase' in the examples has a central role. Through it the process comes to existence. Halliday (1994, 163) calls this role the MEDIUM. He explains this concept in the following way:

Every process has associated with it one participant that is the key figure in that process; this is the one through which the process is actualised, and without which there would be no process at all.

In material processes the MEDIUM, or key figure, is equivalent to either ACTOR or GOAL (OBJECT or PATIENT) of the standard transitive analysis. In addition to the MEDIUM, there can be another participant acting as an external cause called AGENT, or initiator. The following clause pair has been a popular example in illustrating this aspect of agency:

The police exploded the bomb  
The bomb exploded

‘The police’ acts as an external cause in the first sentence but ‘the bomb’ is the MEDIUM in both sentences. To paraphrase Halliday (1994, 164), in the real world there may well have been some external agency causing the bomb go off in the second sentence, but in the semantics of English it is represented as having been self-caused.

The ergative interpretation is connected to the system of voice. Halliday (1994, 168) explains how the system works:

A clause with no feature of ‘agency’ is neither active nor passive but middle. One with agency is non-middle, or effective in voice. An effective clause is then either active or passive.

The second sentence in the example above is thus middle in voice. The first one displays explicit agency, which makes it EFFECTIVE in voice. An effective clause is either active or passive: active if AGENT is the subject, passive if MEDIUM is the subject (Halliday 1994, 168). This means that also a passive clause can bear explicit agency, for example: ‘The bomb was exploded *by the police*’. Agency can also be left implicit by leaving out the ‘by-’ phrase in a passive clause, this is illustrated by the following examples from Halliday (1994, 169):

The glass broke  
The glass was broken



The first example there is no feature of agency thus making the process middle in voice. The second example, however, embodies a feature of agency so that one can ask the question *who by?* The choice whether to include or omit agency from a process constitutes an important part of message construction (Simpson 1993, 94).

The ergative analysis is an very important part of the tools for analysis in this study because it deals with participants and their role in instigating processes and this is exactly what the main question in this study is about: *who did what to whom?* In other words, who do the applicants see as having brought about the events they are telling about, and how do they see their own role in the happenings; are they themselves the participants in the processes or is it predominantly some external entity that caused the action?

### **2.3. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission**

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established in South Africa as a part of the democratisation process following the end of the white minority rule and apartheid in 1994-1995. The situation in the country at the time was very unstable. The last ten years of apartheid rule could more or less be compared to a civil war. The society was divided into two main sides according to racial segregation: black and white. These sides were by no means uniform. Tribal groupings divided the black population and the ancestry of the whites decided their loyalties. The most powerful and well-known of the freedom fighting organisations, the African National Congress (ANC) was, and is, seen as a predominantly Xhosa organisation and the main Zulu organisation, Pan African Congress (PAC) was seen by Xhosas to work for the white government. The apartheid ideology was based on the notion of racial superiority of the Afrikaaner, the descendants of the Dutch settlers, although the whites with English origins did certainly benefit from the system and cannot really claim to be outsiders to all the injustice of the era. The sole purpose of the TRC was to try and bring all these different sides together to form the new so-called rainbow nation.

Together with the introduction of democracy comes a controversy of morals and values. In an authoritative system right and wrong are strictly defined. There is no room for questioning the interpretation of right and wrong by those in power. The rule of the physically strongest applies. This was the case for both the apartheid era government and also inside the black liberation movements, especially for their police force and armed wings. In order to form a new set of beliefs and morals, shared more widely by the segregated South African nation, the whole nation would need to reconcile itself with the past, and the morals and values of the past. This is one of the main reasons for the forming of the TRC and also the intriguing dilemma behind the choice of subject for this study.

As a part of dealing with the past, a system of amnesty was established in order to get those responsible for apartheid era atrocities to tell the truth in exchange for legal amnesty. A successful amnesty applicant would have had to fulfil certain requirements, the most important of which are stated in the beginning of the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act:

...the granting of amnesty to persons who make full disclosure of all the relevant facts relating to acts associated with a political objective committed in the course of the conflicts of the past...

The requirement of full disclosure is especially relevant to this study, because it contains the essential question asked in my analysis, *who did what to whom?* Other requirements are not without interest either, they can be helpful in explaining the motivation behind the choice of structures and terminology used by the applicants. For example, the requirement of political objective included that the applicant had been a member of an organisation, which had a political objective demonstrated by a political agenda and a hierarchical structure. Actions eligible for amnesty would have to been seen as a part of this political agenda and the decision for taking the particular action made by the right body within the organisation's structure. Since most of the amnesty applicants were lower ranking members of their

organisations, responsible for the actual executions of these decisions, they are trying to show in their testimonies that they were acting according to the decisions made in the correct bodies.

## **2.4. Material and methods**

### **2.4.1. Analysed material**

The purpose of this study is to analyse how well do the testimonies answer the question *who did what to whom*. Altogether ten amnesty hearings were included in the study, but because of the length and nature of the hearings, only certain parts of the hearing transcripts were analysed in detail. The selection criteria are explained later in this chapter. The transcripts of the following amnesty hearings were analysed in this study: AM3751/96 J.M. van Zyl, AM3840/96 T.T. Xundu, AM5314/97 J.T. Benzien, AM0063/96 D. Coetzee, AM3920/96 G.J. Niewoudt, AM2891/96 D. Ncamazana, AM0755/96 N. Thyido, AM1638/96 L. Kulman, AM3915/96 D.P. Siebert and AM5282/97 E.M. Nofemela. The transcripts are available on the Internet on the TRC site: <http://www.doj.gov.za/trc/amntrans/index.htm> In the analysis the hearings are referred to with the applicant's surname.

All analysed cases concern the killing of one or several people. This was a conscious choice since killing another human being is among the most serious of offences and I estimated that telling of such events would provide best material for analysis. Almost all cases studied have several applicants, but I have studied the testimony of only one these applicants except in one case (applicants Siebert and Niewoudt), where I have included two testimonies covering the same offence. I have tried to select the hearings so that they would represent the situation of the time from all aspects. About a half of the applicants were granted amnesty. Also, they include equally members of the old police force and members of the black

liberation movements. The claimed membership of the latter group was not always found plausible by the Committee, but this is not relevant to the goal of this study. Finding an equal amount of granted and refused cases for these two groups of applicants involved in a killing proved to be more difficult than what I expected. One reason for this is that the hearing transcripts and the actual amnesty committee decisions are located in different places on the TRC website, and quite often it proved impossible to find a matching pair.

The hearings vary in length, but the average transcript covering the hearing of one applicant is approximately 200 pages long. A text this long would naturally not be a suitable target for this type of analysis, which looks at language on clause level. Therefore, I have limited the actual inspected material to a considerably shorter section covering the part where the applicants, more or less in their own words, account for their involvement in the actual act of the killing. This allows me to concentrate on the abovementioned questions on experience, values and beliefs and brings out most clearly how well the applicant covers the question who did what to whom. These extracts from the hearings are 2-3 pages long on average. The extract from the Benzien hearing is included in this study in full and examples from the others are presented in the relevant analysis chapters.

The structure and flow of the proceedings in these hearings is very close to that of an ordinary court hearing with legal representatives on both sides having their turn on presenting their case. Also the members of the amnesty committee, several of who were professional judges, ask questions from the applicants. Because of this, the time left for applicants' own presentation and view of the case is limited. The parts of the hearings used in this study contain as little external questioning as possible, since the questions often only allow for a simple yes or no answer from the applicant.

The hearings were interpreted to and from all the 11 official languages of South Africa. The transcripts are in English, which was always one of the translated languages. The level of

professionalism in interpretation varies greatly between the languages, which makes some of the transcripts difficult to follow. The transcripts chosen for this study are all relatively coherent, although the interpretation is not of the highest of quality in all of them.

Transcripts in general may appear somewhat incoherent due to the nature of spoken language, but this incoherence or formlessness is a myth according to Halliday. The planning phase of what we want to communicate is present in speech, whereas it has been omitted from written text. Halliday (1990, 77) explains the seeming formlessness of spoken language in the following way:

The ‘formlessness’ of speech is an artefact of the transcription; if a written text is reproduced with all the planning processes left in, then it too will appear formless. But even the most sympathetic transcription will not make spoken language look good in writing, for an obvious reason: it wasn’t meant to be written down.

Halliday (1990, 79) goes on to emphasise that “spoken language is no less structured and highly organised than the written. It could not be otherwise, since both are manifestations of the same system”. Therefore there cannot be any doubt that transcripts, such as the ones analysed here, are perfectly suitable material for an analysis using the Hallidayan model.

#### **2.4.2. Method of analysis**

This chapter briefly summarises the way the analysis was conducted with references to the theory presented in the previous chapters.

As mentioned in chapter 2.1, Halliday’s functional grammar is based on the notion that all the above-mentioned functions are reflected in the structure of the clause. Therefore the selected parts of the transcripts chosen for this study were analysed on clause level. Breaking sentences into clauses was not always easy, since the material consists of more or less free-flowing spoken language, which makes it slightly less grammatically coherent than originally written text would be. The problematic parts would include no processes, but several circumstantial elements connected only by the context in which they appeared.

I applied the Hallidayan model of analysis as it is explained in chapter 2.3. This includes classifying clauses according to the process types they represent and then identifying the different process elements: participant roles and circumstantial elements. The classification of process types was expanded past the basic Hallidayan model to include Simpson's subdivisions of material processes as explained in chapter 2.2.1.3. Also the terminology concerning participants in material processes did not follow that presented in Halliday's functional grammar, and instead Halliday's term GOAL, Fowler's terms OBJECT and PATIENT were used. This has been explained in chapter 2.2.2. Ergative analysis introduced in chapter 2.2.4 is also applied here in order to go deeper into the structures of agency and causation.

### **3. Analysis of the Jeffrey Benzien case**

In this chapter I will analyse one hearing in detail in order to show how the source material was analysed. Showing a detailed analysis of all the ten cases would be too much for a study this size. Instead, the analysis of the rest of the cases is grouped together in a later chapter. I have chosen this particular case to be analysed in detail partially because it is more coherent and well-structured than the hearings in general, and partially because it contains most interesting structures of all the analysed hearings. It covers most issues that came up in any of the analysis, and thus works well as an example on which to base the other analysis.

The analysed part of the hearing transcript is first shown below in full, then the background of this amnesty case is explained followed by the analysis is presented divided in sections based on the way Halliday's model was explained in chapter 2.3. Finally a conclusion part attempts to summarise the findings from this analysis. There will be a wider conclusion chapter at the end of this study putting together the findings from the Benzien case and the analysis of the other cases.

#### **3.1. Background**

The applicant, captain Jeffrey Benzien was granted amnesty for the killing of Ashley Kriel, a member of the military wing of ANC. In an inquest following Kriel's death, Benzien claimed that the shooting was an accident and that the gun in his hand had just gone off. His version of the incident was accepted by the inquest and he was not prosecuted. At the time of the amnesty committee hearing, Benzien was still working as a police officer and had recently been promoted to captain, although he no longer had any major tasks.

This study covers the part of Benzien's testimony in which he tells of the actual struggle that lead to Kriel's death. In the hearing every part of this account was then tested by means of cross-examination. In the beginning of the part of his testimony analysed in this study, he

gives background information of the situation, the reason for their task, time and place and who was present and who gave the order. Then he describes lengthily and in detail the events leading to the shooting, how they got to the house where Kriel was and the struggle preceding his death. The struggle is described especially carefully. The shooting and its consequences are covered rather vaguely, especially when compared to the preciseness used throughout the rest of the testimony. Benzien pays then more attention to the events immediately after the shooting, covering the details meticulously. As said, his account of the happenings strikes in general as being very professional, as one would assume a policeman reporting an incident that had occurred in his line of duty.



AM5314/97 J.T. Benzien

I am number W80113K, in the South African Police, Detective Warrant Officer, stationed at Cape Town.

On Thursday, the 9th of July 1987, at 13h35 I was on duty, I was sober and clad in civilian dress. I was accompanied by number K173415M, Sergeant A.D. Abels of the Security Branch in Cape Town. On the instructions and orders of our Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Liebenberg, Sergeant Abels and myself went to Albermarle Road 8, Hazendal, Athlone.

Our task was to do surveillance of the grounds there, to determine whether the trained ANC terrorist, Ashley Kriel, was hiding out there. We only had information to the effect that the abovementioned terrorist could be in the house or in one of the adjacent houses and therefore Sergeant Abels and myself, approached the house on foot whilst other members of the Security Branch waited out of sight of the house.

Upon arrival at the abovementioned address, I saw that there was a gate in front of the door and this gate was locked with a padlock. Sergeant Abels and myself then walked around the back of the house to the back door. I requested Sergeant Abels to knock on the door to determine whether anybody was home.

After a couple of minutes, a Coloured man opened the door. The Coloured man held a jersey and a towel in front of his trousers, his right hand was covered with this jersey and a towel and his left hand was pressed against his covered right hand.

I immediately recognised this person as the wanted terrorist, Ashley Kriel. I identified myself to Ashley Kriel as a member of the South African Police. Kriel immediately made an upwards motion with his covered hands. At the same time, he tried to run into the house.

I threw both my arms around Ashley Kriel's arms and chest, trying to pin his arms to his body. He resisted furiously and battled to free himself. I suspected that he had either a firearm or a handgrenade in his arms under the jersey and the towel.

Sergeant Abels assisted me and we managed to restrain Ashley Kriel, who resisted. During this struggle the towel and the jersey fell and I saw Kriel holding a firearm with both his hands in front of him, and he tried to raise it.

We had already fallen to the ground during the struggle, and we tried to pin down to the ground. I succeeded in getting the firearm from, loosening it from his grip, it was an automatic pistol and I hit him on the forehead, quite a heavy blow and this wound bled freely.

Kriel released his grip for a moment whilst he was laying on his back, and we pinned him down to the ground. I was in a crouching position on his right hand side and Sergeant Abels to the left of him, at his head. I still held this firearm which I took from Kriel in my right hand and with my left hand, I took my handcuffs from my pocket and I handed them to Sergeant Abels, with the instruction that he should handcuff Kriel's hands.

Just after Sergeant Abels had placed the one cuff around Kriel's right wrist, Kriel jumped up into a sitting position and grabbed my right hand in which this firearm still was.

I grabbed my right hand with the firearm out of his grip. He turned to his left, whilst he was still in a sitting position in order to free himself and get up. Sergeant Abels, meanwhile tried to restrain Kriel. I however, realised that Kriel was getting into an upright position and from my position at that stage, which was behind him, because he was turned away from me, I jumped on his back in order to pin him down to the ground once again.

With me on his back, he thrashed in all directions and tried to enter the house. At some stages we were on the ground and other stages we were kneeling or - it as during this stage that I heard a shot. I realised that it was his firearm which was still in my right hand which had gone off.

I realised that Kriel had been wounded and I noticed blood at his mouth and nose. I immediately instructed Sergeant Abels to cuff the deceased's left hand as well, and to guard him whilst I immediately went to my vehicle to get help on the radio.

The struggle couldn't have lasted for more than a minute. At no stage did I cock the weapon and in the struggle, I didn't notice whether it had been cocked.

However, I am of the opinion that the deceased must have cocked the weapon before opening the back door of the house and had concealed the weapon underneath the towel and the jersey.

When I returned to where Ashley Kriel was, it was clear that he was dead. During the search of the deceased's room in Albermarle Road 8, a handgrenade was found under his pillow. This was found by Warrant Officer Nel of the Security Branch and the explosives expert seized this handgrenade.

I seized the deceased's firearm, a .22 star, self loading pistol, number F739725 with seven rounds in the magazine and one round in the chamber of the pistol.

Next to the body, there was one .22 pellet which I seized. After the incident, I secured the weapon myself. I pointed out the relevant points of the official police photographer as well as members of the video unit.

The handcuff on the left hand wrist had been loosened to indicate the position of the handcuffs during the struggle and the body was then taken from the scene by ambulance.

### 3.2. Participants

Participants in Benzien' s story are mostly human. The following table lists the actual participants and all the terms they are referred to.

<b>Participant:</b>	<b>References:</b>
Benzien	<i>I</i>
Kriel	<i>the trained ANC terrorist Ashely Kriel, the abovementioned terrorist, a coloured man, the coloured man, this person, the wanted terrorist Ashley Kriel, Kriel, he, Ashley Kriel</i>
Abels	<i>Sergeant Abels, he</i>
Nel	<i>Warrant officer Nel of the security branch</i>
Liebenberg	<i>commanding officer lieutenant Liebenberg</i>
Unidentified participants	<i>other members of the security branch, the explosive expert</i>

**Table 3 Participants in Benzien case**

Benzien himself is also included as the actor in phrases *Sergeant Abels and myself* and *we*.

Only Kriel is referred to by several different forms; for example, *a coloured man* and *Ashley Kriel*. In some instances the same item refers to different individuals; for example, *he* is used to refer to both *Ashley Kriel* and *Sergeant Abels*.

Not all the participants are human or animate. In the following example, there are two inanimate participants, *the towel and the jersey* and *a firearm*.

During this struggle, the towel and the jersey fell and I saw Kriel holding a firearm.

There are also other inanimate participants, of which the same entity, *a firearm*, is referred to several times, also in the role of actor.

The actor/ patient division in the material is quite clear. Main actors are Benzien himself and Ashley Kriel, which is the natural outcome of a description of a fight between these two individuals. Although Kriel functions as the actor almost as often as Benzien does, he also

takes the role a patient most often. Also this would fit the nature of the text as it is Benzien who is applying for amnesty for what he did to Kriel.

The terminology used when referring to the participants reveals old apartheid era terminology and classifications. For example, Kriel is referred to as *the trained ANC terrorist Ashely Kriel* and the unidentified policemen as *other members of the security branch*. By naming Kriel *a terrorist* and pointing out that his colleagues belonged to the *security branch* of the police, Benzien emphasises the political situation of the time and also his own position in that situation. His terminology choice describes the war-like situation in the society back then with its clear-cut groupings; the freedom movements on one side and the security police on the other. Benzien uses these phrases to emphasise his position as a member of one side, that of the security police fighting organised terrorists. Terminology choice also shows the racial classification that was a dominating part of the situation in the apartheid era with its political connotations related to the above-mentioned groupings. The following example illustrates this politicisation of colour:

I requested Sergeant Abels to knock on the door to determine whether anybody was home. A coloured man opened the door. The coloured man held a jersey and a towel in front of his trousers...

Just before this, Benzien has been explaining that his task was to arrest *an ANC terrorist* and this sentence in a way introduces Kriel physically to the scene. By referring to Kriel as *a coloured man* Benzien plays with the assumption that an ANC member must be black or coloured. His motive for using such terminology would seem to be to justify his actions that followed after the door was opened. The stronger his motive for suspecting that this was the person he was looking for, the more justified his following actions would be. On the other hand, it can be assumed that Benzien knew well what Kriel looked like anyway as a police man would know the face of a wanted person. This makes it look more like the reference to Kriel's skin colour really plays with the assumptions general public has of the apartheid time

situation. It describes a situation where most people considered being in a war whose sides were drawn on skin colour.

After the long descriptive actor references to Ashley Kriel in the beginning, he is later on referred to as *Kriel* or *he*. Sergeant Abels, however, keeps his title throughout the story. This is probably due to the fact that he is not really a key participant in the events, but also possibly because the formal title is used to indicate his subordinate position to Benzien. This would denote that Abels has no responsibility for the result of the incident as he was merely doing what Benzien told him to do. On the other hand, this use of a formal title, as well as the use of apartheid related terminology could be seen as related to the amnesty requirement that the applicant has to show that he was a member of an organisation related to the apartheid era society. Using Abels' title, as well as warrant officer Nel's, emphasises the fact that Benzien was acting as a police officer, a member of a hierarchical system, and not as a private person, out of personal gain or motive.

This view is also supported by Benzien's mention of one more participant, *commanding officer lieutenant Liebenberg*. He is not really an actor or even patient, but merely part of the circumstantial element of the clause. Interestingly, Benzien only mentions him briefly, and does not go into further detail of what lieutenant Liebenberg's 'instructions and orders' included. Part of the amnesty requirement of having been a member of a hierarchical system of the apartheid era is that the applicant can show that he was acting under orders from someone higher in the chain of command. Earlier in his testimony, outside the studied part that is, Benzien does bring out his own subordinate position more, and it is difficult to try and determine why he is not emphasising it more here.

### **3.3. Processes**

Material processes are the most frequent of process types in the testimony, although frequently the sentences consist of clauses with different process types, for example:

I realised that it was his firearm, which was still in my right hand, which had gone off.

Here the sentence starts with a mental process *I realised*, followed by a relational process *it was his firearm, which was still in my right hand, which had gone off*, which itself can be divided into another relational process *which was still in my right hand* and material process *which had gone off*.

Relational processes occur throughout the story, although they are in clear minority compared to material processes. These are mainly used to describe the scene in various ways. In the following examples relational processes are used to give background information:

CARRIER	PROCESS	ATTRIBUTE	ATTRIBUTE
I	was	sober	and clad in civilian dress.

IDENTIFIED	PROCESS	IDENTIFIER
Our task	was	to do surveillance of the grounds...

Later on in the testimony, relational processes are used to describe where the different participants were in relation to each other during the struggle, for example:

CARRIER	PROCESS	ATTRIBUTE
I	was	in a crouching position on his right hand side

Although these three examples are all different types of relational process, they perform the same function. They all describe the scene in different ways. The first one describes certain qualities attributed to the speaker. The second one identifies an entity, in this case the nature of Benzien's task. The third one describes the circumstantial relationship between two entities, in this case defining the place of the speaker in relation to another person.

Mental processes are concentrated towards the end of the testimony. At the point where Benzien describes the actual shooting, mental processes are in majority:

*I heard* a shot.  
*I realised* that it was his firearm...  
*I realised* that Kriel had been wounded...

As can be seen from the two latter mental process clauses above, Benzien uses mental processes also in combination with other processes. This will be further analysed and discussed more later in this chapter.

Material processes take over again when Benzien tells of what happened after he realised that Kriel was dead:

I immediately *instructed* sergeant Abels...  
I immediately *went* to my vehicle...

This change indicates a difference in the way Benzien seems to have experienced the events where it comes to the shooting and the happenings immediately before and after the shooting. It seems as he acknowledges his own actions leading to the shooting but not in directly having caused the gunfire or the death resulting from it. As mentioned, the choice of process types when describing the shooting is studied more carefully later on in this chapter.

Nearly all material processes are intention processes i.e. processes of doing with an animate actor and a voluntarily performed act, for example:

ACTOR	PROCESS	OBJECT
A coloured man	opened	the door

ACTOR	PROCESS	CIRCUMSTANCE
I	jumped	on his back

In these examples the actors *a coloured man* and *I* clearly act voluntarily. In the following example however, the voluntariness is less clear:

*Kriel released his grip for a moment* whilst he was laying on his back and we pinned him down to the ground

Grammatically the process *released* in clause *Kriel released his grip for a moment* is clearly an intention process. But, in view of the background information given in the rest of the sentence, it is highly unlikely that the action was actually performed voluntarily. This example is an exception however. Most of the intention processes in the analysed text are

clearly performed voluntarily even when looked in the light of the whole situation instead of just on clause level.

There are only a few event and supervision processes, and these are used when the testimony has proceeded well into the struggle part, such as the following example of a supervision process:

We had already fallen to the ground during the struggle.

There is nothing ambiguous in this usage. The sentence merely describes the scene, in the same manner as was seen with relational processes.

The dominating usage of intention processes gives the image that the teller is very much present in his story. The use of intention processes seems to indicate that the speaker is not dodging the responsibility of the actions described, but is giving a full and personally engaged discount of them. This clarity changes however, when Benzien comes to the part where Kriel is shot and starts using more mental processes.

The division between active and passive structures seems to support this view too. Active structures are used throughout the whole text, apart from four passive clauses. Two of these four are linked to mental clauses as in:

(I realised that) Kriel had been wounded.

The use of a passive pushes aside the question *who by?* By leaving out the doer, focus is drawn on other issues, thus by-passing the question of responsibility. The ambiguity connected with the use of a mental process in this sentence is part of a larger section of similar nature and is studied more in detail next.

As has been mentioned several times earlier, the style changes when Benzien comes to the actual shooting, which from his point of view is then described through mental processes:



...it was during this stage that I *heard* a shot.

I *realised* that it was his firearm, which was still in my right hand, which had gone off.

I *realised* that Kriel had been wounded and I *noticed* blood at his mouth and nose.

Part of the ambiguity of the second sentence is due to these sentences being taken from a transcript of spoken text, but it also illustrates how Benzien saw his role and responsibility in the situation. Placing *I realised* and *I noticed* as the first element in the clauses draws attention to them making the fact that Benzien was sensing something the theme of the clause.

A transitive interpretation of these sentences gives the following elements:

SENSER	PROCESS	PHENOMENON
I	realised	that it was his firearm, which was still in my right hand, which had gone off

SENSER	PROCESS	PHENOMENON
I	realised	that Kriel had been wounded

SENSER	PROCESS	PHENOMENON
I	noticed	blood at his mouth and nose

Including the fact that Kriel had been shot in the phenomenon element of the clause serves to shift attention from the facts that caused Kriel's death to the result of these facts. This suggests that the *I* telling the story is distancing himself to the role of an observer, which seems rather contradictory considering the physical location of the people involved: at the time of the shot, Benzien was on Kriel's back, trying to pin him down onto the ground. Using mental processes to describe his involvement at this stage suddenly places him away from the struggle as if he was merely watching it from a distance and narrating the event emphasising his observations rather than his involvement. Of course one could argue that the role of an observer is natural when giving a testimony in court, at it would be so, except that Benzien is testifying about his own actions, and he tells about everything else in very clear terms.

Further analysis of the phenomena of the abovementioned sentences is also interesting. Phenomenon of the first one, *it was his firearm, which was still in my right hand, which had gone off*, is a relational process, a process of being where *his firearm, which was still in my*

*right hand, which had gone off* is an attribute of *it*. The two latter clauses, *which was still in my right hand* and *which had gone off* both define *his firearm*. A relative process placing the gun in Benzien's right hand at the time it went off is as close as he comes to expressing the causation between himself and Kriel being shot. Instead, he gets to the fact of a shot being fired via mental and relational processes.

### **3.4. Agency**

An ergative analysis of the sentences discussed in the previous chapter is needed to better answer the main question, does the applicant's testimony make clear who did what to whom? The factual essence of the sentence, *I realised that it was his firearm, which was still in my right hand, which had gone off*, is the clause '*his firearm (which) had gone off*'. This clause carries essential information needed for determining what happened. The process of this clause, *go off*, can never take agency. It cannot be expanded into equivalent active/passive forms and defies analysis in terms of the '*who or what does what to whom or what*' question, neither does it support a '*who by?*' question. The medium of the clause is *his firearm*, the affected and only participant of the clause.

The phenomenon of the second sentence is similar in its factual ambiguity. In *Kriel had been wounded*, *Kriel* is the medium and again, there is no explicit agency. However, the process does have implicit agency, and allows for the question '*who by?*'. The passive structure in this clause emphasises the state of Kriel rather than the question of responsibility for his state. The former option would be more common in every day language, but one would assume the latter to be more interesting in a criminal hearing, which an amnesty hearing could be identified with.

In chapter 3.2, I have analysed the participants mentioned in Benzien's testimony, and classified them into two main categories, actors and patients. This might not be sufficient in creating the image of active participants and affected ones in the testimony. For example, in

the following sentence, there are two instances of affected participant, which would not be classified as such when simply using pure transitive analysis:

Just after Sergeant Abels had placed the cuff around Kriel's right wrist,  
Kriel jumped up into a sitting position and grabbed my right hand...

*Kriel's right wrist* and *my right hand* are not animate participants as such. A wrist or a hand cannot perform actions by itself, and could hardly be seen as a patient, as the term 'patient' denotes an animate participant. It could be likened to an object, an inanimate affected participant. This is not accurate however, from a realistic point of view. If one wants to know what has happened to a person, one has to take into account what has happened to that persons individual body parts. What happens to a wrist or a hand, affects the person as a whole.

Tony Trew (1979, 128-131) uses a matrix to sum up this information. He uses terms 'transactive' and 'non-transactive' clause to distinguish between clauses where the action affects another participant (transactive) and clauses, which only involve the actor. Table 2 shows an analysis of the participants in the Benzien case done using Trew's matrix idea. In the table, the occurrence of a transactive clause is recorded with a T in the cell against the causer (actor) and under the affected participant. The occurrence of a non-transactive clause is recorded with an N in the cell with the involved participant both at its side and above it. In the table some individual participants have been grouped together in the category 'police' as their relevance to the study is the same. Similarly, different terms used for the same participant have been grouped together in one category.

	Affected participants					
		Benzien	Kriel	Sgt. Abels	Benzien & Abels	Police
Actors	Benzien	NNNNN NNNN	TTTT	T		
	Kriel	T	NNNNNNN NNNNNN			
	Sgt. Abels	T	TT			
	Benzien & Abels		T		NNNN	
	Police					NNN

**Table 4 Participant roles in Benzien case**

The matrix analysis shows clearly that the main actors are Benzien and Kriel, the applicant and the victim. Clauses with Benzien as actor are mainly non-transactive (nine clauses). He is the causer in five transactive clauses, four of which have Kriel as the affected participant. Benzien together with Sergeant Abels is the actor in four non-transactive clauses and in one affected clause (with Kriel as the affected participant). Although Kriel is the actor approximately as often as Benzien, he is the actor in only one transactive clause, i.e. – a clause, which has an affected participant. Benzien is the most active actor in transactive clauses and Kriel most often the affected participant of such clauses. Therefore, the analysis gives an overall picture of the role divisions, which corresponds with those in real life. Kriel's role of affected participant is coherent with the role of victim he had in real life. Benzien, as the causer in most of the transactive clauses, is responsible for most the actions having effect on other participants, in this case mainly Kriel.

### **3.5. Summary of the Benzien case analysis**

All in all, Benzien's testimony seems to give a clear answer to the question who did what to whom. For the most part, Benzien uses clear sentence constructions that show the causality between actions and results and also clearly states who performed the action and who was affected by it. Only in the shooting part does it become more difficult to understand what actually was done and who by. Despite this, the result is clear. There is no ambiguity in what caused Kriel's fatal wound and therefore who was affected by the action. Benzien mentions only one gun and describes only one shooting incident. It is also clear that it was Kriel who was wounded, although this is explained as an observation:

I realised that Kriel had been wounded and I noticed blood at his mouth and nose

As noted before, it is as Benzien is waking up to the reality of the situation at this stage. Perhaps this is how he feels about it, realising that you have killed another human being should not be an easy sentiment, regardless of how used to violence you are. The ambiguity of this section of Benzien's testimony concentrates on the action and the causality between the action and the result. Instead of stating that he shot Kriel or that he pulled the trigger, Benzien uses a clause construction, which cannot have an actor connected to it thus going round the main information content needed from the whole testimony.

As seen in the matrix analysis, the role division used by Benzien corresponds otherwise to the real-life roles of a victim and perpetrators. Although describing a fight between himself and the victim, these roles are not reversed. Despite explaining the shooting as an accident he does not try to put Kriel in the role of an active participant and thus responsible for the outcome of the events.

The question of who did what to whom includes the questions of the causality between actions and results as well as that of who performed the actions and who was affected by the

actions. These are closely connected and thus difficult to discuss separately. An attempt to further analyse the different parts of the main question of this study is made in the *Conclusion* chapter.

## 4. Analysis expanded

In this chapter, analysis of the source material is expanded to cover the rest of the studied cases. The purpose is to see how the findings from the analysis of the Benzien case correspond to a larger number of analysed cases. This chapter follows the previous one roughly in structure and the same issues of analysis are covered, regardless of whether there are any findings in the rest of the cases. In the beginning of the sections on participants and processes, the findings are first summarised in a table and then explored further.

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the material studied consists of testimonies of two ideologically opposing sides, members of the police force and the liberation movements. Comparisons between these two rough group divisions are made when that is deemed useful, but only with the objective of understanding the lexical choice in question against the background of the speaker. Comparing these two groups is not an objective of this study in itself.

Most police testimonies are structured in a similar manner as Benzien's testimony. Firstly, the events leading to a struggle are described. This often includes explanation of how the applicant, the victim and the possible other people ended up in the scene of the struggle. Similarly to Benzien, the other police applicants describe this part in surprising detail using mainly active material processes. Secondly comes the actual struggle. Interestingly, this is often considerably more ambiguous than accounts on the road to the struggle and other background information. The most intriguing clause structures can be found in this part and the actual killing is often covered especially vaguely. Thirdly, most police officers then explain briefly what happened after the victim's death, or fatal injury. This is very short in all these typical background-struggle-death-afterwards scenarios.

The typical police applicant has been working in the field and has thus been responsible for the execution of any given plan. Naturally this also affects the structure of the testimony. The only police testimony deviating from this model (Coetzee AM3920/96) is by a policeman higher up in the hierarchy, whose role in the happenings was that of a commanding officer who was not physically involved in the killing.

The freedom movement fighters' testimonies also follow the above-described pattern. First, all participants are placed on the scene, then follows the action, in these cases attack, and finally a short ending explaining mainly how the applicant and his colleagues got away from the scene.

Besides obviously reflecting the physical flow of events, the structure of the testimonies also reflects attitude. One would assume that the parts seen as important by the applicant would be described lengthily. On the other hand, it could be so, that by concentrating on certain issues, the applicant is trying to avoid talking about other more difficult subjects, which of course sounds more plausible. No one wants to present himself in an incriminating light.

In all situations described in these testimonies the applicant has been a member of a group that has had complete dominance in terms of power during the incident. Most of the applicants have either attacked unarmed civilians or been acting as a member of the police in a situation where their target has been entirely overpowered. One would assume that this is reflected in the language used to describe the situation and it is, but perhaps in more a complicated manner than what one would think. The complete dominance is an objective evaluation of the situation made with hindsight and the viewpoint of an outsider judging the events with a completely different set of mind than what those involved in the events did at the time. Also the overall political situation has changed what is generally seen as justifiable. There are two overall trends in the way that the applicants' seem to experience the events, or



decide to describe their experience in their testimonies. The policemen seem to be aware of the incriminating nature of the power division at the time of the incident and often try to hide the power relationship by describing lengthily the struggle preceding the killing, thus trying to alleviate the imbalance of power. The freedom fighters, however, do not seem recognise this at all, or alternatively, recognise it but experience the momentary shift in power as non-relevant because of the overall power situation in the country.

#### ***4.1. Participants***

The following table shows a summary of the relevant findings concerning participants from the analysis of the rest of the testimonies. These findings correspond to the findings that came up in the analysis of the Benzien case. The testimonies are listed in the table in no particular order. A hyphen in the Terminology row means that no interesting terminology was used to refer to the participants. It does not therefore mean that the terminology in general in that particular testimony had no significance, but just that that related to participants did not reveal anything interesting. Unidentified participants means human participants who are not named in the text but remain anonymous.

Table 5 Summary of participant analysis

	Siebert	Thyido	Xundu	Van Zyl	Ncamazana	Nofemela	Niewoudt	Coetzee	Kulman
<b>Participants mainly human/animate</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Inanimate participants</b>	None	<i>The bullet struck him</i>	The car was idling, confusion that is made by <i>the grenade</i>	<i>The bullet hit him</i>	None	<i>The police van arrived</i>	<i>Mr Biko's head hit the wall</i>	None	<i>The bullet got his daughter</i>
<b>Unidentified participants</b>	None	<i>Someone had died</i>	<i>Some member of the security forces, the person I referred to earlier on as the person who was either the secretary or the person maintaining the club</i>	None	<i>The unit commander, someone painting the door of the church, the people inside the church</i>	None	None	None	<i>The people around the area</i>
<b>Personal pronouns</b>	Unclear usage	No unclear usage	No unclear usage	No unclear usage	Unclear usage	Unclear usage; 'we' used to refer to an unidentified group of people, for example: <i>...with seven or eight others we...</i>	Unclear usage	No unclear usage	Used a lot but not unclear (only a few people appear in the testimony)
<b>Terminology</b>	Victim referred to as <i>the accused, the deceased</i> and <i>Mr Biko, the deceased</i>	-	Refers to several of his colleagues as <i>comrades</i>	-	Refers to his colleagues as <i>Africans</i> . This is also used as a title, for example, <i>African Tjabane</i>	-	-	Mentions the rank of all of his white colleagues, but does not do this with black ones, for example, <i>Sergeant Schutte brought Joe Mamasela down on the 17<sup>th</sup> of November</i>	Refers to the victim several times as <i>the white man</i> . Refers to his colleague as <i>comrade</i> .

The participants in all cases are mainly human. There are no other animate participants except for one (...*the dog* would vomit it out) in a case where the applicant (Coetzee) describes poisoning of the victim's dogs.

All inanimate participants appear during the culmination point of the testimonies when the actual killing is described. With one exception, these are weaponry (*bullet* and *grenade*) or vehicles (*police van* and *car*), the type of objects outwardly seemingly capable of independent movement, but of course entirely dependent on human action. It sounds less incriminating to say that a bullet hit someone than that you shot someone, which could well be seen as the motivation between the choice of words here.

Like in Benzien's testimony, unidentified participants are quite rare in most testimonies. Two applicants (Xundu and Ncamazana), however, use them exceptionally widely. In both these cases this usage can be explained with the nature of the incident in question, both were attacks on large number of previously unknown people. The unidentified participants, when used, seem to cover participants from bystanders (*someone painting the door, the people around the area*) to the victim (*someone* had died), colleagues (*the unit commander*) and even imagined adversaries (*some member of the security forces*). The last example is from a case where the applicant (Xundu) tried to justify the force of the attack on civilians by claiming that they were sure that there would be members of the security forces and the police in the premises.

Personal pronouns are used to refer to all participants, but in some cases this usage can be very unclear, like in the following example from Kulman's testimony:

And Zama had shot the farmer before he saw him coming out of the truck.  
He thought that he was the person who was shooting.

It is quite unclear who the 'he's of the second sentence are. From the context one can determine, that the first 'he' is Zama, the co-applicant, and the second one must then be the farmer who was killed in the incident.

Victims in testimonies by MK or PAC members are rarely referred to with their names, even when the applicants well know the names of their victims. They are mainly referred to with personal pronouns or with descriptive noun phrases like *this white man*. The incidents described by these applicants are mainly attacks on unarmed white civilians, anonymous targets seen to represent the system in general. The applicants would not have known their victims, which would also explain the facelessness of the victims. Some cases have caused greater attention by the public and the victims have been identified more strongly, but this does not seem to be reflected by the way the victims are referred to by the applicants. One explanation could be interpretation, and differences in the way the two languages use pronouns in relation to names.

Applicants with a police background refer to participants in patient roles mainly with their names, and the use of pronouns is more coherent. This supports the idea that the wide use of pronouns by PAC and MK applicants is due to interpretation or other linguistic factors. Although all testimonies have been interpreted into English, there are several factors that make the interpretations unequal. Firstly, Afrikaans, used by the police, is related to English, whereas Xhosa and other indigenous languages belong to a completely different language group. Secondly, the level of education of the Afrikaans interpreters must have been higher than that of the interpreters of the other languages.

Terminology used by applicants when referring to other participants reflects often the classifications and divisions of the apartheid era society. This classification separates people of different colour but it also has political connotations. Referring to other participants by a descriptive phrase in which the description is mainly based on the colour of that person's skin

is done only in reference to the victim. This applies both to former police officers and liberation movement fighters. It is less clear though, how deliberate this politicising is. Interestingly, Benzien is the only of the policeman applicants who tries to identify his victim in political terms.

Two of the PAC members refer to their accomplices as comrades (Xundu and Kulman).

One PAC member (Ncamazana) uses the term African to refer to all black people:

After that, after we entered there, the unit commander, he shouted: “White this side and *Africans* this side”.  
Commander then instructed *African* Tjabane that he fetch them so we can find keys.

The term African is widely used in reference to all black Africans. It has been used by whites and blacks alike, but with rather opposite connotations.

Another example of this is the Kulman’s testimony where he refers to the victim, Mr Meyers, as *this white man* when he is first mentioned. Also Benzien uses the colour reference when the victim first physically appeared to the scene in the testimony. It seems natural for the applicants to refer to their victims by their colour as this emphasises the applicants’ situation at the time, a situation seen by many as being that of war. It simplifies the setting.

These types of references are also used to show the applicants position in an organisation, for example, one applicant consistently refers to his PAC colleagues as comrades. This kind of classifying usage of terminology was characteristic to captain Benzien’s testimony, whereas it does not appear in the stories of the other policemen. They mainly refer to others with their surnames, colleagues and victims alike. It is possible, though, that they have seen their position in the system as a separate issue, and have dealt with the chain of command and their place in the hierarchy at a separate part of the hearing. This choice is still interesting, it can be seen to reflect the applicants’ understanding of the importance of showing their place in the chain of command and thus the meaning of an amnesty requirement. Using plain

surnames and the relatively neutral ‘mr’ suggests that the applicant does not have a clear picture of the hierarchy of the organisation he used to work for and possibly his own role in relation to others in the organisation.

The actor/patient division between participants in the testimonies seems to depend on the nature of the incident described. Members of PAC and MK mainly describe the events using themselves or their comrades in arms as active participants. They also hardly ever place themselves or their colleagues in the patient role. Patient role is often solely given to the victims of the incidents. The active participant role in the testimonies of members of the police force is given to the applicant himself, the other policemen, but also to the victim. These incidents have in most cases culminated in a struggle between the applicant and the victim, which eventually lead to the victim's death. It is the description of these struggles that requires presenting both sides with the role of an active participant. The key participant in these testimonies has still been the applicant himself. The applicants also place themselves in the role of the patient relatively frequently, although the victims occur in the role of the patient most often. The role division issue is analysed further in section 4.4.

### 4.3. Processes

The following table summarises the findings concerning processes. These are presented in a generalised manner in the table and then elaborated in the text. The applicants are listed in no particular order.

	Siebert	Thyido	Xundu	Van Zyl	Ncamazana	Nofemela	Niewoudt	Coetzee	Kulman
<b>Material processes</b>	Material processes dominate. Mainly intention processes. Supervention processes used to describe fight	Material processes dominate. Unusually few intention processes. Event processes used when describing the killing	Material processes dominate. Mainly intention processes	Material processes dominate. Mainly intention processes, a few clauses where voluntariness less clear, for	Material processes dominate. Only intention processes	Material processes dominate. Mainly intention processes. One event process: <i>the police van arrived</i>	Material processes dominate. Mainly intention processes. Event process used to describe how the victim got	Material processes dominate	Material processes dominate. Mainly intention processes. A few supervention processes, for example:

	including the fatal part for the victim, for example: <i>we fell over one anothers feet, we hit the wall with Mr Biko</i>	Sentences with several process types and clauses as phenomena		example: <i>He let go of me</i> (because he had been shot) Few event processes, for example: (I didn't know where) <i>the bullet actually hit him</i>			injured Superventi on processes used when describing the fight, for example: <i>they landed up against the wall</i>		<i>he fell on the ground</i> Event process used to describe the killing of one of the victims
<b>Relational processes</b>	Identifying processes to describe the situation in general Attributive & circumstantial processes to describe where participants were during the struggle	One attributive & possessive process: <i>Maliqole was armed with a machine gun</i>	Identifying processes describe the strike team and the roles of it's members in the attack.	Identifying processes to describe his feelings, his gun, the situation in general and victim's position	Attributive & circumstantial to describe the position of the participants	One attributive & possessive: <i>I had a knife</i> Identifying processes to describe scene	Attributive & circumstantial processes used to describe where the participants were in the room and in relation to each other	Identifying processes used to describe people's position in the system Attributive & possessive, for example: <i>I had a bottle of strychnine</i>	Identifying processes used to describe the participants role in the incident
<b>Mental processes</b>	Describes the scene through mental processes a few times, for example: <i>I saw that he had something in his hand with which to hit</i>	The killing explained through mental processes: I never <i>noticed</i> where the bullet struck him, but I <i>realised</i> that they did strike him	Usage related to the time of the testimony, not the events described, for example: <i>I think I must have thrown the grenade</i>	Few mental processes used with a clause as phenomenon, for example: <i>I realised that I had jeopardised the operation ...</i>	Only reference to the killings is through a mental process (hearing gunfire)	Own responsibility described through a mental process: <i>I don't know whether I in fact stabbed her</i>	No mental processes used	Usage related to the time of the testimony, not the events described, for example: the next day the dogs got killed, <i>I don't know how many</i>	No significantly unambiguous usage
<b>Use of passive</b>	No passive clauses	Passive used often, describes what happened to him after the shooting, for example: <i>We were arrested and</i>	No passive clauses	One passive clause: <i>his hands had been cuffed behind his back</i>	No passive clauses	No passive clauses	Passive clauses used in the beginning when describing the fight, not used after being questioned about which policemen	No passive clauses	Passives used when describing the shooting of the victims

		<i>prosecuted</i>					were in the room at the time		
<b>Other</b>	Long sentences connected with 'and'	-	-	-	Long sentences connected with 'and'	-	Long sentences connected with 'and'	Differs from the other cases because describes more the general working methods of the security police than the particular incident	Long sentences connected with 'and'

Types of processes used in the testimonies correspond to a large extent with those used by Benzien in his testimony. Material processes are dominant in all the texts, and mental and relational processes are used to express similar things. There are also sentences combined of different process type clauses, and there is often ambiguity connected with these sentences. Material processes are used when describing the actual killing or injuring of the victim, except in one case where the applicant claimed not to have personally killed anyone and in another, in which the killing was never actually described. Of course, just using material processes does not make an account entirely uncontroversial or clear.

Relational processes are used for describing the scene, giving information on the physical surroundings and the location of the different participants, but also on other background details, such as what orders the applicants had received. Compared with Benzien's story, the scene is described very little in the rest of the cases. The applicants tend to get straight into the action part and spend less time explaining, for example, fight scenes.

Mental processes again are used often for describing events by the means of distancing the applicant from the scene. Two types of this usage can be found. Firstly, these structures are not used in an attempt to obstruct the applicants' own responsibility, but rather more naturally as means of describing what someone else did, as can be seen in the following example:



I also saw that he had something in his hand with which to hit...and I could see him hitting the accused.

These can be analysed as follows:

I	also	saw	that he had something in his hand with which to hit
SENDER	CIRCUMSTANCES	PROCESS	PHENOMENON

I	could see	him hitting the accused
SENDER	PROCESS	PHENOMENON

The first sentence contains one of the few scene describing relational processes *he had something in his hand with which to hit*. The mental process clauses *I also saw* and *I could see* represent the applicant's experience and very clearly place the responsibility of the hitting to someone else. There is no ambiguity in these sentences. Secondly, mental processes are used similarly to the way as in Benzien's case as in the following analysis:

I	never	noticed	where the bullet struck him, but
SENDER	CIRCUMSTANCES	PROCESS	PHENOMENON

I	realised	that they did strike him
SENDER	PROCESS	PHENOMENON

Again, mental processes are used to describe applicant's experience, but this time the description is far from clear. The phenomenon clauses are event processes as their 'actor' (bullet) is an inanimate participant. Compared with similar sentences in Benzien's testimony, the lack of ambiguity in the first pair of sentences is due to the presence of an actor, or agent. Therefore, ambiguity is not created alone by the use of mental process as a filter between events and applicants' role in them, but the phenomenon part needs to contain something that makes the agency unclear.

Material processes are mainly intention processes, i.e. processes where the actor performs the act voluntarily. Event processes are used in few places, for example (from applicant Nofemela):

The police van arrived.

Here, *the police van* is an inanimate actor performing the act of *arriving*. It is an interesting clause, since just as well the applicant could have said *the police arrived*, which would have been clearer. Some background knowledge is needed here. The applicant was a member of a youth organisation attached to PAC, and had spent most of his life in a black township.

Townships in the 1980's were constantly raided by the police, who often would just drive in a van or even a tank and rarely get out of their vehicle, at least not without a helmet. The police had therefore turned into faceless symbols of power, who often were represented by just their vehicles. In this light, the use of an event process when describing the arrival of the police is quite understandable. In another case (Nieuwoudt), event process is used in the part where the main injury that caused the victim's death is inflicted:

...we struggled and as a result of our momentum, Mr Biko's head hit the wall.

*Mr Biko's head* is the actor here, but as discussed in the Benzien analysis, a mere body part cannot really be seen as an animate actor. The ambiguity of the clause can be at least partially explained by the struggle, in which several policemen were in close contact with Mr Biko.

The situation itself denies a clear understanding of *who did what to whom*.

Similar to Benzien's testimony, active structures are used throughout the other testimonies too, and if passive structures occur, they often do so when describing the actual death or injury of the victim. The following example illustrates this as well as having some other interesting structures:

I heard a noise as he was getting out of the car and *he had been shot* and fell on the ground.

The use of passive structures places the object, or affected participant, in a focal position, thus drawing attention to it. This is emphasised if the agent is deleted as well, as is the case here.

Fowler and Kress (1979, 31) talk about the powerful neutralising effect that passive constructions have on the action or processes communicated. They present the idea, that the

process such as *had been shot* here, is only one step away from transforming the process to a state, such as *was shot*. Processes, being under the control of agents, imply the possibility of modification, decision; whereas states are perceived as unalterable and thus to be put up with (Fowler and Kress, 1979, 31). The example sentence above is interesting also in other ways. It is from a testimony in which the applicant (Kulman) explains the shooting three times, all following basically the same pattern: mental process clause *I heard* introducing the fact that the victim got out of a car and was shot by the co-applicant. There is an interesting development in the agency concerning the shooting. The first account of the shooting is as follows:

And *Zama had shot the farmer* before he saw him coming out of the truck.

Here the agency is very clear, an active material process is used and the actor and even the affected participant are named. The second time, this has reduced into *he had been shot* with *the farmer* now reduced to *he* and the agency left completely out. The third time the applicant said the following:

He got out of the car. Whilst he was out there was a sound. Meanwhile *he was being shot by my comrade*.

This time the agency is present, but the process has actually changed towards a state.

Passive structures can make it difficult to determine the roles associated with the process, in other words, it is unclear who does what to whom. The group of participants in the following example from Nieuwoudt include the victim, Mr Biko, the applicant and several other policemen of who most remain unidentified:

Mr Biko resisted quite severely and *several blows were aimed at each other* and *efforts were made* to restrain him.

Although *Mr Biko* is actually the victim, he is the only participant mentioned in this sentence. Fowler and Kress (1979, 41) call this style as censorship. They claim, that rather than just clouding the relational responsibilities of the deep structure (who does what to whom), syntax

may actually reverse the distribution of rights and duties. Thus someone who has something done to him by another can be made responsible for his own suffering. In this example, by placing the focus on the fact that Mr Biko resisted and deleting other agents, the applicant manages to twist the question of agency and responsibility from himself and the other (besides faceless) policemen to the victim.

Several of these cases have long sentences where the clauses are connected with ‘and’, like in the following example from Kulman:

I thought that he was reaching for a firearm *and* I shot at him *and* I missed him *and* shot his daughter in the face *and* I also heard a shot on the other side of the truck *and* Zama had shot the farmer.

This kind of sentences are used in all parts of the testimonies, in describing the killing, as in the example above, or the background such as the scene or a fight leading to the killing. This usage is typical for spoken language, of course, but it seems that it is mostly used to when describing events that consist of several individual facts connected to each other only by the context i.e. – without a causal connection. However, it would often seem beneficial for the applicant to show that there is a causal connection. For example, in the example above, it might have been useful for the applicant to say:

...*because* I missed him (=the farmer) I shot his daughter

Thus emphasising that the shooting of the girl was an accident. This would perhaps require more planning in forehand than is typically done in speech.

#### **4.4. Agency**

An ergative analysis of the testimonies revealed only one clause with a process that cannot take agency. As in Benzien’s testimony, this occurs in when telling about the death of the victim:

During our trial, I heard that *someone had died*.

The process represented here by verb phrase *to die* cannot take agency. Of all the cases analysed, this one possibly hides the applicant's own involvement in a most intriguing manner. The applicant (Thyido) acknowledges his part in *someone's* death through what he heard after being prosecuted for killing that someone. According to Hodge and Kress (1993, 19), *something* is not an actor, nor is it really affected; it is simply involved in the process, and it is not clear in what precise way. This can be extended to *someone*, it too is ambiguous enough to be seen merely involved in the process instead of playing the role of an affected participant. Of course, it is possible that this is the truth, that the applicant really was not aware that the shooting he took part in led to an outsider getting killed, but if you have been convicted of killing a person, one could expect you to remember that person's name or at least some other characteristic, in this case the fact that the person was a child.

A matrix analysis reveals two groups when using the results to look at how well the role division of the testimonies reflects that of real life (since the applicants are more or less voluntarily applying for amnesty, one has to assume that they really did have a part to play in the killings). The analysis of most texts complied with that of Benzien's testimony. In these cases, the role division reflected the real situation; applicants were the main causers or actors and the victims affected participants. There were, however, two cases where the role division was not at all clear. These will be discussed more in detail in the following.

In the following matrix analysis, the applicant, Mr Xundu, is a member of PAC and has applied for amnesty for his part in an attack to a whites only golf club. The attack left over twenty people dead and several others injured. In the matrix, 'Everybody' refers to all the people taking part in the attack. Other members of the team are mentioned by name, but not as actors, mainly describing where they were or what they had said.

	Affected participants			
Actors		Mr Xundu	Comrade Lester	Everybody
	Mr Xundu	NNNNN		
	Comrade Lester		NN	
	Everybody			NNN

**Table 6 Matrix analysis of participant roles in the Xundu case**

In transactive clauses the action is seen as passing from the actor across to the affected (Fowler, Hodge, Kress and Trew, 1979, 8). Here no transactive verbs have been used, which means that there cannot be any affected participants, and with that, no victims. There are actors, but no causality. It is not even clear if the applicant recognises the causal relation between their attack and the dead and injured people.

The facelessness of the victims could be explained with the fact that the hit team members simply did not know who the people were. They were just attacking white people as representing the government. On the other hand, one would expect that the victims were referred to even by anonymous terms, such as pronouns or other descriptive phrases. As discussed before, this is done in many other cases, and victims are referred to by phrases like *the white man*. The applicant tries to explain this facelessness by listing who they expected to be in the golf club:

Now the reason I fired shots was, as it was appreciated that if there is such a senior National Party member, Mr Radoo or Mr Radu, then it means there will be his VIP team, there will be senior police officers, senior army officers and national intelligence...

This is mainly concerned with the amnesty requirement that the act must have had a political objective. Attacking senior NP members and other true representatives of the regime such as police and army officers, fulfils this requirement better than an attack on unarmed civilians.

By concentrating on this side of the argument, the applicant does not give full account on who did what to whom.

The other case, Ncamazana, (where the matrix analysis gives a result deviating from the majority, has also got several people participating in an attack on unidentified civilians. Here the victims are mentioned, but very vaguely first they are referred to as *white people* and afterwards with personal pronouns. It is not mentioned how many white people there were, and they are not individual references to any of them.

## 5. Conclusion

As has been seen, several different linguistic features can cause the ambiguity regarding responsibility for an act and its repercussions. The following is a list of features discovered in this study that have made the description of the actual killing or injuring unclear:

- sentences combining different process types, especially mental processes
- event processes
- passive structures
- verbs that cannot take agency
- use of non-transactive processes

Mental processes used as a kind of a filter between the applicant and the causal events were discussed especially in the analysis of the Benzien hearing. Using mental processes in this way distances the speaker from the causal chain of events and thus from responsibility. Ambiguity created through mental processes concerns the identity of the actor, the active agent. These sentences can place the speaker on the scene of events, but in the role of an observer instead of that of an active participant or agent. Of course, not all use of proceeding mental processes in sentences creates ambiguity. Their use is quite natural in some contexts, especially in texts like the ones analysed here whose purpose is to describe past events, which can naturally place one in the position of an observer. Also, ambiguity caused this way is often created in conjunction with the context and frequency with which it is used. A scene from the Benzien case can illustrate this. He describes a situation where he is clearly holding a gun while trying to pin down another man, and then continues to explain that he *heard* a shot and *realised* that it in fact came from the same gun which he was holding, after which he again *realises* that the man he's been trying to restrain has been injured. Here the context of the story is essential in creating the ambiguity regarding agency in the causal relation between



the gun and the injury. The mere use of mental processes to precede material processes expressing actual causal relations is not enough, other factors, such as context, are needed too. Presenting things this way would seem to require some forethought. These kinds of constructions denote that the event was an accident, and to present an argument like this when the public opinion believes the opposite requires some careful planning. It is not surprising therefore that the only testimony where mental processes are used efficiently to create ambiguity is the most logically presented and informative one of them all.

Event processes are used in almost all of the testimonies. The unanimate object taking the position of an actor in an event process can well be seen as an actor in a linguistic analysis, but it cannot instigate any action in real life, it cannot have the same part to play in a causal relationship than an animate actor would. Because of this, the unanimate actor cannot really have responsibility attributed to it. This makes event processes a safe choice when one does not want to describe something directly. Interestingly, three applicants used *bullet* as the actor in an event process. The thought behind could have been the desire to explain how fatal the bullet wound was, which of course is closely connected to causality between pulling the trigger and someone dying.

Passive structures are a classical example of means of obstructing the causality of an action, especially when the agent is deleted. Passives are used surprisingly little in the studied testimonies. Perhaps the use of a passive construction omitting the agent is thought to be too obvious an attempt to withhold information. According to Fowler et al. (1979, 31), passive constructions have the following consequences: the naturally prominent first phrase in the sentence is in passives occupied by the object, making the object focal. They also point out that rather than just clouding the relational responsibilities of the deep structure (who does what to whom) passive constructions may actually reverse the distribution of rights and duties (Fowler et al. 1979, 41).

Verbs that cannot take agency are a step forward from passive structures that do not express agency. Where a passive structure can express agency if wanted, these verbs prohibit expressing agency altogether. Verbs that cannot take agency such as ‘die’ and ‘go off’ suggest that whatever happened, happened on its own, without outside assistance. Because there is no agent, there is no causality, nothing to instigate the chain of events.

All linguistic phenomenon discussed above cause ambiguity in relation to the person of the agent. The use of non-transactive verbs, however, means that there are no affected participants or patients in the clause. The agency can be completely clear, but there is no entity at the other end of the causal chain, no one affected by what the agent does. This kind of ambiguity is considerably more rare than that of agency, and it is used notably in only one of the studied testimonies. Omitting the affected participant makes the victims appear faceless, even non-human. It gives an impression of carelessness, not understanding the consequences of one's actions, but is also very descriptive of the time in question. For most of the applicants their adversaries did not have faces, they were just part of the enemy, blurred by hatred and misinformation. It is actually surprising that these forms are not used more.

### **5.1. Who did what to whom?**

This question covers all parts of the causal chain. If one part is missing, or otherwise unclear, the whole chain becomes ambiguous. The question can be divided into three parts: 1) *who* is the actor or the agent 2) *what* has been done 3) *to whom* is something done. The ambiguity of the hearings analysed in this study can be classified according to which of these three questions it relates to.

As seen before, agency is the most ambiguous part of these three. All the first four structural means discussed in the previous section make the agent unclear. Possible agents in the testimonies are the applicant himself, his colleagues and even the victim. The group of possible agents is known, at least if we take for granted that the applicant is not omitting

anyone on purpose. Making the agency unclear has a major effect on responsibility. When the first part of the causal chain is missing or otherwise unclear, also the question of responsibility for what happens is avoided.

Sometimes the agency is made unclear by using terms such as ‘we’ and ‘everybody’ to refer to the agent. These terms can include the applicant and his colleagues, and also the victim. Although there is a grammatical agent, this way the actual agency beginning the causal chain becomes very vague. Of course, it is natural to use these terms in certain situations, but often a detailed idea of who actually was part of ‘we’ or ‘everybody’ is unclear. Also, including the victim in the same group of agents as the applicant and his colleagues emphasises the victim’s own involvement in his own injury, even hinting that he himself was partially or entirely to blame for it.

Ambiguity in relation to *what* has been done is complicated to analyse separately because it is closely connected to the agent and the affected participant of the clause. The participant elements are more clearly the ambiguous element than the processes expressing the action. Verbs that cannot take agency can be seen as leaving the process unclear because, besides leaving out the agency, they answer the question *what has happened* rather than *what has been done*. This too breaks the causal chain only in connection to the participant elements; the process alone cannot really create ambiguity to the causal chain. The only way this could happen is if one would use a verb that is undoubtedly wrong one in the sense that it does not describe what happened at all truthfully i.e. – downright lying.

*To whom* something is done refers to the identity of the affected participant. As mentioned earlier, the affected participant element can be straight forwardly left out of the clause, which clearly makes the identity ambiguous. Non-transactive verbs cannot even have an affected participant. These need to be considered entirely in the context in which they are used. Sometimes the context does not even assume any other participants than the agent, but they

can also be used deliberately, thus omitting the affected participant indirectly. Otherwise the affected participant can be made unclear similarly to the agent, by referring to a vague group of people. This makes the actual identity of the affected participant unclear. The identity is also unclear in case of a single affected participant, who is referred to with, for example, a personal pronoun, and it is not clear from the context who is being referred to.

## **5.2. Ambiguities explored**

Why are the ambiguities then? Why have the applicants not just explained what they did, what their colleagues did and how did this affect the victim? The answer is quite obvious. No one wants to admit guilt, not even when it is a question of an amnesty hearing which sole purpose is to pardon those who have done wrong. And of course, the nature of the amnesty committee was not quite that clear cut. There were other requirements than just full disclosure. The act had to have a political motive, a requirement that is rather difficult to fulfil in a society that has changed its official morals entirely. There are several possible reasons for explaining the lack of clarity. Logically reporting past events is not easy and requires practice. Benzien's testimony, for example, shows his education and experience as a policeman. In his testimony events follow in a logical order and it is clear most of the time what is happening and who are the participants. This is not the case in all the police reports however. Why? Perhaps because of personal qualities, perhaps the whole situation is not actually clear to the applicant, or perhaps he really is trying to cover up the actual chain of events and causalities between his own actions and the victim's death.

In some cases it is evident that the whole amnesty process is not entirely clear to the applicant. Especially when the applicant had already been convicted and was in prison at the time of making the application and the hearings, their information sources must have been fairly limited and one-sided. In some hearings the applicants actually try to explain in the hearing that they had just been given an application by a representative of their organisation,

MK or PAC mainly, and hardly any guidance in how to fill it in or how to build their argumentation for the committee. For an uneducated ex freedom fighter, the whole situation of an amnesty hearing must seem absurd. No matter what, the hearing situations represented more or less a court situation, and that of course, was modelled according to the old power structures. After the great, long awaited change, there they were, having to explain what they had done as part of the struggle to a committee of judges who behaved more or less like the ones who had sent them to prison earlier. It is possible, that quite a few of these applicants had never heard of the requirement of full disclosure, or what that would mean in practice. And even if they did, logically presenting a point of view is not an easy skill, and is often acquired through education and experience of similar situations. Of course, there were applicants who were clearly using the possibility of amnesty just as a change of getting out of prison. They tried to come up with a link to an organisation, which would give them the needed political motive.

The truthfulness of, for example, Benzien's testimony cannot be disputed; it is his version of reality. Like Simpson (1993, 108) says: the issue of which version of reality it [a piece of language] functions to present is entirely another matter [than truth]. Language is not an objective medium of communicating, but representation of our subjective view of the state of affairs. The amnesty hearing testimonies represent the applicants' subjective views of the course of events, their own role and responsibility of what happened. Their subjective views, however, have been moulded by their position in the old apartheid society and what their upbringing and experiences have made them to see as truth, i.e.-their ideological background. For example, Benzien's ideological background is that of the National Party and Dutch Reformed Church, both representing the view that the white Afrikaner is racially far superior to black people and that extreme measures are necessary to keep their promised land from falling to the hands of the blacks who would destroy it. He actually did believe that what he

was doing was right. This is evident from Benzien's hearing (outside the material analysed) when he says: "Cape Town had the same potential as Johannesburg, Pretoria and Durban for shopping-mall bombs – but I, with respect Mr Chairman, did my work well." It is entirely possible that the shooting was an accident, but the question arises, how relevant is it after all to the whole process of reconciliation? A single shooting can be an accident, and not incriminating as such, but the entire structure of society causing the shooting to take place is that very much. Questions of responsibility and guilt are questions that have no clear answers, and the amnesty hearings seem to have been about something bigger than the debate whether a single deed in a rotten system was justified or not.

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AM1638/96	L. Kulman
AM2891/96	D. Ncamazana
AM3751/96	J.M. van Zyl
AM3840/96	T.T. Xundu
AM3915/96	D.P. Siebert
AM3920/96	G.J. Nieuwoudt
AM5282/97	E.M. Nofemela
AM5314/97	J.T. Benzien

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<http://www.doj.gov.za/trc/amntrans/index.htm>

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