



**MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF BLACK ENGLISH SECOND-
LANGUAGE SOUTH AFRICAN LEARNERS IN EX-MODEL C
PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

by

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this piece of work to my late father, Jackson Siyabiza Chiloane. He always had confidence in me, and wished that I would successfully complete my studies.

‘Segodi samalekane,
Tau yamariri!’



UNKASHANA KAMENZI!

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ABSTRACT

Black South African learners are registered in ex-Model C schools to receive their education. The language of learning and teaching is English, whilst these learners' English language proficiency is limited. They come from different townships and rural areas, and their home languages are indigenous languages. Limited English Proficiency (LEP) is a serious barrier that hinders the learners' true potential. The Department of Education expects the schools to assist the learners by identifying the gaps in their education early, and by offering support.

The study aims to investigate and describe the challenges facing black, English second-language South African learners and to meet their needs by offering suggestions as to how they could be assisted to learn and achieve according to their full potential. There is a need to heighten the awareness of different stakeholders who are involved in educating the learner and to stimulate their interest to assist in meeting the learners' challenges.

The author has made use of mainly qualitative research methodology, and in some instances had followed the quantitative method of research. All the participants were from a specific ex-Model C school in Pretoria. The data were gathered by means of a literature review, document analysis, questionnaires, and classroom visits and observations.

The study has revealed that the black South African learners in ex-Model C schools are faced by numerous challenges owing to their limited English proficiency, and that they do not meet the requirements to pass their grades. Their inability to cope affects their self-esteem and confidence negatively. The learners do not take risks to participate actively during lessons as they tend to avoid embarrassment and being teased by their peers.

The study further revealed that there are other contributing factors to the learners' challenges, such as teachers who cannot assist the learners in the language that the learners understand (indigenous languages), parents' limited English proficiency,

learners rising at 05:00 to prepare to get to school, late attendance of classes, absenteeism, waiting till late in the afternoons to be fetched from school, unsupervised homework and a lack of appropriate resources at home.

The study resulted in formulating guidelines and recommendations that will help meet the challenges faced by black South African learners in ex-Model C schools, and support them.

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Figure 2.1	Language competence	18
Figure 2.2	Grade 1 -- 3: Foundation Phase assessment codes	40
Figure 2.3	Grade 4 -- 6: Intermediate Phase assessment codes and marks	40
Figure 2.4	Grade 7: Senior Phase assessment codes and marks	41
Figure 4.1	Pie chart indicating the percentage of learners' HLs	69
Figure 4.2	Teachers' profile chart	75
Figure 4.3	Learners' responses to the questionnaires and interviews	95

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1.	Definition of the problem	1
1.2.	What is the central problem?	2
1.3.	What are the limitations of these black learners?	11
1.4.	Possible reasons for black learners' poor proficiency in English	11
1.5.	How serious is the problem?	13
1.6.	The aims and objectives of the study	13
1.7.	Research questions	13
1.8.	Research methodology	14
1.9.	Literature review	14
1.10.	Questionnaires	14
1.11.	Observation	14
1.12.	Interviews	15
1.13.	Definition of key terms	16
1.14.	Structure of the dissertation	17

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1	Introduction	18
2.2	Communicative competence	18
2.3	Language competence	18
2.3.1	Organisational competence	19
2.3.2	Pragmatic competence	24
2.4	Levels of language proficiency	27
2.5	Language acquisition and learning	29
2.6	Factors affecting language learning	32
2.7	The NCS of the Department of Basic Education	37
2.8	Language-assessment proficiency	43

2.9	Approaches of language learning	45
2.10	Conclusion	51

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1	Introduction	52
3.2	Research methodology	52
3.2.1	Literature review	53
3.2.2	Document analysis	54
3.2.3	Questionnaires	54
3.2.4	Personal interviews	57
3.2.4.1	Interviews with learners	57
3.2.4.2	Interviews with teachers	59
3.2.5	Classroom observation	60
3.2.6	Learners' work	63
3.3	Data analysis	64
3.4	Research ethics	64
3.5	Limitations, validity and reliability of the research	65
3.6	Conclusion	65

CHAPTER 4: DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1	Introduction	67
4.2	School files	67
4.3	The headmaster's responses to the questionnaire	69
4.3.1	Summary of the headmaster's responses	74
4.4	The teachers' responses to the questionnaire and interviews	75
4.4.1	English language knowledge	77
4.4.2	The performance and abilities in learning activities	79
4.4.3	The challenges faced by learners with LEP	83

4.4.4	The factors that affect second language learning	84
4.4.5	Strategies used	86
4.4.6	Assessment	86
4.5	Summary of the teachers' responses	87
4.6	The parents' responses to the questionnaires	90
4.6.1	Summary of the interview with the parents	93
4.7	The learners' responses to the questionnaire and interview	95
4.7.1	The learners and the language	101
4.7.2	Summary of the learners' responses	104
4.7.3	Class visits	105
4.7.4	Learners' work examples	108
4.8	Conclusion	111

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1	Introduction	113
5.2	The limitations of the research	114
5.3	The summary of the research findings	115
5.4	What needs to be done?	115
5.4.1	The Gauteng Department of Education	116
5.4.2	The school governing body	117
5.4.3	The headmaster and the school management team (SMT)	118
5.4.4	The teachers	119
5.4.5	The parents	123
5.4.6	The learners	125
5.4.7	The community	126
5.5	Conclusion	127

LIST OF REFERENCES	128
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LIST OF APPENDICES

132

Appendix 1	Application letter to the school
Appendix 2	Permission from the school
Appendix 3	Application letter to the GDE
Appendix 4	Permission from the GDE
Appendix 5	General letter to the headmaster, teachers, parents and learners
Appendix 6	Headmaster's consent form
Appendix 7	Teachers' consent form
Appendix 8	Parents' consent form
Appendix 9	Learners' consent forms
Appendix 10	Headmaster's questionnaire
Appendix 11	Teachers' questionnaire
Appendix 12	Parents' questionnaire
Appendix 13	Learners' questionnaire
Appendix 14	Interview schedule
Appendix 15	Lesson-observation form
Appendix 16	GDE: Learners 450 support form

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1 DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

Many black parents take their children to ex-Model C schools around Pretoria, Gauteng, where English is the medium of instruction (Mol). They do so because they want them to learn English. English is viewed as a *lingua franca* between members of different language groups in the country. English is further seen as the Mol in commerce, industry and education. Parents therefore hope that their children will be empowered in English and be able to face with confidence the outside world in the future.

Some of these parents are from outlying rural communities. They send their children to live with families who work as domestic workers in urban areas. Other children are from townships close to Pretoria, such as Mamelodi, Atteridgeville, and Soshanguve. Usually these learners do not know English well enough to cope with the academic demands of their schooling. Their English Language Proficiency (ELP) is limited. These learners speak a few words in English during breaks with their friends, and do not contribute much in the classroom. Their English proficiency is not adequate for the purposes of formal learning and, as a result, they do not succeed or perform well in assessment tasks.

The Gauteng Department of Education expects schools to assist learners with limited ELP. The School-Based Support Team of every school has a special task to identify learners with learning barriers at an early stage. This process helps to identify the gaps in ELP early, and to put learner-support structures in place. This team has an important role in ensuring that learners' learning needs are met by the school.

There is a serious need to encourage and promote the attempts to assist learners with limited ELP. Teachers report that the learners who struggle with English do not perform well in tasks, tend not to do their homework, do not participate in class activities and find it hard to make friends and enjoy being outside the class during breaks rather than being in the classroom. Limited English Proficiency (LEP) has become a serious learning barrier that also affects the learners' self-confidence. In this regard, the learners become very shy, cry if they cannot do activities, do not feel free to share their opinions, are not confident and rely on the teacher or classmates for assistance.

1.2 WHAT IS THE CENTRAL PROBLEM?

Meeting the challenges of black, English second-language learners in ex-model C primary schools is vital to enhance the effective learning of the learners. Poor or LEP affects the academic development and progress of the learners negatively. LEP learners struggle to do their written work. They further need support to experience their learning in a positive way, for example by being able to follow instructions, to communicate with their teachers and classmates, and to complete tasks successfully.

Examples of written work from learners in an ex-Model C school in a middle-class suburb were analysed. It was found that they support the statement above. A few of these examples follow below:

Learners in Grade 1 were required to arrange pictures in a chronological sequence. They then had to write down the matching sentences from the blackboard. The given sentences were:

1. Johnny woke up.
2. He brushed his teeth.
3. He eats his breakfast.
4. He is on his way to school.

The following is an example of the response of a Zulu-speaking learner in his

second year of exposure to English. (He completed Grade R in an English-medium school).

1. He brushed his teeth.
2. He is on his way to school.
3. He eats his breakfast.
4. Johnny woke up.

The learner placed all the pictures in the wrong order but *copied* the sentences correctly. The examples above indicate that the learner could not follow the instructions because even if s/he was not able to read and *understand* the sentences, he/she should have been able to *follow the order* of events by looking at the pictures, such as the last picture -- in which Johnny is waking up -- which should have been the first one. Clearly, there is a language barrier, that is, the learner's knowledge and understanding of the English language is not adequate for learning.

In another task, learners in Grade 1 were expected to write down words that the teacher dictated to them. The words were as follows:

- *lad, had, bad, mad, pad, dad, sad, is, the, this*
- *The lad is bad.*
- *Dad is sad.*

The words below were a Xhosa-speaking learner's response to the dictated words. He is from Soshanguve, where he completed Grade R in a township pre-school.

_; ant; pha; mph; _; pta; sh; nra; nea; nat; hat; idr, and _; -- all incorrect.

The learner was not able to recognize the dictated words. He wrote *-mph* instead of *mad*; and *idr* instead of *this*. His spelling skills are patently non-existent; and he could not recognize the initial sounds. For example, he wrote *-ant* instead of *had*. His letter-formation skills further needs attention as he is not clear about the difference between, for example, *n* and *h*.

Grade 2 learners were given a text about a dog. They were expected to do a comprehension activity, read the questions, find the answers from a paragraph, write the correct answer and add the correct punctuation marks. The questions follow below:

- **Question 1:** *What was the greedy dog's name?*

The learner simply copied the first few words that the teacher had given them as a guideline to answer the question. He also added a question mark to his answer.

- **Question 2:** *What did Spot like to eat?*

The learner could not even add *one* word that forms the core of the story, namely "meat".

- **Question 3:** *Where did Spot run to with the meat?*

The learner's response was, 'Spot ran to the with the meat?' The correct answer was, 'Spot ran to the river with the meat'.

- **Question 4:** *What did Spot see in the water?*

The learner answered, 'What did Spot meat'. The correct answer was, 'Spot saw a dog in the river with some meat'.

The next example shows that the learner does not really understand what is being taught, and can neither do comprehension activities nor use the punctuation marks correctly.

Example

- Read the first part of a sentence,
- describe the emotions that are expressed and
- complete the sentence with personal experiences.

1. *I feel happy when* _____
2. *I feel excited when* _____
3. *I feel sad when* _____
4. *I feel proud when* _____
5. *I feel angry when* _____
6. *I feel loved when* _____

The responses of a Zulu-speaking learner, who had been exposed to English since Grade R, were as follows:

1. I feel happy when “*esmyybfdw*”.
2. I feel excited when “*my bruthe hs mey*”.
3. I feel sad when “*I do sifiron*”.
4. I feel proud when “*I do “sifirut*”.
5. I feel angry when “*smacmw*”.
6. I feel loved when “*I siyswmnau*”.

This learner does not have basic writing skills. She gave as answers a combination of the letters of the alphabet that is meaningless. It is not possible to correct the sentences as one cannot actually determine what the learner had wanted to write. She could not even personally describe in writing how she feels. The reader should note that in Grade 2 learners are expected to be able to build words and sentences.

Grade 3 learners were expected to give the plurals of words that were written on the blackboard. The words follow below:

child - _; *goose* - _; *loaf* - _; *knife* - _; *woman* - _; *mouse* _; *louse* - _; *calf* - _;
tooth - _; *bird* - _; *story* - _; and *scarf*-.

The following are the responses by a learner in Grade 3 whose home language is Xhosa, had been exposed to English since Grade 1, and lives around Sunnyside (an urban area in Pretoria) in a flat where he is further exposed to many other people who speak English.

First, the learner could not transcribe words from the blackboard. He *copied* the words as follows:

- *Birst* for bird,
- *store* for stor,
- *sirll* for scarf,
- *lofw* for loaf,
- *gois* for goose,
- *mors* for mouse,
- *caref* for calf and
- *towfe* for tooth.

This learner did not understand the instruction. He made serious errors in this exercise, copying approximately 95% of the words incorrectly, as illustrated above.

Second, the activity shows that the learner has a very limited vocabulary and cannot spell English words correctly. He simply wrote meaningless forms such as *mors*, *towfe*, *sirll*, *gois* and *caref* rather indifferently. He did not even notice that these words were strange and unfamiliar because he does not understand the English language.

Last, the learner did not perform the task that was to be assessed, namely to give the plurals of the words written on the blackboard. As he answered most of the questions incorrectly, it is patent that the vocabulary and understanding of the language of this learner is far below the expected level.

The next example is based on the Learning Outcomes (LO) according to the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). According to the NCS, by the end of Grade 7, learners must be able to do the following:

- Listen carefully to instructions, for information and enjoyment and respond confidently and effectively to a wide range of situations,
- read and view for information and enjoyment and respond critically to texts,

- use language to think, reason, access, process and use information for learning and
- use the sounds, words and grammar of the language.

Learners in Grade 7 were given a listening activity. They were expected to do the following:

- Listen to a story about Anne Frank on a CD player;
- discuss the story in a group; and
- use sounds, words and grammar appropriately to answer the questions.

They had to answer the following questions:

1. Where was the Frank family going?
2. Who was Margot?
3. Who were the two people mentioned in the story who helped the Frank family?
4. What was the first thing that Anne put into her satchel?
5. What was the item that Anne took with her?
6. Who was Mr Goldsmith?
7. At which time did Anne's mom wake her the next morning?
8. Which items did the Frank family manage to take with them, and who helped them?
9. To which religion did Anne and her family belong?
10. At what time did the Frank family leave?
11. What was the name of Anne's cat?

A learner from Limpopo, who had been exposed to English for a year, obtained 3/15 for the test because he struggled to extract the correct information and to present the information correctly. For example, he did not know the following: Where the Frank family went, who the two people mentioned in the story were, at what time the Frank family left or what the name of Anne's cat was.

The learner clearly did not *listen* carefully or did not *understand* the story. He

struggled to give even one-word responses that are easier to do than writing out full sentences. The learner struggled to think, reason, process, and use the information for learning.

In a Grade 2 Mathematics lesson, learners had to label shapes. The names of the shapes were given up front. It was difficult for some learners to complete the task successfully. As an example, a learner who had been exposed to English since Grade 1 labelled a cube as a triangle, a circle as a diamond, a prism as a cube, a square as a pentagon, an oval as a triangle and a pentagon as a cylinder. The learner obviously struggled to label the shapes with the correct, given words. There is no indication of knowledge and understanding of the relationship between the name and the shape itself.

In a Technology task, Grade 5 learners were expected to complete sentences by giving suggestions on what shopping malls could do to ease shopping for the disabled. They were asked to offer three new ideas. A specific learner's response was as follows:

1. *Mint bump her know ket Teis*
2. *he fight with her*
3. *I suggestion just*

This example illustrates that the learner struggled to interpret the question. It was the first year that he had been exposed to the English language. His answers did not make sense and the words he used were not even closely related to the question.

Grade 5 learners -- in another instance -- were expected to match the corresponding terms in the two columns in a Technology task as set out below:

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. <i>The rising of the sun</i> | a. <i>Water energy</i> |
| 2. <i>Internal or inherent power</i> | b. <i>A lever</i> |
| 3. <i>The waves rolling up onto the beach</i> | c. <i>Heat energy</i> |

4. *A bar that rotates around a fixed point* d. *Energy*

A Sepedi-speaking learner, who completed Grade 4 in a township school, gave the following answers:

1. *A;*
2. *B;*
3. *C; and*
4. *D.*

She simply copied the letters before the list of options as answers. The learner was unable to link the correct definition with the correct concept. This is an activity that offers the learners clues if they know and understand the English language.

Examples of these clues are as follows:

- *Sun is linked to heat.*
- *Waves are linked to water.*
- *Power is linked to energy.*
- *A bar is linked to a lever.*

The learner had all the answers wrong. The cited examples show that the learner's poor performance is due to limited English proficiency.

The cited examples show that these black, English second-language South African learners in an ex-model C school have an inadequate knowledge and understanding of English. Their lack of English proficiency results in poor performances in their English language activities. This also negatively affects their performances in Technology, Natural Science, Economic and Management Sciences, Social Sciences, and Life Skills. The reason is that all the other learning areas are mediated through the medium of English. It makes sense that the learners have to know and understand the medium of instruction.

The challenges that are faced in the school where the research was conducted are rather numerous:

- The L1 and L2 learners are placed in the same classes and one standard lesson is presented to the whole group.
- L1 and L2 learners cannot be placed in separate classes to teach them at the appropriate level (second language) as that could be perceived as inappropriate and as a sign of racism. The L2 parents are aware that their children are struggling to meet the grade requirements. Placing those children in a separate class could indirectly mean that the children do not fit in the school, are given a lower level of education as compared to other learners or receive unequal treatment. People are aware of their rights as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 1996, namely a right to equality (9): ‘... everyone has a right to equality before the law and has a right to protection and benefit of the law.’ To protect this right, people tend to generalise and offer formal equality. Formal equality ignores the specific ways in which people experience their lives, in this case being LEP. Provision of substantive equality (acknowledging that a L2 learner comes from a township, has no English background, no English grade R, has no one to help with homework and needs more support) can help to resolve the problem. Carrim (2004:16), states that “ ... to generalise and universalise human identity is to ignore the specific ways in which people are positioned, the particular ways in which they experience their human identity and the varied ways in which they encounter violations of their rights as specific individuals in very particular ways.”
- Most of the learners with LEP have other languages that they have learnt as second, third or fourth language, so English is not their SAL.
- Most teachers do not know the learners’ HL to assist them in the languages that they do understand.
- Some learners with LEP start school with very limited English. They come from townships like Mamelodi, Atteridgeville and Soshanguve.

Some -- from rural areas like Limpopo, Mpumalanga or the Eastern Cape --start with very little or no English.

- Some learners with LEP register to start Grade 1 in school and have done Grade R in township pre-schools where the LOLT is not English. These learners find themselves in an unknown environment in which they are expected to learn English and to perform well when tasks are given.
- Learners with LEP feel the pressure of not being able to meet the requirements as their L1 peers do.
- There is limited time for teaching, the teacher-learner ratio is high and the focus is on correctness rather than *meaningful* interaction.

In the Intermediate and Senior Phases of schooling, learners have to move from one teacher to another for eight LAs. Teachers have different teaching styles and expectations and that can be confusing for the learners.

1.3 WHAT ARE THE LIMITATIONS OF THESE BLACK LEARNERS?

These black South African learners possibly know English well enough for basic, interpersonal communication such as asking for the toilet, playing with friends during breaks, asking for help from the secretaries and reporting incidents to the teachers. However, their English proficiency is not adequate for the learning process.

1.4 POSSIBLE REASONS FOR BLACK LEARNERS' POOR PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH

There is too little sustained and meaningful exposure to English outside the classroom for most of these learners. They play with learners who speak different indigenous African languages at home. When they do try to speak in English, their township friends call these learners “coconuts”. This insult means that they are black and live in townships, but pretend to be white because they go to ex-model C schools. They do not have an opportunity to improve their command of spoken English, as they are scared of being teased about it.

The school admits, teaches and assesses them as English first-language learners. This poses a problem as their English first-language peers use only English and not any other language at home and at school.

Poor English teaching is also a possible factor in second-language South African learners' poor proficiency in English. The learning and teaching support materials, syllabuses, teaching and assessment methods and procedures play a significant role in the teaching and learning process. In the case of LEP learners, the teaching of English can be too general to cater for their specific needs because of time issues and deadlines that needs to be met by teachers. This might be the case in the ex-Model C primary school where the research was conducted.

Another possible reason could be a limited culture of reading, and a lack of an environment of academic support. Some learners are raised in families where members of the family are simply not interested in reading books or magazines. Learners from such families tend to perceive reading as "homework" and visiting the library as "punishment". Lack of support in this regard, specifically a lack of a reading culture at home from the other members of the family can be discouraging as the child will not see any point in taking time to revise what had been done at school on that day. Revision helps to reinforce concepts that had been missed or misunderstood at school.

Some children are from families where English does not play a significant role. The parents use indigenous African languages to explain homework or conduct conversations. The way in which things are done is different to what is expected in Western-orientated schools. Some black learners use English *only* at school and do not have resources such as English magazines or books at home. Most of the teachers are white and do not know or understand any of the Bantu languages adequately. They are unable to assist the learners in the languages that these learners understand better than English such as, for example, Sepedi, Zulu, or Xhosa.

1.5 HOW SERIOUS IS THE PROBLEM?

It was discovered that LEP learners who use English as a language of learning and teaching, suffer the following serious effects in the learning situation:

1. Poor academic achievement;
2. a poor foundation for cognitive development and academic progress;
3. a poor self-image and lack of self-confidence; and
4. emotional insecurity/anxiety. (Lemmer 1991:169)

Essentially, LEP learners are not unintelligent. They contribute to classroom discussions when there is a learner who can communicate with them. This becomes difficult when they are expected to read, understand and answer the questions in written English. They simply cannot cope with the medium of instruction. Some tend to behave in a negative way as they talk whilst lessons are presented, do not want to try when given a chance to do so and do not do the written work in class.

The learners with LEP sometimes end up in trouble while trying to be seen as "being cool". They need help to cope with the demands made by the school. The researcher is of the opinion that the problem is very serious and requires in-depth research. These children need urgent help to feel in control of their learning and development.

1.6 THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main aim of this study is to investigate the nature of challenges and barriers experienced by learners with a limited proficiency in English and for whom the language of learning and teaching is not their mother tongue.

The study also aims to meet the needs of the second-language learners by offering suggestions as to how these learners could be assisted to learn and achieve according to their full potential.

1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research and literature overview as well as the questionnaires used, aim to address mainly two major research questions. The first is to recognize and address

the challenges and barriers facing black, English second-language South African learners in ex-Model C schools and, in so doing, to help these learners reach their full academic potential.

The second is to offer recommendations on what will be needed to meet or overcome the challenges facing these learners in the ex-Model C schools.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher will undertake a literature review on the management and guidance of different learners who have a limited English proficiency. In addition, data will be collected from various people in the ex-Model C primary school who are actively involved in the learning of learners. The instrumentation of this study will include: action research, analysing documents, interviews with teachers and learners; questionnaires to be completed and classroom observations. The participants will not be forced to participate. Should they give consent to participate, they will remain anonymous and the information collected will be kept confidential.

1.9 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature survey will cover the challenges and barriers faced by LEP learners for whom English is the MoI.

1.10 QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaires will be handed out to the headmaster, all the teachers; and to 12 parents and 12 learners with LEP, participating in the research (see Appendix 10, 11, 12 and 13). The participants' identity and information will remain confidential (see appendix 5).

1.11 OBSERVATION

Learner behaviour during lessons will be observed to see how these learners take part during discussions, answer questions, put their ideas on paper (writing skills),

and apply what they were taught when they completed assessment tasks. The question is whether they understood the topic that was presented during lessons. The researcher will further observe a meeting between a teacher and the parent of a learner who is not proficient in English. S/he will note how the teacher reports his/her findings to the parents; which intervention strategies are planned to support learners; and which tips are given to the parent to assist their children at home.

Finally, the researcher will determine how the parent responds to and follows up on the intervention, whether s/he acknowledges the teacher's findings or whether s/he is protective about the matter. The researcher will determine whether the teacher discusses the positive or negative symptoms of the intervention. Should the intervention signs be negative, the researcher would like to determine whether an alternative plan is put on the table to assist the learner and whether a date is set for a follow-up meeting or review on the issue.

1.12 INTERVIEWS

The researcher opted to conduct group and individual interviews with the following individuals on the following basis:

- Six English teachers: three in the Foundation Phase; two in the Intermediate phase; and one in the Senior Phase,
- Thirty-one teachers of other learning areas in the school,
- Twelve learners with LEP in each phase: two in the Foundation Phase, five in the Intermediate Phase; and five in the Senior Phase and
- Twelve parents of learners with LEP in each phase.

1.13 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Additional Language	AL
Assessment Standard	AS
Basic Interpersonal Communicative skills	BICS
Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency	CALP
Community Language Learning	CLL
Communicative Language Teaching	CLT
Department of Education	DoE
First Additional Language	FAL
First Language	L1
Foundation Phase	FP
Gauteng Department of Education	GDE
Head of Department	HOD
Home Language	HL
Intermediate Phase	IP
Language of Learning and Teaching	LoLT
Languages-Learning Outcomes	LLOs
Learning and Teaching Support Material	LTSM
Learning Area	LA
Learning Outcome	LO
Limited English Proficiency	LEP
Medium of Instruction	MoI
National Curriculum Statement	NCS
National Education Policy Act	NEPA
Revised National Curriculum Statement	RNCS
School Based Support Team	SBST
School Governing Body	SGB
School Management Team	SMT
Second Additional Language	SAL
Second Language	L2
Senior Phase	SP
South African Schools Act	SASA

Subject, Verb and Object

SVO

Total Physical Response

TPR

1.14 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

Chapter 1: Problem statement

The problem statement and the purpose of the study will be dealt with in this chapter.

Chapter 2: Conceptual framework

The author will describe the following basic concepts relevant to this study:

- The nature and levels of language knowledge
- Linguistic demands/requirements of the school, such as Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)
- The assessment of learners' LEP, and how the assessment is done
- Language-teaching didactics and the English teacher's contribution to the acquisition of English

Chapter 3: Methodology

The author will discuss the research methodology used in the study.

Chapter 4: Research data description, analysis and interpretation

Chapter 4 will deal with the description and discussion of the data collected, which will then be analyzed and interpreted in this chapter.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations

The focus will be on linking the research findings with the research questions discussed in the first chapter. A summary of the research findings, limitations and recommendations and a conclusion will be provided for further research.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers the theoretical framework of this study. Further, the various processes and concepts relevant to this study will be discussed. Among others, the researcher will address communicative competence, language knowledge, the levels of language proficiency, types of language acquisition, factors that influence the learning of an additional language and language competence assessment. The NSC of the Department of Basic Education and the didactics of language teaching will also be covered.

2.2 COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

Brown (1994:227) says, "... the term communicative competence was coined by Dell Hymes and is that aspect of our competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meaning interpersonally within specific contexts".

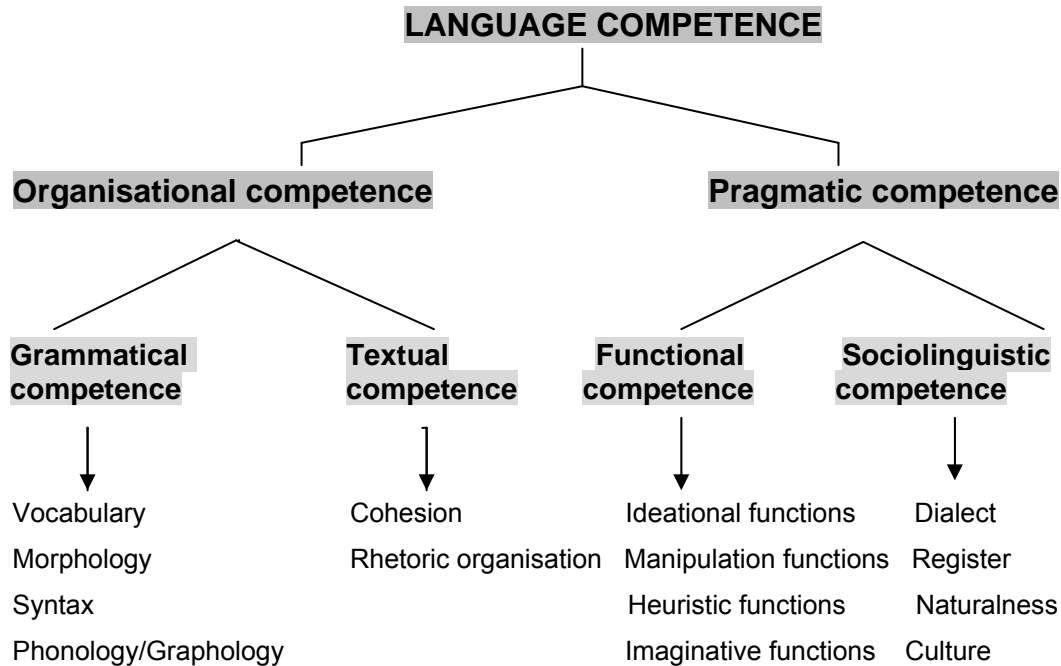
According to *The Pocket Oxford Dictionary* (1978:162), the term *competent* is defined as "... having adequate ability, knowledge, power, and qualifications, etc; sufficient, effective". Therefore, communicative competence can be defined as having an adequate ability to use language for communication functions in all domains, for all functions and at all levels. Communicative competence comprises two categories of language competence. These are organisational competence and pragmatic competence. These categories will be discussed in the next paragraph.

2.3 LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

What do we mean when we say that we know a language? Knowing a language implies far more than only knowing its grammar. To know a language, is to be able to use it for communicative functions.

Bachman (1990:87) demonstrates the components of language competence in the following way:

Figure 2.1 Language competence



2.3.1 Organisational competence

Organisational competence is divided into two sub-categories, namely grammatical competence and textual competence. These two sub-categories have their own sub-components.

Canale and Swain (1980:29) define **grammatical competence** as the “... knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology”. It involves mastering the grammatical aspects of a language. It deals with joining parts of a language into grammatical wholes, for example: sounds into words, words into sentences, sentences into phrases and so forth.

Phonemes are sounds that differentiate words from one another. The sound [b], for instance, is different from the sound [d] in English: the word “buck” is different from

the word “duck”. A word can be meaningless if the sound [m] is reversed to [w], for example: *mat* / *wat*. Some learners struggle to differentiate between [m/w, b/d, n/h, t/f, i/j, s/c, and p/d].

With regard to **vocabulary**, learners must know the words of a language and their correct meanings. The following sentence will illustrate the point:

The boy- a particular male child or young man,

is kicking- is forcibly striking with his foot,

the ball- a solid or hollow sphere used in games.

Vocabulary therefore means learning a list of words in a language individually and understanding their meanings.

Syntax is the study of the structure of sentences. A sentence is a group of words arranged in a way that conveys a particular thought. The position of words in a sentence is important.

It is not only important to know the meaning of a word but also to know how it fits into the sentence, for example:

S V O
(The dog) (eats) (meat.)
Subject: *(The dog)*
Verb: *(eats)*
Object: *(meat.)*

The learner learns the basic order of an English sentence, that is: subject, verb and object (SVO). Using the example above, it is important for learners to note that, in the Passive Voice, the object will become the *surface subject* and that the action is still done to it, for example:

O **V** **S**

(The meat) (is eaten by) the dog.

Object: *(The meat)*

Verb: *(is eaten by)*

Subject: *(the dog)*

It is important for learners to further know that sometimes the word order changes, for example, the verb *faint* can only occur with grammatical subjects such as *Mary*, *John*, and *Kate*: *Kate fainted*, *John fainted*, or *Mary fainted*. Such sentences never have objects. It would be incorrect to say, '*Mary fainted Kate*'.

Morphology refers to the study of the structure of words. Learners must know how words are formed. One can add a *prefix* or a *suffix* to the *root word* in English to change its meaning, for example:

Root word: *cycle*

- *cycle* = ride a bicycle

Prefixes are elements attached to the beginning of the root word. Examples follow below:

- *Recycle* = convert waste material to be re-used
- *Bicycle* = two-wheeled bicycle
- *Tricycle* = three-wheeled bicycle
- *Unicycle* = one-wheeled bicycle

Suffixes are elements attached to the end of the root word, as indicated below:

- *Cycling* = riding a bi/tricycle (verb)
- *Cyclone* = a wind that rotates around a calm central area (noun)
- *Cyclist* = a person who is cycling (noun)

The knowledge of lexical elements and the rules for organizing linguistic elements into larger linguistic wholes are important, for instance:

- /b/ + /u/ + /k/ = *book*
- *book* + *s* = *books*
- *book* + *shelf* = *bookshelf*
- *I see books in the bookshelf.*
- *The books that are in the bookshelf belong to my teacher.*

Textual competence, according to Brown (1994:228), "... is the ability we have to connect sentences in stretches of discourse and to form a meaningful whole out of a series of utterances". It is associated with simple conversations and different written texts, for example books, articles, greetings, and jokes.

Learners must be capable of putting sentences together into an effective text and to use these to conduct conversations and to interact socially. The following example, in which a learner greets a teacher, is an example:

Learner: *Morning, teacher.*

Teacher: *Morning, John.*

Learner: *How are you?*

Teacher: *I am fine, thank you.*

Putting sentences together can be applied when telling or writing a joke, as illustrated in the following example:

The teacher asked Mary to fetch a letter for him from the pigeonhole. Mary ran to the trees near the playground area. She looked up but could not see a letter or the pigeonhole. She asked one of the cleaners. The cleaner told her that there were wooden boxes with holes in the staffroom, and they are called pigeonholes. Mary laughed and ran back to the staff room.

The paragraph above shows how the learner can put sentences together to form a text.

A learner must learn the rules that one follows when constructing texts, and be able to interpret them. Two excellent examples are the layout and style of a business letter, and a friendly letter.

The business letter

In a business letter, one has to follow the steps as set out below:

- Write one's address on the top right-hand corner,
- add the date,
- skip a line and
- write the name and address of the person to whom one is writing on the left-hand side.

The friendly letter

In a friendly letter, one must:

- write one's address at the top of the letter,
- add a date, but
- one need not write the address of the person to whom one is writing.

A learner must also be able to organize the sentences into paragraphs in a letter to form a meaningful text. A business letter is formal. One cannot write about personal issues that do not relate to the purpose of writing the letter. In business letters, one would therefore write on topics such as applying for admission to a school or for a scholarship. In an informal or friendly letter, the writer can write about personal matters such as how s/he is finding being in a new school and the like.

The second-language learners come to their classes with no grammar, no texts, no functional knowledge and no socially appropriate language behaviour.

Grammatical competence would include correct spelling and punctuation, good vocabulary, coherent writing, correct sentence construction and showing an understanding of contextual questions. The second-language (L2) learners have to be competent in the subject matter that they learn from their teachers to be successful.

Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000:306) state that "... the contributing factor to the general lack of proficiency in the ex-colonial languages in Africa is the use of inappropriate teaching methods ... Western approaches, inappropriate to African conditions, are followed in teaching these languages". Teaching English as a second language is often done in the same manner in which home languages are taught. The focus is on grammar rather than on the development of the communicative abilities of learners. When learning a language, the focus should not only be the grammatical aspects, but should also address the sociolinguistic, textual and factual aspects of the language. To demonstrate textual competence, learners need to be able to write texts that are coherent and cohesive.

2.3.2 Pragmatic competence

Pragmatic competence is divided into two aspects, namely functional and sociolinguistic competence. The functional aspects of a language perform functions such as asking questions, answering, defining, discussing, describing, and explaining. Functional competence involves sending and receiving meaningful information in conversations. Sociolinguistic competence deals with the knowledge of the socio-cultural rules of using a language and discourse.

Learners can use language to express their feelings, describe an incident and persuade a teacher to take action. The following is a good example:

We were playing at first break and I put my lunchbox on the grass. The Grade 3 boys came running and kicked my lunchbox open. My food was all over the grass. I called the boy but he ran away and said that I must leave him alone because I cannot even read. I then started crying. I felt sad. I did not have food to eat during second break. The other children helped me to clean my bread. It did not help. I am disappointed. This is not right. The boy must be punished. He is very rude. He is a bully.

Sociolinguistic competence involves being able to use the language appropriately in different social settings. The following are examples of words, among others, which can be used when speaking to adults:

- *Yebo!* instead of *Ja!*;
- *Cha!* instead of *Hhayi!*;
- *Timer* instead of *ubaba*;
- *Ou Lady* instead of *umama*; and
- *icherry* instead of *intombi*.

Loudness of voice is part of sociolinguistic competence. One cannot, for example, raise one's voice when speaking to older people, but can raise it when joking or arguing with friends or siblings. In Zulu, a child cannot talk to an adult standing, or simply turn down an adult's request or suggestion. When talking to an adult, a child is expected to carefully select the words to be used and to squat in front of the adult if it is a boy, or kneel before the adult if it is a girl.

The abovementioned rules are demonstrated in the following example:

Dad: *Jabu!*

(Jabu comes running and squats in front of his father.)

Jabu: *Yes, Dad?*

Dad: *I want you to go and fetch your grandmother in Pietersburg tomorrow morning.*

Jabu: *(In a very polite voice.) Yes, Dad, I understand. It seems that there will be a slight problem.*

Dad: *Which problem?*

Jabu: *I have to attend my extra English class tomorrow from seven to one o'clock at school.*

Dad: *Oh! I remember.*

Jabu: *If Dad does not mind, I can go after my classes.*

Dad: *That's fine, my boy. I will ask your sister to go.*

Jabu: *Thank you, Dad. I am sorry that I could not help.*

Dad: *It's fine, don't worry.*

(Jabu stands up and leaves.)

In this example, Jabu could not do as his father had asked, but he presented himself politely to his father. Jabu did not say that he could not help his father. He chose his words carefully to remind his father about his classes. He also remained squatting until the end of the conversation. This shows respect to his father, who is giving him a command or an order.

The conversation between Jabu and his Dad would have been different if it had taken place between Jabu and his sister. Jabu would use different words to tell his sister that he could not go to fetch his grandmother, and remind her about his classes by, for example, using the following words: 'Have you forgotten that I have my extra English classes tomorrow'?

If Jabu had answered his father in the way that he would have answered his sister, it would be unacceptable. His father would use his linguistic knowledge to prohibit him from saying certain things. For example, he would raise his voice and say:

- *That is not the way I raised you!*
- *You don't talk to your father like that!*
- *You have forgotten your place, boy!*
- *Boys don't stand whilst talking to adults!*

- *Mind who you are talking to!*
- *I am not your friend, boy!*

The father's comments aim at correcting what the boy is doing or saying. This is a way of ensuring acceptable socio-cultural norms and standards in a community. The sociolinguistic aspect deals with respect, politeness and formality. Gradually, the speakers of a language accept what was demonstrated above as part of the knowledge of their language.

Western norms and standards are usually set. In a Western culture, for example, a child stands up when greeting or talking to a teacher; and looks the teacher in the eyes when s/he is talking. Failure to comply with these norms in a Western culture is viewed as disrespectful, whilst these behaviours are unacceptable in the Zulu culture. Savignon (1983:37) states that "Only in full context of this kind can judgements be done on the appropriateness of a particular utterance".

In learning English as a second language, learners will need to be competent in grammar, put sentences together to form texts, learn socio-cultural rules and learn the functional aspects of language. There are different levels of language proficiency.

2.4 LEVELS OF LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Cummins (1979), proposed that there be a distinction between *communicative proficiency* that the learner needs in daily life situations outside the classroom, to which he refers to as Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS), and *language proficiency* that children need in the classroom for learning and understanding exercises and tests, called Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). Cummins (1981, in Brown, 1994:227) revisited the issues of BICS and CALP, and modified the two terms based on the context in which language is used.

He considered the interpersonal, face-to-face communication with people (BICS) as *context embedded*. Conversational fluency is an ability to engage in a conversation in a familiar situation by using simple grammatical constructions and high-frequency words. Speakers can use expressions, intonations and gestures to support what they mean. As an example, a learner will feel more comfortable in taking part in a family debate because s/he can argue and support his/her facts easily when he/she is questioned. S/he knows the background and it is easy to use the language to participate in the conversation. There is no high need to think of how to use grammar and how to put the sentences together so that they make sense. Such a task will be *cognitively undemanding* for the learner.

The language used at school for learning purposes (CALP), is regarded as *context-reduced*. It includes organizing words into sentences to provide meaningful texts, and writing assessment tasks that require higher-order thinking skills. Clark (1996: 4) highlights that “language is the medium in which we encode reality”. Language is the medium of communication and it plays an important role in educational development. The learners with LEP do not have the tools to assist them to demonstrate their full potential in learning.

Learners are expected to perform challenging functions, such as naming, discussing, classifying, evaluating, processing data, and so forth. The communication and tasks in the classroom are cognitively demanding, and learners cannot continuously interrupt the teacher by asking for explanations from their classmates or stop the teacher every time they do not understand a word or an instruction. CALP includes low-frequency academic words, reading textbooks, doing research, writing tests, exams, and comprehension tasks. Learners need to write complex sentences and texts. Other tasks demand children to motivate answers or give their views on the questions set, and to use the language in formal situations like debates, speech festivals, role-playing, and public speaking.

Learners can acquire or learn a language. Bialystok (2001:19) asserts that “language is most effectively acquired at an early age.” This factor normally has an effect on the learners’ academic performance as it depends if the LoLT is the same as the learner’s Home Language and if not, at what age are the learners with LEP

exposed to the LoLT.

2.5 LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND LEARNING

There are different ways in which a language can be acquired or learnt, namely the Home Language (HL), first-additional language (FAL), and second-additional language acquisition (SAL). According to the Department of Education (2002:4), from Grade R up to Grade 9 Schools, language learning should be approached as follows:

Children learn their home language first and automatically. It is acquired, not taught. Chomsky, in (Lightbrown and Spada, 1993:7), claims that "... children are biologically programmed for language and that language develops in the child in just the same way that other biological functions develop". Walking and talking are essential development stages for all children and children learn to do it without being taught. The environment should be favourable to allow the development. The same applies to learning one's HL. There is no formal teaching that takes place at home. The children use their home language daily to converse, to express their feelings, and to communicate their needs. The child starts school being able to speak and understand the language his/her HL. The teacher's duty in HL study is to teach the child to expand the skills acquired at home, for example:

- The learner may be aware that one uses a formal letter to apply for a sponsorship, but does not know how to write it.
- The child may be aware that, at school, there are tests that are written, but may not know how to answer questions that demand explanations, motivation and discussions.

Learners use the language at CALP level to do tasks that are cognitively demanding. It is therefore the teacher's duty to teach the learner how to write a formal letter. The teacher teaches the child the *functional usage* of his/her HL.

The FAL is the language that the learners learn formally after they have acquired their home language. The learners with LEP who are sent to ex-Model C schools

often have a limited or no knowledge or background in English. These learners have an indigenous language as their home language. They have very limited exposure to English, and hence must be taught to develop an ability to understand and speak English. FAL learners must be assisted by the teachers to gain organizational competence, for example grammatical knowledge, namely: the Present and Past Tense, vocabulary, word and sentence order, negatives, the Passive and Active Voice, as well as textual knowledge, such as writing formal letters, writing tests and exams, and writing cohesive and coherent texts.

Pragmatic competence can also be developed by improving *functional knowledge*, such as reporting an incident, giving information, justifying statements, arguing, explaining, and taking part in a conversation and *sociolinguistic knowledge*, such as using appropriate language behaviour, how to address young and old people, how loud one's voice should be, appropriate body posture and eye contact. Learners must be assisted to relate the new concepts that they are taught in English to their home language. They should also be helped to gain confidence in expressing themselves in English, which is their FAL.

The SAL is a language that learners may never have heard before. Such a language can be taught as a SAL. This language is rather strange to learners. The teacher must teach the learners the very basics of that language. At school level, SAL is intended for learners who wish to learn three languages. It can be an official language of South Africa, or a foreign language. The SAL should only be introduced in Grade four, and it should be allocated less learning time when compared to their HL and FAL. Learners are expected to learn SAL for general communicative purposes. Language learning involves a natural and a formal process, as discussed in the next paragraph.

(a) Natural or non-formal process

According to Lightbrown and Spada (1993:69) "... most people would agree that learning a second language in a natural acquisition context or on the streets is not the same as learning it in the classroom". In natural acquisition, learning takes place at home orally, and in a non-formal way. There is no systematic plan of discussions.

The situation is context embedded, cognitively undemanding and oral knowledge and skills are developed naturally. The learner has the background on what family members are discussing, such as their elder daughter's birthday party. The learner is further exposed to a wide variety of vocabulary and structures, such as *question formation*, which deals with: *when, where, at what time, and who should be invited*. Their vocabulary will grow to include, among other words, *celebration, guests, invitations, venue, reservations*, and so forth.

In a natural process, learners hear adults using language in an appropriate manner most of the time and participate in conversations with them. As an example, the learners can persuade their parents to include him/her in the wedding programme as a speaker (functional knowledge), s/he will practise his/her speech (textual knowledge -- organising ideas), s/he will give an appropriate speech and raise his/her voice to be heard by guests (sociolinguistic knowledge in wishing his/her sister a happy birthday). The activities in the natural or non-formal learning situation are oral and could be extended at school level through formal processes.

(b) Formal process

In a formal process, learners bring the knowledge that they have gained at home in a natural way to be extended by the teacher in the classroom at school. Learning is formal, cognitively demanding, context reduced; written knowledge and skills are developed. The lesson is planned and structured. Contact with proficient speakers is limited. Learners are taught to read from textbooks, to analyse texts, to answer questions in writing, write tests and exams, do comprehension tests and do research and projects.

The learners should be able to construct complex sentences and texts, for example, by discussing and writing a letter of application for a bursary (grammatical and textual knowledge), writing an essay of 1 000 words explaining and motivating why his/her application should be considered (functional knowledge). The format of the letter should be official and the forms of address should be appropriate (sociolinguistic knowledge). Teachers should motivate learners to keep on practising to improve their writing skills.

The Department of Education (2002:5) recommends the following:

- The learner's HL should be used for teaching and learning wherever possible.
- Where learners make a transition from their HL to an additional language (AL) as a language of learning and teaching, this should be carefully planned.
- The AL could be introduced as a subject in Grade 1.
- The home language should continue to be used alongside the AL for as long as possible
- Teachers and other educators should make provision for special assistance and supplementary learning of the LA.

Even if the abovementioned recommendations can be challenges to schools, provision should be made to assist the learners with LEP to achieve to their full potential. Different factors can affect language learning and more support should be offered by teachers. This will help to minimize the level of language shock and anxiety and boost their self esteem and confidence.

2.6 FACTORS AFFECTING LANGUAGE LEARNING

In L2 learning, it is important to understand how learners feel and respond to different situations. Teachers should establish if the learners believe and value what they are learning. There are factors that affect second-language learning, such as self-esteem, motivation, attitude, anxiety, empathy and risk-taking. A few of these factors affecting language learning will be discussed in the next paragraphs.

According to Malinowski (1923, in Brown 1994:136) "... personality development universally involves the growth of a person's concept of self, acceptance of self, and reflection of self as seen in the interaction between self and others". People develop a sense of self-esteem from their experience, tasks and activities that they come across in their lives. Malinowski (1923, in Brown 1994:137) divided self-esteem into three categories:

1. Global or general self-esteem that is considered to be stable in mature adults and cannot be changed except by extended therapy;
2. situational or specific self-esteem that refers to one's appraisal of oneself in different events; and
3. task self-esteem that relates to specific tasks in a specific situation.

In this study, *global or general self-esteem* refers to the learners' general inability to cope with the requirements of learning areas owing to their lack of English proficiency. The learners see themselves as failures in general because they struggle throughout. Learners can overcome this difficulty by additional support from all stakeholders and relevant, extended therapy. *Situational or specific self-esteem* refers specifically to their difficulty in acquiring a second language. In general, they feel that their specific reason for not coping is their lack of proficiency in the medium of instruction, which is English. Task self-esteem relates to particular tasks within specific situations, such as spelling in English, painting in art, designing in Technology, multiplying in Mathematics and problem-solving in Life orientation. In task self-esteem, the learners with LEP may refer to their inability to cope with specific tasks in the different LAs, such as presenting a product that they have made in Technology, passing tests and exams in Natural Sciences and writing coherent and cohesive texts in English.

Bailey and Nunan (1996:164) believe that “establishing a good relationship with students is extremely important in creating a conducive learning atmosphere in the classroom”. The learners need to take responsibility to learn when the teachers fulfil their right to learn by teaching them. It is discouraging for teachers to keep on teaching if they do not get an indication from their learners if they understand or not. The teachers must also motivate their learners to indicate if they do not understand and that there is nothing wrong about it.

McCoy (1979:187) refers to this kind of discussion as “cognitive restructuring” and trusts that this process creates trust between the student and the teacher. The teacher gets an opportunity to deal with his/her learners' problem of anxiety immediately. The learners gain confidence and trust the teacher if they feel that s/he

understands their lived experiences. This could further boost their self esteem and make them relax during lessons. Crookall and Oxford (1991:144) states that if the learners and teachers would “consider themselves as a partnership... then neither would see the other as a source of difficulty, and both could work together to deal with the common problem”.

There is still no proof that a high self-esteem contributes to success in language acquisition. According to Heyde (1979, in Brown 1994:138), “... teachers can really have a positive and influential effect on both the linguistic performance and the emotional well-being of the students”. Teachers therefore need to encourage, motivate and support learners with LEP because they often end up being anxious about every task that they are given.

Bailey (1991:90) hypothesized that “language classroom anxiety can be caused and or aggravated by the learners’ competitiveness when he sees himself as less proficient than the object of comparison.” Brown (1994:141) says, “... anxiety is associated with feelings of uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt, apprehension or worry”. Scovel (1978:134) agrees, stating that “... anxiety is a state of apprehension, a vague fear ...” learners with LEP feel anxious when they are faced with complex tasks. They tend to doubt their abilities and worry whether they will succeed. Some learners with LEP worry about a particular or specific task, such as giving a speech, writing an essay on a topic, or writing an exam because they know that their English is limited and they will probably not achieve good marks when compared to those of their L1 peers, but they do not mind working in groups or doing research. Some learners with LEP are generally worried about everything that is in their second language-learning package. They are nervous about every task, be it speaking, reading or writing. Anxious learners try very hard to avoid embarrassment, humiliation, criticism and to preserve their self-esteem.

Bailey (1983, in Brown H. D.1994:142), found in self-analysis that “... while competitiveness sometimes hindered her progress, at other times it motivated her to study harder”. Some learners with LEP panic when faced with complex tasks whilst others feel motivated to try very hard to meet at least the minimum requirements. Teachers have to identify learners who are anxious about particular tasks, and those

that are anxious about everything in L2. They should support them to take responsibility of their learning and try harder to succeed.

Anxiety is not always a negative state. Learners tend to feel anxious before writing an exam or presenting a speech. Becoming nervous before such activities is a good sign that indicates that the learners are interested in their learning and wish to perform well rather than being relaxed and not bothering to prepare. Scovel (1978:139) termed this type of tension “facilitative anxiety”. Negative anxiety may cause the learner with LEP not to learn effectively. Poor performance in English can cause them to skip tests, absent themselves unnecessarily, miss class sessions, hide their books, or often ask to go to the bathroom. Scovel (1978:139) terms the latter as “debilitative anxiety”.

Risk-taking is considered a good characteristic of successful learning of a second language. Beebe (1983:41) claimed that “... persons with a high motivation to achieve are ... moderate, not high risk- takers. These individuals like to be in control ... They do not take wild, frivolous guesses or enter into difficult situations”. Phillips (1990:541) found a “negative relationship between several measures of anxiety and the quality and quantity of foreign language speech”. The language that is used tends to be the barrier for communication and causes the level of anxiety to rise and; as a result learners become reluctant to speak in class. Risk-taking yields positive results for learners with LEP but they do not always want to embarrass themselves by making wild guesses. They often listen to what their peers are saying without arguing or supporting them.

In second-language learning, some learners do not take any risk that will make them appear “stupid” and be laughed at by their peers. This may cause them to make mistakes as they always remain silent and are not sure whether what they are thinking is correct, relevant or wrong. The worst part is that the teacher may not even know what is happening in their minds and hence may not be able to assist them if what they are thinking is not appropriate or relevant.

There are some learners with LEP who are overly high risk-takers. They can dominate the class by taking risks that mostly place them in no-win situations, which

wastes teaching and learning time. Teachers need to take care of these learners and control their actions. Sometimes teachers encourage and motivate learners to guess, which is quite acceptable. Yet it should not be overdone as it could confuse learners who are not competent in English.

Guiora and his colleagues (1972:142) define empathy as “a process of comprehending in which a temporary fusion of self-object boundaries permits an immediate emotional apprehension of the affective experience of another”. Communication fails when false assumptions are made about the other person’s state. Brown (1994:143) states that “... empathy is the process of putting yourself into someone else’s shoes, of reaching beyond the self and understanding, and feeling what another persons’ understanding or feeling is.” Teachers need to *feel* for the learners with LEP and understand that they come to school with no background in English. They are not to assume that the L2 learners will cope as time goes on, but should guide them through their learning by giving them simple and clear instructions, teaching them how to read and interpret questions, how to write cohesive texts and how to present appropriate speeches. When the school admits the learners with LEP, it takes the responsibility to help the parents to cater for the educational needs of those learners.

Hogan (1969:309) is of the opinion that “... there are two necessary aspects to the development and exercising of empathy: first, an awareness of one’s own feelings and second, the identification with another person.” Communication breaks down when the teachers simply assume that they are aware of the learners with LEP’s state and feelings. It is important that the teachers should acknowledge the learners’ LEP and living with the feeling of being incompetent. The teachers can imagine how difficult it can be if they are forced to learn an indigenous language to help their learners with LEP in the language that these children understand. This will help the teachers empathize with their learners with LEP if they also feel what one goes through in learning an additional language.

According to Littlewood (1984:53) “... motivation is the crucial force which determines if a learner embarks on a task at all, how much energy he devotes to it, and how long he perseveres”. Self motivation contributes a lot to any learning and

learning a language gives a learner a means of communication. Learning a second language can take place at different levels of motivation, namely those of global, situational, and task-orientated motivation. High global motivation takes place when learners with LEP *want* to learn the English language, low situational motivation takes place in different situations during an English lesson, such as during self-assessment on the work done in class and moderate task motivation takes place when learners with LEP aim to achieve good marks in written tasks such as tests and exams. A learner can be successful when s/he is motivated. Teachers therefore need to motivate and support learners with LEP to persevere and to keep going to achieve the levels stipulated by the Department of Basic Education (DoE) (Circular 22/2002:15).

2.7 THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

Learners are expected to achieve a number of skills and knowledge as set out by the Department of Basic Education in the form of learning outcomes (LOs) and assessment standards (ASs). The LOs and the ASs are set out in such a way that they describe what the learners should know and be able to do, how conceptual and skills development can take place and how conceptual progression offers a link between different grades.

The LOs have different ASs that are carefully planned to cover the different skills, knowledge, values and attitudes necessary. The Languages Learning Outcomes (LLOs) are divided into the following activities: listening, speaking, reading, viewing and understanding, writing, thinking and reasoning and language structure and use. The LOs for English HL, Grades R -- 9 are defined as follows in the Department of Education (2002:12-13):

- **Listening:** The learner will be able to listen for information and enjoyment, and respond appropriately and critically in a wide range of situations.

Even though the learners with LEP can demonstrate appropriate behaviour during listening tasks, they sometimes do so without fully understanding the task or discussion. This becomes clear when they are supposed to use the language to

perform a function, such as: retelling the story, explaining how they feel about the story, suggest solutions for the problems identified in the story, or give the sequence of events. They normally do not manage to respond appropriately to such questions. The learners with LEP usually lose marks in listening activities as often the level at which the story is narrated is higher than their level of understanding and lack of prior knowledge in relation to the discussed topic.

- **Speaking:** The learner will be able to communicate confidently and effectively in speaking in a wide range of situations.

The learners with LEP battle in this regard because they are too shy to communicate in the target language and especially so, in front of an audience. This shyness stops them from demonstrating even the little understanding that they have because they cannot communicate appropriately in English, as for example reciting a poem, giving a speech, telling a story, debating, playing a game involving language, in role-plays, describing a process, or recounting a sequence of events. The learners with LEP are hesitant to speak in front of their L1 peers if they are not specifically asked to do so because they are hesitant to take a guess and expose themselves to laughter.

- **Reading and viewing:** The learner will be able to read and view for information and enjoyment, and respond critically to the aesthetic, cultural and emotional values in texts.
- The L2 learners struggle to read and, as a result, do not answer the questions correctly. This does not apply to English lessons only, but to all the learning areas. They fail their written tasks because during a test or an exam as they cannot continuously ask the teacher or invigilator to explain the work. Their inability to read and understand questions leads them to fail the tasks owing to their lack of reading skills, even if they do know the answers.
- **Writing:** The learner will be able to write different kinds of factual and imaginative texts for a wide range of purposes.

The learners with LEP write words and sentences that do not make sense because

they are not able to read. Some simply re-write the questions without any understanding. They *pretend* that they are writing so that no one can ask them why they are not writing. Their work is full of spelling errors. They cannot write cohesive and coherent texts.

- **Thinking and reasoning:** The learner will be able to use language to think and reason, as well as to access, process and use information for learning.

Some learners with LEP have difficulty in using language to think and reason because their English is limited. When the learners with LEP are given research activities, they can get some assistance in the computer or media centre -- with their parents' support. They can gather information but they fail to interpret or process the information in the correct way. They cannot answer complex questions, such as 'After reading the passage, re-write it in your own words and write a conclusion in a paragraph that explains your feeling about the story'.

- **Language structure and use:** The learner will be able to use the sounds, words and grammar of the language to create and interpret texts.

Some learners with LEP are unable to use correct grammar in English. They end up losing marks because they confuse sounds, use the wrong word order and do not have enough vocabulary to carry out tasks correctly.

It is the responsibility of English-medium primary schools to make sure that they empower their learners with LEP to achieve these outcomes and, where the learners experience barriers, the school must support them to succeed. It is possible for learners to cope in some learning outcomes, but not in others. A learner could, for instance, achieve good results in listening and speaking, but battle to read and comprehend an assignment in which s/he is expected to answer questions by giving reasons in writing. Limited English proficiency could be a disadvantage for second-language learners in all learning areas.

Teachers are expected to support all learners who are not coping with the minimum requirements by giving them expanded opportunities. These will help the learners revise the concept that was taught and possibly improve their marks. Learners who

struggle to meet the abovementioned requirements in the Mol -- in most cases -- are also in danger of struggling in all the other learning areas. Problem areas must be recorded on a learner's support form by the teachers who teach individual learning areas, and the parents must be continuously updated on their child's growth (or lack of) and development. The Department of Education (2002:11) Circular 22 has set tables (see figure 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 below), providing methods to convert marks achieved by learners during formal assessments into various levels. Teachers are to use the information in the table to provide feedback to parents. The tables follow below as in the Department of Education (2002:11):

The table in figure 2.2 represents the codes that are used by the teachers in the Foundation Phase (grade 1, 2 and 3) to report on the learners' performance. The learners with LEP will normally score 1's in Literacy and Numeracy.

CODES	DESCRIPTION OF COMPETENCE
1	Not yet achieved
2	Partially achieved
3	Achieved
4	Outstanding/ excellent achievement

Figure 2.2 Grade 1 -- 3: Foundation Phase assessment codes

The table in figure 2.3 represents the codes that are used by the teachers in the Intermediate Phase to report on the learners' performance. The learners with LEP will normally score 1's (0 - 34%) in English, Mathematics and other learning areas.

CODES	DESCRIPTION OF COMPETENCE	MARKS (%)
1	Not yet achieved	0 -- 34%
2	Partially achieved	35 -- 49%
3	Achieved	50 -- 69%
4	Outstanding/ excellent achievement	70 --100%

Figure 2.3 Grade 4 -- 6: Intermediate Phase assessment codes and marks

The table in figure 2.4 represents the codes that are used by the teachers in the Senior Phase to report on the learners' performance. The learners with LEP will normally score 1's and 2's (0 - 39%) in English, Mathematics and other learning areas.

CODES	DESCRIPTION OF COMPETENCE	MARKS (%)
7	Outstanding achievement	80 -- 100
6	Meritorious achievement	70 -- 79
5	Substantial achievement	60 -- 69
4	Adequate achievement	50 -- 59
3	Moderate achievement	40 -- 49
2	Elementary achievement	30 -- 39
1	Not achieved	0 -- 29

Figure 2.4 Grade 7: Senior Phase assessment codes and marks

The learners with LEP struggle to achieve a satisfactory level of proficiency in the second language because the realities of their teaching do not allow for adequate language acquisition. They have very limited or no exposure to a second language at home. Teachers who educate and support the learners with LEP when they experience problems in their learning are most of the time not in a position to communicate or assist these learners in their mother tongue.

In formal-language learning classes, a teacher is not a figure of authority, but a facilitator. S/he determines the programme of the learning session, such as what is taught, for how long, when to ask questions and what can/cannot be said. In some cases, the focus is placed on correctness rather than on appropriateness.

Frequently, the latter is given more attention than the attempt to explain why the answers given are incorrect and, as a result, some learners give up and do not risk answering questions. This depends on individual teachers. Some teachers feel that it is confusing to give the learner all the finer details of a lesson as the learner can easily get confused, whilst others feel that learners need thorough and detailed

information about the lessons that are presented so that the learners can understand the information in their own ways of learning.

Brumfit (1984, in Webb and Kembo-Sure, 2000:294) state that "... the knowledge, skills, aptitudes and motivation of the teachers, their experience and training are also factors." The kind of attitude that the learner displays in learning a language can be an added factor in acquiring English. The learners with LEP who are well behaved try to follow the rules. They avoid wasting time by always being in trouble, and being called for interviews instead of being in the classroom learning. Learner interest and dedication in the acquisition of a second language allow the learners with LEP to remain motivated, to keep on trying and not to lose hope. They have to work extended hours when compared to L1 learners.

According to Ellis (1985:103), "... students will inevitably have very different views about the kind of teacher that they think is the best for them". According to Stevick (1980, in Ellis 1985:103), some children prefer a teacher who "creates space for them to pursue their own learning paths". Others prefer a teacher who "structures the learning tasks more tightly". Bailey (1980, in Ellis 1985:103), emphasizes "a definite preference for a democratic teaching style". Learners have different abilities and should be given multiple opportunities to learn in ways that they choose for themselves.

Studies were conducted on the attitudes of students about teachers.

McDonough (1978, in Ellis 1985:103) further comment on "... problems of having to abide by someone else's teaching plan." However, Pickett (1978, in Ellis 1985:103), reveals that "... some learners want a teacher to act as an 'informant' but others praised teachers who were logical, clear and systematic, that is: impose a structure on the learners." Stevick (1980, in Erhman and Dörnyei 1998:2) claims the following:

Success in second-language learning depends less on material, techniques and linguistic analysis, and more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom. The relationship between the participants determines the quality and quantity of the interaction necessary for task involvement.

The teacher-learner ratio also widens the gap, as the teachers cannot attend to every learner's needs, but resort to group activities to save time. Unfortunately, the high noise level makes learning and concentration impossible and other classes are disturbed. The teacher learner ratio and high noise level during group discussions are some of the contributing factors to the difficulties faced by black learners when taught in English as a medium of instruction.

In a learning environment, there are different activities that take place. The learners with LEP are not only expected to learn the grammar of the target language, but also to use it appropriately, that is: what to say, to whom it can be said, when, where and how to say it. Teachers have a responsibility to assess learners and report to relevant stakeholders.

2.8 LANGUAGE-ASSESSMENT PROFICIENCY

The school and teachers are responsible for the assessment of learners and to establish a team to develop and facilitate the implementation of the assessment programme. Every school must have an assessment plan that should be made available to parents at the beginning of the year. The activities that are in the assessment plan are based on the assessment standards representing the knowledge, skills and values that the learners should demonstrate to achieve the LOs that are set for a grade. Through the assessments, the teachers can tell if a learner is coping with the requirements of the grade or not. The assessment should also help learners to make good decisions about their performance.

According to the Department of Education (2002:134), "... assessment is a continuous, planned process of gathering information about the performance of learners measured against the Assessment Standards of the Learning Outcomes." Teachers use different strategies to gather the information, give constructive feedback to learners and report to parents. The assessment should be continuous and should support the growth and development of learners.

According to the Department of Education (2002:136) Languages -- English Home Language, "... assessment standards are the language knowledge, skills and values that learners must be able to demonstrate what they know or can do

by the end of a particular grade. The assessment standards form the basis of the activities that are done in classes'. The following are examples:

Grade 1-- LO1: AS2 We know this when a learner demonstrates appropriate listening behaviour by listening without interrupting, showing respect for the speaker, taking turns to speak, and asking questions for clarification.

Grade 5 -- LO3: AS2 We know this when a learner shows understanding of fiction text, discusses central idea, plot, setting, atmosphere and characters.

Grade 7 -- LO2: AS2 We know this when a learner communicates ideas, facts and opinions clearly and with some accuracy and coherence, using a limited range of factual oral text types.

Furthermore, the Department of Education (2002:126) states that the types and purposes of a variety of assessments cover the following:

- *Baseline assessment* checks the learners' prior knowledge.
- *Diagnostic assessment* helps to identify problems that cause barriers to learning. Teachers can then give support and put intervention strategies in place.
- *Formative assessment* monitors and supports the process of learning and teaching.
- *Summative assessment* gives the overall picture of the learners at a given time.

There are different ways that the school can use to assess the learners' knowledge and understanding. These could be class work, spelling tests, tests, oral presentations, projects, essays, comprehension tests, examinations, discussions and role-plays. The length and complexity of the activities differ, and this is normally displayed in the form of a rubric. Rubrics give the criteria used by teachers to assess the learners work and to indicate their abilities during an assessment.

Teachers should keep records of all the assessments. Different codes are used to report on learners' progress. Reports should give information on the learners' performance for each term, the areas of competence, lack of progress, the support needed and they should further provide constructive feedback. Should a learner not meet the requirements for the grade, and after discussions with the parents and the DoE, they may repeat the grade.

Brown (1987:219) explains that "... a test measures a person's ability and knowledge. Care must be taken in any test to understand who the testees are". The learners with LEP bring limited English knowledge to ex-Model C schools. There is no culture of being read English stories at bedtime, no educational games and no puzzles to do. They hear English only during news times on television and in movies. After considering a learner's background, the teachers can then determine whether the test is appropriate for the learners with LEP ability, for example:

- the instructions should not be ambiguous,
- the learners should be able to understand the questions,
- the teachers read the paper to the learners at least once,
- Enough time allocation (extra time),
- Using a dictionary,
- how should the marking done and
- the interpretation and summaries of scores or results.

2.9 APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE LEARNING

Learners approach tasks in different preferred ways. There are visual learners who learn by seeing things, aural learners who hear a thing once or twice before they know and those who need to physically do things before they understand them. If learners were allowed to choose their preferred learning strategies, they could learn better. Teachers can help them by planning differentiated lessons and by presenting their lessons in such a way that they cater for all learning styles. An example could be as follows:

- A lesson on animals can be presented by using pictures,
- by bringing animal toys to class,

- playing animal sounds on a CD player and letting the learners identify the animals,
- bringing a DVD or video on animals; and
- allowing learners to role-play certain animals by showing their characteristics.

At the end of the lesson, many learning styles would have been covered.

Teachers complain that this method is time consuming. There are different approaches and methods that can be followed in language teaching. Some claims are made by teachers about different language-teaching methods, such as that learners can easily discuss topics that are not relevant to the set topic; they do not get to do the assessment on time to hand in the marks; and some children are easily confused by other children's contributions to the discussions. Yet, irrespective of the claims, the methods form part of language-teaching history as they give ideas and guidelines when one is teaching languages.

According to Prator and Celce-Murcia (1979, in Brown, 1994:70), when following the *audio-lingual* method, '... new material is presented in dialogue form and there is dependence on mimicry, memorization of set phrases, and over-learning'. Teachers carefully choose the linguistic items that they want to present to their learners. A teacher can then tell a story or conduct a dialogue that contains new words whilst the learners are listening. Thereafter, learners are expected to memorize the story or dialogue.

Learners are expected to pronounce words correctly and to make sure that their speech does not contain mistakes. A teacher can help the learners by guiding and supporting them when they learn how some grammatical rules work. Learners are given expanded opportunities to practise what they have learnt.

After enough practice in using different audiovisual learning and teaching-support materials, learners are then motivated to retell or role-play the story that they the teacher had told them. If the learners succeed to convince their teacher that their production is correct, they are deemed to have developed adequate linguistic and

pragmatic knowledge (Kumaravadivelu 2006:106-107).

In the *grammar-translation* method, little attention is given to teaching languages for oral communication. According to Prator and Celce-Murcia (1979:3), the following are some of the characteristics of the grammar-translation method:

- Classes are taught in the mother tongue ...;
- grammar provides the rules for putting words together;
- reading of difficult classical texts is begun early;
- exercises in translating disconnected sentences from the target language into the mother tongue are done; and
- little or no attention is given to pronunciation.

The grammar-translation method is popular because it does not require the teacher to be a specialist. The translation- and grammar-rules tests are easy to compile. Learners are simply exposed to a number of activities whereby they learn through rote learning and translating texts that do not encourage them to communicate in the target language. Learners tend to develop good reading skills in the second language when this method is used but Richards and Rodgers (1986:5) indicates that “it has no advocates and it is a method for which there is no theory.”

Following the *Community Language Learning (CLL)* method that was developed by Charles Curran, the teacher and learners stand together, form a community that values every individual and no one is seen as a leader or more important than the others are. The group members are free to communicate and the support in the group is huge. Brown (1994:96) states ‘... the group of clients (learners), having established in their native language an interpersonal relationship and trust, are seated in a circle with the counsellor (the teacher) on the outside of the circle’.

Learners say words in their HL (Zulu, Xhosa or Sepedi); the teacher says the words in the target language (English); and the learners repeat what the teacher had said as accurately as possible. The conversation could be taped for later listening the learners are encouraged to overhear what is repeated as La Forge(1983:45)states that “the result of the ‘overhear’ is that every member of the group can understand

what any given learner is trying to communicate.

As time goes by, the learners become familiar with the target language and the teacher starts to give fewer translations until the learners become independent. The learners' confidence is built and their anxiety is lowered. They are sure that no one will laugh at them when they make mistakes because they support one another in their learning.

The *Suggestopedia* method promotes the usage of human brainpower to learn a language. Lozanov (1978:2) claims that “There is no sector of public life where suggestology would not be useful.” This method is helpful for both academically gifted and less gifted learners. The most important feature of Suggestopedia is the centrality of music and musical rhythm to learning. During the soft playing of Baroque music, one can take in tremendous quantities of material, due to an increase in alpha brain waves and a decrease in blood pressure and pulse rate.

Music forms the basis of this method. Learners are provided with comfortable chairs. They are to be “childlike” as much as they can be, and all the authority is given to the teacher. During role-plays, learners assume the roles and names of the native speakers of the foreign language. The learners are apparently relaxed, not anxious, and communicate freely with one another.

Caleb Gattegno devised the *Silent Way* that is characterised by the approach of solving problems. Learners *discover* concepts instead of memorizing and repeating them. Learners use the learning and teaching media to solve the presented problems. The teacher is expected to only guide the learners and not to spell out everything for the learners even if they are tempted to do so. The learners as a team must cooperate, be independent, responsible, and solve the problems.

The Silent way is similar to other learning methods and Richards and Rodgers (1986:99) state the following about Gattegno’s work:

- Learning is facilitated if the learner discovers or creates rather than remembers and repeats what is to be learned.
- Learning is facilitated by accompanying physical objects.

- Learning is facilitated by problem solving involving the material to be learned.

In the Silent-way method, ‘... small coloured rods of different length and colourful wall charts are used to present pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, syntax, verbs, single words, short phrases and sentences once or twice and thereafter, the learners are to refine their understanding and pronunciation with little corrective feedback from the teacher’(Brown 1994:98). Even if the teacher is not always available to encourage the communicative atmosphere, the learners' grammatical and textual competence is developed.

James Asher, the founder of the *Total Physical Response* (TPR) approach, wished to devise a method that was as stress-free as possible because language learning can create anxiety. In TPR activities, learners do much listening and acting. Asher (1977:43) says that “The instructor is the director of a stage play in which the students are like actors.” The teacher gives the verbal and non-verbal instructions and the learners carry them out. Below are some examples of such instructions:

- Raise your hand (non-verbal);
- stand and tell us where you come from (non-verbal and verbal);
- draw pictures of all the things you see in the class (non-verbal);
- what is this? (question); and
- wait for your turn to speak.

Learners are free to respond to instructions and ask questions without feeling intimidated. Krashen and Terrell’s (1983) combined effort brought up the Natural Approach which promotes the traditional approaches to language teaching, implementation and classroom procedures. According to Brown (1994:99), “... the *Natural Approach* is aimed at the goal of basic interpersonal communication skills, that is, everyday language situation -- conversations, shopping, listening to radio, and the like”.

Learners are given a chance to delay production until their speech is developed. Cole (1931:58) states that in this method, “The study of grammar was reserved for a still later period.” The teachers must support the learners by ensuring that their

learning environment is relaxed and stimulating, and by using the language that they understand, or that is just slightly above the learners' level for discussions and repetition exercises. The learner may remain silent during the silent period until s/he is ready to communicate. They should not be rushed into writing activities until they can speak the foreign language.

Brown (1994:245) offered the following interconnected characteristics as a definition of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach:

- Classroom goals are focused on all the components of communicative competence and not restricted to grammatical or linguistic competence.
- Language techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaning purposes. Organisational language forms are not the central focus.
- Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques. At times fluency may have to take on more importance than accuracy.
- Students ultimately have to use the language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts.

The CLT builds fluency, but fluency is not over-emphasized at the cost of clear and unambiguous communication. Teachers can guide the learners in unrehearsed situations and not control the lesson. Learners communicate spontaneously in the communicative classes. Teaching- and learning-support materials such as computers, DVDs, CD players, videos and television could be used to simplify learning and teaching.

The aforementioned methods and approaches each have their strengths and their weaknesses, and a combination that suits different situations can help to make learning a second language fun. Teachers come from different institutions with different backgrounds to teach different learners with different backgrounds. Learners have different learning styles, and if the teachers could use a combination of approaches of teaching that could help the learners with LEP to better adjust to the ex-Model C environment. The CLT method of teaching seems to be the

appropriate approach to the problems dealt with in this study.

2.10 CONCLUSION

The theoretical concepts that are important for this study were discussed in this chapter. Communicative and language competence was discussed, as well as the different levels of language proficiency. There are different approaches to language acquisition and factors that affect language learning. The LOs and ASs were discussed as set out in the NCS of the Department of Basic Education, and different approaches that could be used to facilitate second-language learning were illustrated.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the research methodology used to obtain the information necessary to respond to the research questions will be discussed. Data will be collected in different ways, for example: literature review, analysing the school documents, questionnaires will be given to the headmaster, teachers, parents and learners.

Personal interviews will be conducted with the respondents. The learners' examples of work will be perused to identify gaps and learners will be observed in classes during lesson presentations to deal with the problems identified in this study. The research ethics, limitations, reliability and validity of the research will also be discussed in this chapter.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research of this kind has not yet been conducted in this school, the only school on which the researcher will focus. It is an affluent, ex-Model C school in Pretoria. There are two methods possible to use to collect information on the problems identified in the study, namely the qualitative and the quantitative methods. The aim of qualitative research is to provide a detailed description of a group of people and their real-life situations. Locke (1998:123), describes *qualitative* research as '... being interpretative and critical ... it is rich in meaning and collects non-numeric information.' The aim of *quantitative* research is to quantify classified features and to use statistical methods to explain the relationship between the features.

It is therefore important that the researcher determine the method of gathering data that are available and relevant to the proposed study. This study will mainly follow the qualitative method as the information needed will be collected through analyzing documents, a literature review, interviews, observations, questionnaires and

checking the L2 learners' work.

3.2.1 Literature review

According to Mouton (2003:86), "... it is essential that every research project begins with a review of the existing literature". This will help the researcher to establish what has been done in his/her area of study, and to learn from the work of other scholars. The information gained during the literature review will assist the researcher to avoid duplication and unnecessary repetition of the content of previous studies.

For the purpose of this study, the literature reviewed covered the following concepts:

- communicative competence,
- language knowledge,
- levels of language acquisition,
- types of language acquisition,
- the factors affecting language learning,
- language-competence assessment,
- the implications of the NCS of the DoE and
- the didactics of language teaching.

The research questions of this study were formulated following the literature review.

They were set out in Chapter 1, and can be summarized as follows:

- Which challenges or barriers to learning face black, English second-language South African learners in ex-Model C schools, and prohibit the achievement of their academic potential?
- Which policies and interventions can be recommended to meet or overcome the challenges facing black, English second-language South African learners in ex-Model C schools?
- In the following paragraph, different methods to help answer these questions are discussed.

3.2.2 Document analysis

The important documents of the school will be perused such as the electronic data-archive files; promotion schedules- to see how the learners with LEP perform as compared to the other learners in the same grades and retention schedules- to see the learners that are in danger of failing the grade. The learners' class works, tests, projects, essays and comprehension tests will also be perused to determine the level at which they are performing.

The GDE support forms and mark books will be accessed to establish how many L2 learners attend the school. The researcher will further analyze how these learners perform when compared to their L1 peers -- that is, what their marks are in English and in all the other learning areas as English is the only LOLT in the school. The researcher will establish whether they are on the 450 Support forms which is a special form on which the following information is recorded:

- the names of all the learners in the school who experience learning difficulties,
- the areas in which support is most needed,
- the support that *is* provided by teachers,
- the outcome of the interventions and
- parent notification and support.

3.2.3 Questionnaires

According to Dörnyei (2003:8), "... questionnaires can yield three types of data about the respondent: factual, behavioural and attitudinal information." Questionnaires are used to collect data that can be represented in graphs or pie charts and tables. Questionnaires can also give factual data (such as age, and level of education), behavioural data (what the respondents are doing or have done) and attitudinal data (what the respondents think).

By making use of a questionnaire, researchers can save quite some time as the data can be processed rather fast.

In this specific study, the factual questions will cover the following aspects:

- The *demographic information* about the participants -- their age, race and gender.
- The *behavioural questions* about the participants' life-style and habits, such as which language the learner uses after school at home.
- The *attitudinal questions* about the participants' and their parents' beliefs, opinions, interests and values, such as whether the parents deem it important that they communicate in English with their child/children after school.

The results of the languages spoken by the learners in the school will be presented in a pie chart in the following chapter.

Four different sets of questionnaires will be issued to parents, learners, teachers, and the headmaster to complete. The questionnaires will be accompanied by a letter explaining the aims of the study and the importance of their participation, and will express gratitude for their cooperation (see Appendix 5).

The researcher will make it clear to the participants that participation is voluntary and that no information collected for the study would be used for other purposes. After the researcher has analyzed the responses, some participants will be interviewed on responses that raised matters of interest or that were not clear to the researcher.

The headmaster's questionnaire (see Appendix 10), requires information on the awareness and interventions of the school regarding the problem being researched. It further poses questions about the future plans on how the school intends to deal with using indigenous languages in the school.

The teachers' questionnaire (see Appendix 11), addresses the school and classroom factors related to the linguistic barriers experienced by the learners. This questionnaire will serve the purpose of preparing the teachers for an interview that will follow. All the teachers in the school (from Grade 1 to Grade 7; in all learning areas) will be given the questionnaire to complete and return to the researcher.

The researcher will select twelve learners who experience learning problems because of LEP. They are from Grades 2 to 7. These learners did not achieve good results in 2008 and in the first term of 2009. These learners must have GDE support forms (see Appendix 16), that the teachers complete when they identify problems in the academic development of these learners'. The parents should have been invited to meetings to be informed about their children's learning barriers.

The learners' questionnaire (see Appendix 13), is drafted in simple English and the learners will respond by making ticks next to the questions because reading and answering questions in writing may be a problem for them. Interviews with learners will be conducted to clarify questions or to follow up on issues following on their responses.

The parents' questionnaire (see Appendix 12), addresses the parents' experience of their LEP children's learning in an ex-Model C school. For most questions, parents have to tick the appropriate block. The purpose of this is to accommodate parents who are not fully literate. Follow-up interviews will be conducted to give parents an opportunity to explain in detail what their ticks mean should they want to do so.

The researcher will analyze the languages spoken by the learners in the school, and use the information collected to support her findings.

3.2.4 Personal interviews

A personal interview is a face-to-face situation in which the researcher asks the respondents questions about their experiences. The researcher could further ask follow-up questions, clarify questions or responses, and obtain precise information from the respondents. The participants could be requested to elaborate on their responses. However, participants may not be willing to give honest answers in a personal interview. In such a case, the researcher must reassure them that their responses would be treated as strictly confidential.

3.2.4.1 Interviews with learners

Twelve learners out the seventeen that had to repeat the grades in 2009 were selected. The researcher will select a boy and a girl with LEP and who have scored the lowest marks according to the retention schedule of each and every grade. Informed consent to participate will be requested from their parents first, only the parents of the identified learners will take part in the research. If the parents agree to participate then they will give consent for both themselves and their children (see appendix 8). The researcher will then give the learners their specific consent forms to complete (see appendix 9).

The twelve learners will initially be divided in phase groups namely learners in the Foundation Phase, the Intermediate Phase, and the Senior Phase. A group session where the questions will be explained will take place. This will help to minimize the anxiety because each learner will realize that they are not in trouble as other learners are also involved. Their parents will have given consent for them to participate and irrespective of their parent's consent to participate in the research, they can still not participate if they are not interested. The learners that are interested will then be interviewed individually in different sessions.

Learners will be informed that they are not forced to participate in the interviews. The researcher will determine whether their parents have informed them that they had given permission for them to partake in the research. Should a learner initially not be willing to participate, the researcher can motivate the learner by explaining the

importance of his/her taking part in the research. If that does not help, parents will be informed of the issue, and another learner will be selected.

During a group interview, the researcher will read the questions and discuss these with all the learners as they may not understand them because of their language barrier. This will assist the researcher to make sure that the learners understood the questions before answering.

Making notes as learners are discussing their responses may be intimidating to shy or less confident learners, yet it can at the same time encourage the outspoken or confident ones to dominate the discussion with the researcher. The group interview will help to make the learners not feel insecure or intimidated by the questions that are asked. The learners that are less active can be interviewed later in individual sessions.

Every learner will have a questionnaire where they can tick their preferred responses, after discussing what a question means. The following symbols appear on the questionnaires (and a description of what they mean is in brackets):

☺ (means happy, easy, fun or enjoy)

☹ (means middle – not good and not bad, not sure, do it to avoid trouble, do it just because they are expected to do so) and

☹ (means that the learners see it as a punishment, it's not funny, unhappy or difficult).

The group interview session (where they go through the questions with the help of the researcher) will help them to assist one another in interpreting the questions. They can add to each others idea or ask for clarity. Learners can easily learn from each other. The researcher will explain the questions that may be confusing to learners. The questions deal with, among other issues, the following ones:

- how the learners experiences their L2 learning,
- whether they are shy or not,

- how they feel about doing homework,
- who at home is helping them with their studies,
- which expectations people (parents or teachers) have of them,
- which language they prefer for different functions and
- their general feelings about learning a language.

The researcher will take note of learners who do not participate in the discussion and have another interview with them individually. They will also be notified of the aims of the study to motivate them (the recommendations of the study may contribute to changing their problem of LEP). The interview will give the researcher a better understanding and knowledge of the learners' lived experiences and perceptions.

3.2.4.2 Interviews with teachers

The teachers will be interviewed individually, depending on their availability. Teachers have different commitments besides teaching. It is therefore essential that the researcher arrange an appointment that will suit them. It will further help to obtain the teachers' individual points of view, which would not be influenced by what other teachers, the heads of department, or the headmaster may think, say or feel.

The researcher will give the teachers a copy of the questionnaire in advance. This will help save time as the teachers can prepare themselves for the interviews. All the questions will then be answered as the teachers could also refer to their school documents before the interview. This will lessen the 'I am not sure about that question' responses). Teachers can also communicate freely as they will be aware of what is expected of them.

The teachers will be interviewed individually, depending on their availability. The researcher will interview the three language teachers, the languages head of department and three foundation phase teachers. The selected teachers are teaching the twelve learners that are selected and they know their barriers and have had meetings with the parents of these learners. Teachers have different commitments besides teaching. It is therefore essential that the researcher arrange

an appointment that will suit them. It will further help to obtain the teachers' individual points of view, which would not be influenced by what other teachers, the heads of department, or the headmaster may think, say or feel.

The teachers' responses are very important as they are the ones who see what the learners with LEP experience every day, and should be willing to support them to overcome their learning barriers. The researcher will then make an appointment with the teachers to execute the observations.

3.2.5 Classroom observations

Classroom observations will take place with reference to the framework to which Hymes (1972:277) referred to as the phenomenon SPEAKING + T. Hymes (1972a:277 in Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000:247), states that, "... we have then to account for the fact that a normal child acquires knowledge of sentences, not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate. He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner".

Hymes (1972, in Webb and Kembo-Sure 2000:247) identifies various contextual variables that can have an effect on the language used in a speech event. They are as follows:

- setting,
- participants,
- ends,
- acts,
- key,
- instrumentality,
- norms,
- genre and
- topic.

According to Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000:247-251), “... the *setting* [author’s italics]) relates to the physical circumstances of the speech event, such as time and place.” Other factors related to this statement can be the language used, the furniture, and seating arrangements. In a school situation, the venue is the classroom. One can further look at the number of learners in the class, at which time the lesson starts and ends, and how long the periods and cycles are. It is further important to observe how the learners are seated, and to monitor the direction of their communication, to note whether there are class rules, and where the teacher's desk is.

The *participants* in the classroom speech-event are the learners and the teacher. The role and relationship between the participants are also important: learner to teacher, and teacher to learner, how they relate to one another, and which language is used during the lesson. The general goal of any classroom activity is for teachers to be the facilitators, and the activities to be learner centred. Learners should listen in class, take part in discussions, do their homework and projects, and gain more knowledge through research work.

The *ends* are the general goals and aims of the speech event. In L2 learning, in the researcher’s subjects, the general aim is to understand the topics that are taught in their classes by their teachers. The aim of every learner would be to show understanding of the material taught by achieving good marks for different topics, or to discuss topics, ask questions, and argue about issues where necessary. Particular speech acts can be used to realize the abovementioned aims. Learners can ask questions, discuss, compare, criticize, explain, justify or analyze. Teachers need to assist the learners with LEP to understand what these kind of question expect them to do to answer the question.

The *key* is the same as the concept “register”. The tone, manner, approach and spirit of the speech act are also important. These can be friendly or intimidating, tense or humorous, formal or informal. The key in the classroom is expected to be formal: learners should take turns in speaking, respect the speaker, raise a hand to talk and be polite.

Different *instruments* are used at school to ensure that learning takes place through speaking, namely when doing speeches or discussing issues, writing essays, tests and exams, and body language.

The *norms* relate to the importance of following the rules for appropriate behaviour that accompanies a language in this particular context. The way in which the participants express themselves is important. Examples are, for instance: how the teacher poses questions, how the learners indicate that they would like to answer to a question, the loudness of their voices, eye contact and body posture. Learners may not shout, insult, tease one another, or make jokes during learning time in the classroom.

The features of what takes place in the classroom situation should be appropriate to a certain *genre*, such as explanations, debate, questions, answers, listening to stories read by teachers, speaking when discussing or giving feedback on aspects, reading from books, writing, reasoning and viewing. These activities will be guided by the topic with which the learners are dealing.

The *topic* is what is discussed. It affects the vocabulary that is used. The *context* determines the appropriate language to express appropriate meaning. Learners are taught three learning programmes in the Foundation Phase, namely: numeracy, literacy and life skills. In the Intermediate and Senior Phases, the eight learning areas are, among others, mathematics, natural science, technology and the like.

Researchers differentiate between *visible* and *hidden* observation. Visible observation means that participants are informed about the researcher's presence. In this instance, the learners who will be observed should know when the researcher is coming and what s/he will be observing. Hidden observation means that the participant is unaware that observation is taking place. In this instance, the researcher will observe a learner without informing the learner that s/he is being observed or what is being observed.

Hidden observations can raise ethical issues concerning the privacy of the participants. The study will involve three parties, namely the researcher, the school,

and the participants. The researcher is expected not to overstep the other parties' individual privacy, for example: participants could refuse to answer certain questions and should not be pressurized to do so. The information about personal matters that are disclosed to the researcher should be kept confidential. If there are conflicting issues about behavioural expectations between the parties, ethical problems may arise.

Visible observations will take place to circumvent ethical issues. The teachers and learners will be informed in advance about the observer's presence. The researcher will only observe if the teacher has indicated that s/he is ready for the observation. The researcher will then observe how the teacher presents the lesson based on the framework developed by Hymes (1972:277).

3.2.6 Learners' work

The researcher will ask the teachers to provide him/her with the examples of the learners' work for perusal during observation. Copies will be made if required or necessary for future reference. The learners will remain anonymous and their examples of work will be used for this study purposes only. The researcher will analyze the learners' work to establish how they perform in written activities.

It is important for the researcher to differentiate between *primary* and *secondary* data. *Primary data* are data gathered and assembled specifically for the research at hand directed by the research problem and research questions. This data are aimed at meeting the current needs of the researcher. As an example, the researcher could peruse the worksheet that the learners had completed whilst s/he was observing the action in the classroom. This would help to determine whether the learners had followed the instructions and answered the questions correctly.

Secondary data are data that had been previously collected and recorded before the research had taken place. This data had already been gathered, such as the learners with LEP's work from the beginning of the year (existing class work, tests, speeches, comprehension tests and projects).

3.3 Data analysis

Once the author has collected the necessary information, the data will be analyzed by reading through the responses to every question and making notes. The author will use the information gathered to refresh the teachers' awareness of the learners' linguistic problems that prevent them from performing according to their abilities.

Recommendations to better the situation will be made available to parents, learners and teachers. After a certain period of time, feedback will be expected from all participants to check whether there had been any improvement following the implementation of the recommendations. The feedback could be used to do research in the future, if necessary.

3.4 Research ethics

In a research there are different parties, namely: the headmaster, teachers, parents and learners. Each party expects certain rights and feels certain obligations towards the other parties. The researcher will not overstep the boundary of the abovementioned individual's privacy.

No respondent will be forced to participate in this research or to answer certain questions if they are feeling uncomfortable to answer them. The information that will be disclosed in this research will be guarded from all people other than the researcher.

The right to privacy and confidentiality binds the researcher to protect the anonymity of the respondents. Informed consent means that the participants understand the reason for the research and waives his or her privacy when he or she agrees to participate in the research.

The participants in this research will be given consent forms that contain an option to either agree or disagree to participate in the research (see appendix 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9). Privacy and confidentiality will form the basis of this research.

3.5 Limitations, reliability and validity of the research

The limitations, reliability and validity of this research are related. The researcher will have to be aware of some factors that can affect the interview and observation results. The researcher will set the questionnaires to gather the information needed from the respondents. The questionnaires should be easy to understand and relevant to get the correct valid results.

The researcher's position as a friend, a teacher, a colleague, a deputy principal, a parent, a supervisor or a subordinate need to be fair and neutral to make sure that the results are valid. Some respondents might not give their honest opinions about issues they are asked about because of being scared that they will be victimised or seen as not cooperative by their leaders. The researcher will encourage the respondents not to be scared to give their honest opinion because of his or her status.

Some LEP learners that may be reserved and not take part during group discussions may not answer immediately to questions that are posed by the researcher. Should such a situation arise, the researcher will follow up with the reserved learners to find out if they have different ideas but will not force them to answer if they do not want to.

The researcher should also guard against the more active learners who may dominate the interviews by asking them to give other learners a turn. The teachers' workload and pressure to meet the due dates, parents' feelings about the school's operational requirements, how their children perform, the learners' emotions, fatigue and diet may affect the research results.

3.6 Conclusion

The qualitative method will be followed in this research whereby the instrumentation will include literature review, document analysis, conducting interviews with teachers and learners, filling in questionnaires, classroom observations and perusing the

learners' work. The researcher will keep all the information gathered safe and confidential. Above all the researcher should keep the anonymity of the respondents and use the data only for the research purpose. The data collected will be analyzed in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The data collected during the research process as well as the questionnaires¹ and interviews will be described, discussed, analyzed and interpreted in this chapter.

4.2 SCHOOL FILES

The researcher commenced the data analysis by going through the electronic files of the school. The files were perused to establish how many learners in the school had indigenous languages as their HLs in 2009, how many were on the 2008 possible retention schedule (a list of possible failures) and the number of those who were actually retained in 2008. She also looked at the mark books to see what the progress of these learners was in 2009.

The records revealed that, except for learners who have English as a HL, and those having English as a second language because their mother tongues are indigenous languages, there are many more other HLs in the school, among others Afrikaans, Portuguese, Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa (the latter being three Nigerian languages), Shona (a Zimbabwean language), Italian, Greek, and the like.

According to the 2008 retention schedules, 13 out of 17 learners who had to repeat their grades in 2009 were learners who had an indigenous African language as a HL. The 2009 possible retention schedule (a list of learners who experience severe learning difficulties and have documented proof of support programmes that were put in place to support them and there is still no improvement) reflects that there was a possibility of retaining indigenous mother-tongue speaking learners. Their English marks were less than 34% (Code 1), and they did not pass most of the other LAs,

¹ Permission to use these questionnaires in DBE schools was granted by the DoE [see personal e-mail in this regard in the Appendix].

either. This indicates that the learners with LEP were not coping with the demands of the grades, and scored less than 40% in Grade 7.

The researcher noted that these learners with LEP did not only struggle in English as a LA, but also in all the other LAs such as Technology, Natural Science, Mathematics, Social Sciences, and the like. In the LAs where they did pass, it was with additional support (Code 2), which means partial achievement of the minimum requirements in a LA and is the code used for reporting in learners' report cards). This means that they had to put more effort in those LAs in the following year again.

The learners with LEP repeating a grade were reported to continue struggling, even though they had been given an opportunity to progress. The workload become too much for them. Their poor achievement could be language related, but there are other factors such as psychological and emotional issues that could also be hindering their progress.

Amongst these learners with LEP, some started their schooling with no knowledge of English. They further do not have enough support from their parents because their parents are either illiterate, or work till late at night, or do not have the time or have limited resources at their homes to extend the concepts that are taught in the classroom.

Five out of the 12 learners with LEP on the retention schedule have tutors who help them with their school work. This situation is different from that of their L1 peers who come to class with pre-existing knowledge of English. They come to school to learn formally. By the time the L1 learners are registered, a culture of learning already exists.

English as a Mol can be confusing for learners with LEP as, except for hearing it on radio or on television. They are officially introduced to it only when they start school. The expectation that they perform well academically is stressful as they cannot perform some of the functions that are schoolwork related.

4.2 THE HEADMASTER’S RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE²

The headmaster was given the questionnaire on the same day that the other teachers had received theirs. The following paragraph states briefly how he responded to the questions posed.

The headmaster confirmed that there were learners who were experiencing difficulties owing to the use of English as a Mol. Learners from many embassies from across the world attend the school, hence different languages and cultures form part of the school community. There are 841 learners in the school, 498 of whom are English HL speakers, 59 speak Afrikaans, 37 speak Zulu, 57 use Sotho, three speak Ndebele, 46 are speakers of Tswana, 22 speak Xhosa, three speak Venda, two speak Swati, nine speak Tsonga, 26 use only Pedi and then there are 79 learners who speak other languages(from other countries). All these learners receive their tuition in English and take Afrikaans as a FAL because it is one of the additional languages that the feeder high schools of the school offer.

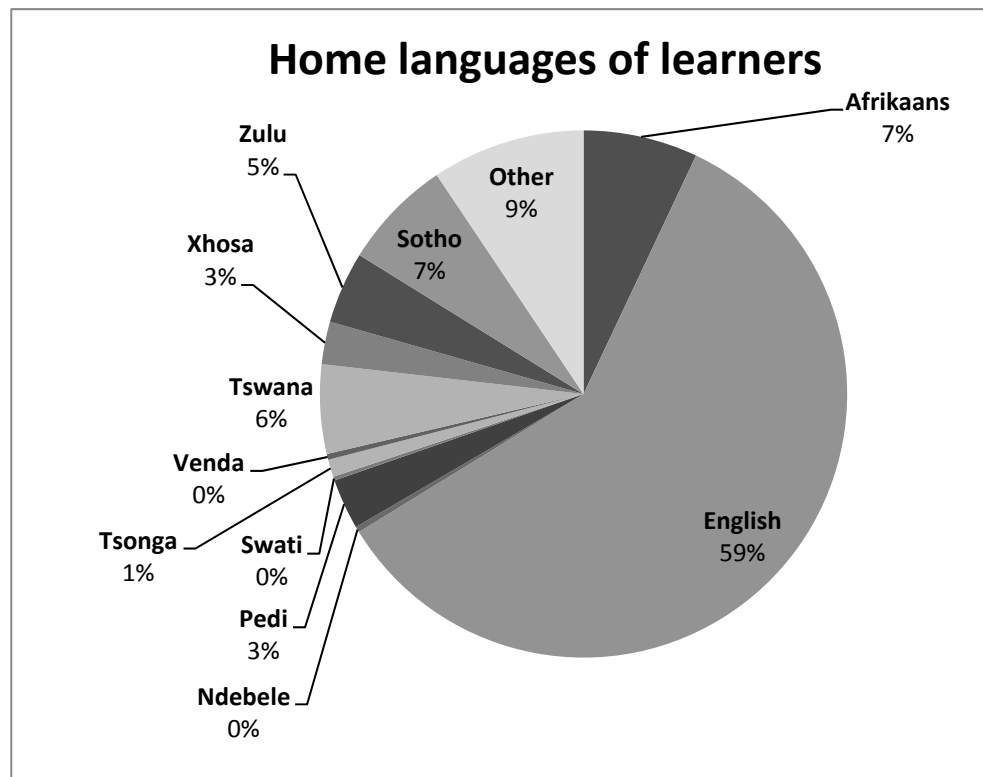


Figure 4.1 Pie chart indicating the percentage learners’ HLs

The pie chart demonstrates the actual percentages of HLs that the school has sourced from the school documents survey that are based on information received from the parents. There is a possibility that there are more learners with indigenous languages (rather than English) as HLs, but the learners are confused by the fact that they are encouraged to continuously communicate in English and then regard English as their HL.

According to the records, the breakdown of 17 learners with LEP who repeated grades in 2009 is as follows: eight in the Foundation Phase, six in the Intermediate Phase, and three in the Senior Phase ($8 + 6 + 3 = 17$). These learners scored one's on a four points scale in grade one to six and on a seven point scale in grade seven (four and seven being the highest score) in most of their LAs, which means that their performance did not satisfy the LA requirements for the grade.

The assessment is based on a variety of activities that offer an opportunity to learners who do not cope well in written activities to score better marks in activities during which they discuss topics given by the teacher, such as role-play, demonstrations, designing or constructing bridges and machines, and the like.

At the end of each year, all the marks are added. Learners are then given an overall performance mark. Should the mark be a "one", the learner must repeat the grade. In other cases, the departmental officials assess the schedules as the learners are not promoted based on English only but on all LAs.

Should the assessment team from the District Office of Tshwane South feel that the learners needs to be given a chance, they send the learner through to the next grade, but with additional support. Such a decision leads to many challenges and even problems as the learners with LEP normally struggle more in the next grade since they had not met most of the requirements for the previous grade.

The teachers are sent to different courses that are organized by the GDE on curriculum-related matters. Guest speakers are also invited to address the teachers as part of their development, for which the school carries the costs involved. The

teachers are encouraged to plan multi-level lessons to cater for learners with different abilities, especially the ones who are not achieving satisfactory results.

Individual support is given to motivate the weaker ones not to lose confidence. They are guided until they complete some tasks. As an example: The teacher would read the questions one by one to the learner and, when the learner struggles to answer questions, the teacher will give the learner clues for the answer.

When the learners with LEP are doing a comprehension test, the teacher would guide them by asking them to read the sentences that contain the answers. This guidance allows them to feel that they can do the work, although such guidance is not always possible because of the numbers of learners in the classes.

The learners with LEP do not always get enough time to practice, highlight and explain difficult words. Teachers are expected to record the learners' areas of need in a GDE 450 Support Form with the type of intervention that was given. Teachers set appointments with parents to discuss the findings and ways in which the parents can help.

The support forms are kept as confidential in the learner's profile and, at the end of the year, the forms are forwarded to the teachers who teach the next grade. This is done to make sure that the teachers are aware of the learners' barriers, and that they would support them.

Two teachers facilitate remedial classes (as extra-mural classes) in the Foundation Phase. The school offers English adaptation classes to learners who do not know English. In this class, learners with no English are taught how to communicate in English, but they still attend their normal English classes. Parents pay a fee for this service. The school further offers the *Readers are leaders Programme* at no cost to help learners with LEP. It is a computer program that helps learners to improve their spelling and comprehension.

Learners are taught in English as a HL. Those who do not cope are referred to classes for extra lessons by their teachers. Reading is compulsory every morning,

quizzes are done, and learners are encouraged to communicate in English when they are in and out of the classroom. Teachers attend weekly grade meetings to discuss and find ways to solve the difficulties experienced by learners in learning English. They further use teaching and learning resources to make teaching and learning easy.

The school has a language policy that was drafted before the headmaster's time in the school, but maybe parents as a community were invited to a meeting to discuss the language matters with the governing body of the school. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996, the Language in Education Policy in terms of section 3(4) (m) of the National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996, and the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 are the relevant documents that were used to draft the policy. The policy is reviewed continuously, or as the need arises.

The LOLT is English and it is stipulated in the admission forms so that the parents know which LOLT is used by the school before the parents enrol their children. The annual general meetings, grade meetings and newsletters are in the Mol as well. It is not clear if the parents do not attend some meetings because of other commitments or because of a lack of interest in listening to the same "lack of progress story".

The school follows the requirements set by the GDE. Assessment is continuous and comprises different types of tasks. Parents are given a chance to view the scripts of their children and sign them. Learners are marked on a scale of Level 1 to 4 that can be converted into percentages. Marks are recorded in mark books and controlled by heads of departments.

Reports on performance are sent to parents on a quarterly basis. Parents are invited to view their children's papers, but more often the parents with children who have a LEP do not attend the meetings until they are individually invited to discuss their children's lack of progress.

Continuous assessment is used and if the learner's overall performance is below the minimum requirements and the learner struggles to cope with the minimum demands of the grade, such a learner has a LEP. The teachers help the learners through

individual support, remedial classes, graded activities, extra classes, re-teaching and using resources to simplify the concepts. Parents are informed of barriers during progress interviews or meetings, they are invited to attend meetings during which they peruse and sign tests and formal tasks, by writing letters or making telephone calls. Parents are allowed to ask questions if they do not understand the work in their children's books.

The support team discusses the problems identified by the teachers, offers advice on the interventions to support learners who experience difficulties in learning, and ensures that the interventions take place continuously. Should there be no progress the learner is referred to a speech therapist, occupational therapist or an educational psychologist for an assessment. The results and recommendations from the specialist(s) are used to develop an intervention plan for the learner.

The children of supportive parents tend to improve because their parents take the advices and help them at home. Other parents blame the lack of improvement of their children on the teachers and expect miracles to happen. In some cases, there is not enough help from home.

If parents are planning to send their children to English-medium schools, the children should be exposed to English at an early age. They should, for example, send them to English-medium pre-schools. Normally parents complain that the latter are expensive and, if they are from the townships, they have to pay for transport to school as well.

The school is in the process of AL research. Parents have requested that Pedi be introduced in the school. No decision has yet been made as to whether it should be taught as a subject or as an extra-mural activity. Maybe Pedi should run parallel with Afrikaans as a FAL, but currently English is taught as the HL (LOLT), and Afrikaans as the FAL. Several meetings have taken place between the representatives of the parents, the teachers and the representatives of the GDE to discuss the possibilities of introducing Pedi in the school.

If Pedi was to be a subject, it will be presented as a FAL or a SAL, depending on the choice by the parents. A mother-tongue facilitator will have to be employed by the school, and it will depend on the number of learners who choose the language and whether there is a classroom available for it in the school.

4.3.1 Summary of the headmaster's responses

The headmaster indicated that the school faces a challenge to provide education to black South African learners using English as a LOLT. The parents register their children, knowing very well that English is the LOLT, and that their children experience difficulties because the LOLT is not being their HL. The learners with LEP are able to use English (BICS) to communicate about everyday life events, for example discussing: soccer games, the *Readathon Week*, dressing up as a character and the Big-Walk Fun Day. The learners with LEP find it difficult to use the English language for academic purposes (CALP).

The learner with LEP's conversational proficiency is normally confused with their academic language proficiency and, as a result, parents and teachers expect them to cope with the educational demands. As all learners are unique, teachers are to support every learner to cope as an individual without comparing him/her to other learners.

The challenge is that ninety-nine per cent of the teaching staff cannot speak or understand an indigenous language (see figure 4.2). They cannot explain the work in the learners with LEP's mother tongue if they do not understand what is taught in English. Parents have requested the school to offer an indigenous language as one of the LAs.

According to the headmaster, discussions and research are currently taking place on how to introduce Pedi in the school. According to the pie chart, the L2 learners comprise an average number of the school population, and their needs should be taken into consideration.

It is imperative that the school make sure that if the school decide to offer Pedi, it should be taught according to the LOs and ASs of the level chosen: FAL or SAL, unless it is offered as an extra mural activity. The implementation should not take place for the sake of quietening the parents or pleasing them. Time allocations should also be adhered to and receive respect like any other language. This might be helpful to learners who would like to take Pedi at high school.

4.4 TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRES AND INTERVIEWS

There are 38 teachers in the school. Twenty-four are English home language speakers; 13 are English first additional language speakers, and one is a second additional language speaker of English. Since this study is not only interested in the performance of the learners in English only. The researcher has attached a table in which the teachers' profiles are captured. In this table there will be an indication of the grades and LAs that a teacher is teaching, their home language, the years of teaching experience, their race and gender.

Grade/s taught	Learning areas	Home language	Years of teaching experience	Race	Gender
Grade 1	Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills	English	12 years	White	Female
Grade 1	Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills	English	20 years	White	Female
Grade 1	Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills	English	20 years	White	Female
Grade 1	Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills	English	7 years	White	Female
Grade 2	Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills	English	36 years	Coloured	Female
Grade 2	Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills	Afrikaans	9 years	White	Female
Grade 2	Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills	English	23 years	White	Female
Grade 2	Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills	English	15 years	White	Female
Grade 3	Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills	Afrikaans	36 years	White	Female
Grade 3	Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills	Afrikaans	37 years	White	Female
Grade 3	Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills	Afrikaans	28 years	White	Female
Grade 3	Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills	English	16 years	White	Female
Grade 4	English and Life Orientation	English	26 years	White	Female

Grade 4	Technology and Social Sciences	English	15 years	Indian	Female
Grade 4	Natural Sciences and Afrikaans	Afrikaans	7 years	White	Female
Grade 4	Mathematics	Afrikaans	28 years	White	Female
Grade 5	English	English	25 years	White	Female
Grade 5- 6	Social Sciences	Afrikaans	40 years	White	Male
Grade 5	Natural Sciences and Afrikaans	Afrikaans	14 years	White	Female
Grade 5	Mathematics	English	18 years	White	Female
Grade 6	English and Life Orientation	English	1 year	White	Female
Grade 6	Mathematics	English	9 years	Indian	Female
Grade 6	Economics and Management Sciences and Afrikaans	Afrikaans	2 years	White	Male
Grade 6- 7	Technology	English	10 years	White	Female
Grade 7	English and Life Orientation	English	24 years	White	Female
Grade 7	Social Sciences and Afrikaans	Afrikaans	3 years	White	Female
Grade 6- 7	Natural Sciences	English	22 years	White	Female
Grade 7	Mathematics	English	16 years	White	Female
Grade 1- 7	Music	Afrikaans	18 years	White	Female
Grade 1- 7	Art	English	2 years	White	Female
Grade 1- 3	Junior computers	English	2 years	White	Female
Grade 4- 7	Senior computers	Afrikaans	24 years	White	Female
Grade 1- 7	Physical education:	English	3 years	White	Male
Grade1-7	Sports coordinator	English	12 years	White	Female
Grade1 -7	English adaptation:	English	3 years	White	Female
Grade 4- 6	Economics and Management Sciences	Afrikaans	17 years	White	Female
Grade 5	Technology	Northern Sotho	19 years	Black	Female
Grade 5 and 1- 7	Life Orientation and media centre	Afrikaans	29 years	White	Female

Figure 4.2 Teachers profile of the grades and learning areas taught, home languages years of experience, race and gender.

The interviews were conducted after a questionnaire had been handed out. All the staff members participated in the research by completing a questionnaire³. The researcher analyzed the completed questionnaires and where there were concerns, or the responses were not clear, the researcher followed up with an interview. Both teachers of English and other LAs, such as Natural Science, Mathematics and

³ See Footnote 2.

Technology, participated. The following paragraphs give a summary of the teachers' responses.

The words "they" and "their" in the questions refer to the learners with LEP.

4.4.1 English language knowledge

The teachers responded that the learners need to be able read and write words, sentences and paragraphs. They should be able to use the language appropriately in different situations and know the language structure of the English language. The learners with LEP battle to construct meaningful texts because of their LEP.

For the Mathematics, Economics and Management Sciences, Life Orientation, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences and Technology LAs, all the teachers indicated that most of the aforementioned skills, including being able to use the specific vocabulary or terminology for specific LAs - such as *design, evaluate, ascending, descending, chronological order, length, width and thickness, income, budget, profit, tax, expense, friction, force and energy* - are challenges to learners with LEP. Their inability to interpret the questions and use such words correctly causes them to lose marks.

The general feeling was that the learners with LEP differ in the way in which they experience difficulties at different levels. They try to build simple words and sentences in lower grades but find it hard to construct compound and complex sentences.

As an example, *The cat sat on the mat* will be easier to write than, *The learners who are participating in the speech festival must practise. This will assist them to be more fluent and audible. Judges expect the speaker to show some facial expressions and the tone of voice is important.*

The school sent the teachers who teach English as a subject to attend the Teaching Handwriting Reading and Spelling Skills (THRASS) Course where they were taught a different method to teach sounds and vocabulary. Vocabulary is taught by using

dictionaries. Learners are also taught how to divide words into syllables, and sentences into words. Spelling tests are written every week, and learners are tested on Fridays for spelling *and* vocabulary. Quizzes are also set to increase the learners' knowledge and vocabulary. These are some of the attempts that teachers make to help the learners, yet they struggle very much with building words and constructing sentences.

The learners with LEP do not always pronounce words correctly, but they do respond well to corrections by the teachers or their L1 peers. The teachers use the common mistakes made by learners as examples of how to pronounce words correctly. Some examples are as follows: *bad*, *bed*, and *bird*. Learners often do not place the stress on the correct syllable of a word. They confuse vowel sounds such as *a*, *e* and *ir*. The learners with LEP end up guessing where the stress should fall and then read the words incorrectly.

The teachers indicated that the learners with LEP's vocabulary ranges from non-existing to average and some improve as they are in the school where they receive support. The newly admitted learners with LEP are the ones who battle, some with no vocabulary at all. A good example is that of a new learner in Grade 5, taught in Xhosa, and having English taught as a subject, who struggles to spell words used every day. A few of his efforts follow:

- *corrections* > *coretins*,
- *important* > *impotat*,
- *quickly* > *qwikli*,
- *quiet* > *qwayt*,
- *principal* > *principle and*
- *children* > *chirin*.

The learners with LEP do not know the relationship between words, such as the agreement between nouns and pronouns, and the subject concord. Examples are as follows:

- *Lindiwe* is doing **her** homework.
- Siphho is kicking **his** ball.
- *All learners* are expected to do **their** best.

The learners with LEP should be encouraged to use English continuously in class, with their peers, and at home when doing homework.

The teachers commented that the learners with LEP often do not know the difference between proper and common nouns, and cannot identify prepositions, verbs or adjectives. A Grade 7 teacher indicated that little understanding of content is demonstrated because the learners with LEP can briefly tell a story in their own words but find it difficult to interpret and answer questions correctly.

The use of tenses and punctuation are often problems, for example: *We written a exam at the end of the term* > *We wrote an exam at the end of the term*. They sometimes focus on an important word and disregard the other words in a sentence, and this influences their understanding of the questions. An excellent example is the following written instruction:

Write the baking steps that you follow when you bake biscuits. The learners with LEP tend to read only the first part of the question, namely, *Write the baking steps*, but then ignore the rest of the question, which normally determines the essence of meaning of the first section of the question, namely, *when you bake biscuits*.

The question above can be altered in many ways by changing only the last part of the question, such as *Write the baking steps that you follow when you bake biscuits / a cake / muffins / bread.*

4.4.2 The performance and abilities in learning activities

The teachers indicated that texts depend on different LAs. In Mathematics, for example, learners can write a number, a word or a full sentence to answer a question, in Technology they can rewrite the research design in their own words, and in Natural Science how digestion takes place. In English, the learners with LEP

should be able to write 250 to 350 words in essays, letters, creative paragraphs, diary entries, recipes, advertisements, stories and book reports.

Teachers reported that the learners with LEP partially understand the work taught once concepts have been thoroughly explained. Questions are predominantly at content level. Learners participate more during discussions and try to answer verbal questions correctly when compared to how they answer in writing.

They demonstrate a better understanding when the teacher or their peers lead them by follow-up questions. Occasionally, learners are required to analyze the meaning of texts and are given higher order questions, such as *Analyze Trevor's situation and suggest three ways in which he can solve his problem*. They struggle to write with coherence and cohesion, and then perform poorly.

According to their teachers, the quality of the learners' written answers is often poor. They are careless, use poor sentence constructions, incorrect spelling, write incomplete sentences and use no punctuation. The teachers check on every aspect of their texts, and these errors show their work to be incomplete and untidy.

During computer projects -- owing to their lack of understanding and frustration -- some learners simply cut and paste texts to which they are referred by their teachers. They lack the skills to interpret the information to which they are referred. If they cannot find an answer, the learners with LEP would just leave blank spaces without making any further attempts to complete the task.

Teachers reported that the learners with LEP mainly score one (1) and two (2) according to the national assessment codes, which means that they (1) do not satisfy the requirements of the learning outcomes for the grade at all, or (2) that they only partly satisfy the requirements for the learning outcomes for the grade. The learners with LEP generally perform at a lower level in assessments, probably owing to the poor quality of their written work and their inability to interpret the questions correctly.

Some learners with LEP who perform poorly in languages do well when they work with numbers. As soon as language contains numbers, the learners become confused because they do not understand what they are reading. Word problems, comprehension tests and creative writing activities are all challenges for the learners with LEP.

Some teachers feel that the standard of English in the school is dropping because the learners with LEP's teachers present the work at an easier level to cater for those who lack the ability to study, understand and interpret questions correctly. In many cases, there is limited or no parental support or guidance for these learners with LEP. Their limited vocabulary hinders their progress; they fail the tests and exams; and their true abilities are not reflected.

Teachers replied that the foundation for learning requires much reading and listening, followed by group discussions conducted in the classes. Learners have to discuss the topics that they are given. When given a text to discuss, they struggle to select the important information and end up reading word for word and not discussing the topic. They occasionally mispronounce the words and do not fully comprehend the text.

According to teachers, the learners with LEP try hard to describe situations clearly, but their descriptions are full of gaps, and the sequence of events is often incorrect. The teachers guide them to follow the correct order to make sure that what they say makes sense. The learner with LEP's ability to communicate verbally is usually better than their ability to communicate in writing. They often lack the vocabulary to substantiate what they are saying, and choose to remain silent rather than embarrass themselves in front of their L1 peers by risking an answer.

According to the teachers, this aspect is a huge problem. Some learners are eager to take part in class activities but cannot find the right words to use. They therefore end up using words that they hear in the media, which sometimes have inappropriate meanings in English. Examples of these are as follows:

- *girl > cherry,*
- *boy > laity,*
- *Father > Timer,*
- *friend > chummy and*
- *Mother > Ou Lady.*

They are often misunderstood by their L1 peers and sometimes get into trouble. The learners with LEP sit back and only try to explain or argue a point when it affects them personally, for example if a learner has to defend himself after being accused of playing on the jungle gym without supervision. In his defence, the learner with LEP will try to use all the words he knows to explain the situation.

The teachers stated that the learners with LEP normally find it difficult to criticize or to argue matters. They are able to find faults in texts and in problem situations, but find it difficult to offer solutions to these. The learners with LEP often prefer to agree with situations at hand to avoid arguing or giving more information. They cope well with the concept of identifying right and wrong behaviour. However, they struggle to explain why an action is wrong and to offer suggestions on how to correct the wrong situation.

The teachers indicated that the learners are expected to participate in different class discussions during prepared and unprepared speeches. They prefer to take part in smaller groups rather than to present speeches in front of their peers. Some are shy but learn how to do it. Often, they are the last ones to present a speech if the teacher has not used the class list to call them. Their participation also depends on the relevance of the topic of discussion to the learners with LEP, as well as their knowledge.

The teachers continuously guide and support learners to participate in discussions. The level of the learners' confidence plays a major role in this regard as the learners with LEP have to be encouraged to keep on trying even if their responses are often not correct. The L1 peers are encouraged to help the learners with LEP with spelling, pronunciation in English.

Learners are mixed in discussion groups to help them to contribute to the discussions and present their findings without feeling threatened by the topics and class audience. Teachers let them view one another's work so that they can learn from one another. Some learners with LEP consult with their teachers afterwards to check if they had understood the concepts or topics that they were taught or to ask for explanations regarding the work.

The teachers reported that the learners with LEP use their mother tongues when they are alone with their L2 peers in their own social settings. Their L1 peers report incidences during which the L2 learners gossip or swear in their HLs, so the L2 learners land in trouble for so doing.

Other learners who understand the indigenous languages further reported cases to the teachers during which the L2 learners actually used foul words in their HL. This is one of the reasons why the teachers do not always trust that the L2 learners speak properly and decently in their HLs as they do not understand what they are saying.

4.4.3 The challenges faced by learners with LEP

The learners with LEP do not work fast enough and, as a result, their work is often marked as incomplete or marks are deducted. They lack comprehension of the material and give incorrect answers. The learners with LEP experience difficulty in expressing themselves in written and oral tasks. These tasks are challenges.

A lack of vocabulary forces them to produce work of poor quality as they cannot do as well as their L1 peers who know English vocabulary do. They do not understand idioms, proverbs and expressions, such as, for example: *Jump the gun* (idiom); or *All work and no play make Jack a dull boy* (proverb).

Teachers responded that the following may be reasons for the LEP of the learners:

- A lack of exposure to English and parental support. They hear English only at school, not at home.

- A lack of the practical use of language.
- A poor work ethic; homework is often not done.
- Poor examples of language usage.
- They do not read or listen to stories enough.
- They do not have a habit of self-correction.

4.4.4 The factors that affect second language learning

According to the teachers, motivation has an enormously positive effect on the progress of the learners with LEP. Interesting content or texts can be used to teach English. The teachers should set an example by sharing their love for the language with the learners by reading, speaking and writing English in an appropriate way. Positive comments and encouragement are vital for the learners' progression. Interestingly, L1 learners also need motivation to carry on working hard.

The learners with LEP's exposure to English need to be unlimited. It should happen at school in the classroom, with their peers on the playground, and at home with their families. English newspapers, magazines, television and radio programmes can be useful in this regard. Extra-mural activities such as reading competitions, speech festivals, debates, and computer and drama classes in English should be promoted to expose the learners with LEP more to English.

The teachers reported that the learners seem to prefer oral activities (discussions) to written activities (tests and exams). The learners prefer to memorize the information after the concepts had been introduced. Some learners prefer to simply listen to what other learners or the teacher is saying. This makes it difficult to judge whether they understand the discussion or not.

The L2 learners who start Grade 1 in the school and have done grade R in an English-medium pre-school do not normally have serious problems with their studies. There are gaps in their learning, but the teachers manage to support these learners. However, there are learners in the same (Grade 1) classes who had not been in English-medium pre-schools.

These learners are exposed to English only via the television or radio programmes and when their parents speak to English-speaking people. They find being taught in English most challenging. The younger the learners with LEP (in the Foundation Phase), the better, because they have a chance to still learn sounds, while the learners with LEP in the higher grades are faced with more formal and challenging tasks, such as writing a report or a diary entry.

There is a link between intelligence and second language learning, for example: performance on reading, dictation and writing activities. There are L2 learners that are high achievers and that are performing at the same top level as their L1 peers. English as second language and LoLT seem not to be a challenge to them. L1 learners were reported to normally cope easily with the English language, have a better work ethic, and learn at a faster rate as a result of the pre-knowledge that they bring from home.

Some educators highlighted that the latter statement may not be completely true or valid as some learners with LEP might know the answers in their HLs (indigenous languages) but do not know the English words and vocabulary to express their thoughts. The number of LAs in the school is more than eight and all are taught in English. The learners with LEP therefore struggle more, especially if they had not sat for the Foundation Phase classes in the school.

The teachers stated that learners with positive attitudes achieve positive outcomes academically. They usually display an enquiring mind and are eager to explore new things. They are not shy to make mistakes whilst learning. They have more confidence than those with negative attitudes. These learners display opposite tendencies than those of the learners with positive attitudes. They do not attempt to investigate a matter or ask if they do not understand a concept. They usually sit back and wait for others to participate. They sometimes, owing to their lack of English proficiency, withdraw from discussions even if they do know the correct answers.

According to the teachers, the learners with LEP with positive attitudes perceive learning English as an opportunity to develop their skills and cope with their learning, whilst the learners with LEP with negative attitudes perceive learning English as

punishment and a burden, especially when they have written assignments. These attitudes hinder their progress.

Other teachers commented that it is necessary for educators to remember that these learners with LEP are in need of help and encouragement on what constitutes a good attitude. It is possible that the way in which they are treated as individuals with language barriers and how they are supported in this regard, could be beneficial. The learners with LEP are aware that they are not coping and do not need to be continuously reminded each time they make a mistake.

4.4.5 Strategies used

The teachers reported that the learners with LEP prefer to start by with oral tasks before they have to do written work. One of the HODs commented that they try to let learners use their senses by listening, observing, and making drawings before writing. The problems often arise when teachers are requested by the District Office to provide evidence of tasks completed. Practical tasks take more time to do but give the teacher an opportunity to assess and support the learner.

There is not always enough time to try the teaching tricks that might help. The learners with LEP are therefore, encouraged to ignore what their peers may think of them. The teachers encourage them to attempt to do the tasks and to ask for help when they have problems. Extra support and remedial classes are offered by the school to revise the basic concepts that are taught.

4.4.6 Assessment

Formal and informal tasks are used to assess the learners in the form of tests, exams, class work, projects, assignments, research, interviews, and the like. Teacher-, peer- and self-assessment is used. Each learner receives a rubric with all the expectations so that they know what is expected of them in various activities. Marks are recorded in mark books to track progress and barriers. The teachers complete the GDE support forms, and inform the parents during meetings with them about learning problems and areas that have improved.

During these meetings, intervention strategies are discussed. At the end of every term, parents receive reports on their children's progress or lack thereof. At the end of the year, they receive summative reports from the school. However, in the case of learners with LEP who experience severe learning barriers, the teachers forward their names to the District Office during the third term of each year as possible retainees.

The District Assessment facilitators discuss these cases with the teachers and take a decision on which learners on the list could be retained at the end of the year if there had not been satisfactory progress or improvement in the fourth term, or who to send on to the next grade, with additional support, if there had been some improvement.

4.5 Summary of the teachers' responses

The teachers indicated that the learners with LEP experience problems in their learning because English is used as the LOLT. The learners with LEP lack competence in grammatical aspects of the language, they confuse words, or use the wrong spelling. Owing to the incorrect spelling, their work is incorrect, but the answer to the question remains correct, for example: *He is iting brakefas > He is eating breakfast*. The learners with LEP lose marks owing to numerous grammatical errors in their work. They sometimes end up discussing issues that do not apply to the question.

The learners with LEP struggle to write meaningful texts as a result of being unable to put sentences together in the right way. As mentioned and demonstrated in Chapter 1, they lack textual competence. The following example was used in that chapter, but could once more serve as an illustration. The learners with LEP struggle to put at least four given sentences, as these below -- into the correct chronological sequence:

1. *He brushed his teeth.*
2. *He is on his way to school.*
3. *He eats his breakfast.*

4. *Johnny woke up.*

The learners with LEP cannot follow the rules of constructing texts, such as, for example, the correct format of a business letter, or others in the same category. Often the address; salutation; or greeting is left unwritten. Using the English language for functional purposes is a further challenge to these learners. They struggle to use the English language to ask questions in class.

The natural process of learning a language usually happens automatically and learners acquire the socio-cultural rules of using language and discourse. Using the language appropriately in different social settings, however, is a challenge for the learners with LEP. They come to school with a different background and culture than those of their peers. The learners with LEP come from homes where English is not often used by their parents when discussing topics.

Their L1 peers attend school to extend and formalize what they have learnt at home. The learners with LEP further face the challenge of behaving in the appropriate way according to Western culture. Their actions that are appropriate in their indigenous cultures are often mistaken by their teachers and L1 peers for rudeness, or for being inappropriate in English, as is demonstrated below:

- Zulu: Children need to speak softly when talking to an adult (teacher).
- English: The learners with LEP lose marks if they are not audible during their presentations.
- Zulu: One cannot look an adult (teacher) directly in the eyes.
- English: The learners with LEP lose marks if they do not keep eye contact with the teacher or the audience.

The learners with LEP's lack of English proficiency affects their general self-esteem because they struggle in all the other LAs, and their lack of competence is related to their lack of proficiency in English. Teachers need to assist and motivate the learners with LEP to approach their learning with a positive attitude until they gain confidence and overcome the feeling of self-doubt and anxiety when faced with class tasks.

Teachers need to plan their lessons in special ways so that they cater for the needs of the L2 learners. Planning and preparing for different lessons is time consuming for teachers but beneficial to the L2 learners especially the learners with LEP. New words can be introduced through story-telling.

When the learners with LEP listen to the teacher pronouncing the words correctly, they could memorize the words and read the story afterwards. This is sometimes difficult to do owing to the size and composition of the class. Further, the L1 learners could become bored since they already know the words that the teacher is explaining to the learners with LEP.

The learners need to see the teacher as one of them and not as an authoritarian person who is waiting to pick on their mistakes -- that causes anxiety. The learners with LEP could be given a chance to express themselves in their HLs, but unfortunately the teachers do not understand the indigenous languages, so they cannot give translations to the learners (Community Language Teaching). This means that the supportive community that is formed by the individual learner, the peers and the teacher is not effective.

The learners with LEP's grammatical and textual competence can be developed if the teacher guides the learners and does not control the lesson to promote a communicative atmosphere in the group. Learners can use learning different media to solve problems presented by their teachers. In such instances the teachers should follow the "Silent Way" and merely guide them, not give them all the answers.

The challenge is that, for learners to succeed, parents believe that the teachers should stand in front of the class teaching. Leaving the learners with LEP to mostly communicate with one another could be interpreted that these learners are being ignored by their teachers because they do not understand English and are not coping with it as the LOLT.

Teachers need support by means of intervention from the Department of Education, and meetings with parents and support educators to be able to help the learners with

LEP. Parents and teachers must communicate more often to bridge the gap in the learners with LEP's learning. The challenge is that sometimes the parents do not agree with the teachers' findings in the classroom. The child whom the parents have at home is often not the child whom the teacher sees in the classroom, perhaps because the parents can explain certain concepts in their HL when their children do not understand the English ones.

For the purpose of this study, most of the illustrations of grasping concepts are taken from the language classroom. It has been proven by Clark(1996:4) that the lack of language knowledge affects learning in general as learning is done through language. The learners with LEP perform badly in other learning areas as well.

They struggle to read and interpret word sums in Mathematics, they cannot comprehend and interpret what the questions are asking for in Social Sciences, Afrikaans and Natural Sciences. They struggle to write paragraphs about personal feelings and experiences in Life Orientation. It is impossible for them to write a design brief for a problem statement in Technology or to follow specifications to design items. The learners with LEP achieve between 0 and 39% in most LAs and do not qualify to progress to the next grades. Learners cannot be retained based on their English performance only. Evidence is needed to proof that they are weak in all or most LA's to be retained.

4.6 PARENTS' RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRES AND INTERVIEWS

All the parents completed the questionnaires (see Appendix 12: Parents' Questionnaire) and returned them to the researcher. They were individually invited by the grade teachers to discuss their children's difficulties in learning. The progress meetings (as they are called by teachers) took place in the classes in the afternoon after the learners had gone home. The interviews took place between the teachers, the individual parents and learners where necessary. The parents were interviewed by both the teachers and the researcher (as the researcher is the member of the support committee).

It was noted that the parents were already aware of their children's problems and had been informed about the barriers to learning on an on-going basis by the teachers via letters, messages in diaries, telephone calls, reports, and progress meetings.

It appeared as if all parents were committed to helping their children to overcome the language problem. The parents had made other arrangements for their children to get extra support in English from private groups, such as the *Tina Cowley Reading Centre*⁴, and *Kumon*⁵.

During the individual meetings (interview) with the parents on the progress of their children, some points of concern were raised. Some of the parents are mere guardians who do not have much knowledge about helping with school work. Others work till late and their children are then left till late at school.

This is unfortunate because by the time the parents are available to help their children with school work or revision, the children are tired and want to sleep. The issue of travelling a long distance to school was discussed as the learners from Atteridgeville, Mamelodi and Soshanguve always look tired because they leave home early.

The amount of work given as homework and preparation for speeches and tests are sometimes challenges for learners who must cope with the language and the content. It takes a long time to get a learner with LEP ready for such activities. Extra lessons offered at school, such as remedial classes and adaptation classes in English are valued by parents, who would like to get continuous feedback from the teachers.

It was reported that some learners do not attend the extra classes. They rather play with friends whilst their parents are under the impression that they are receiving

⁴ The Tina Cowley Reading Centre support learners with reading problems, learning problems, dyslexia, brain training, and learning disorder.

⁵ Kumon is a Mathematics and English programme that helps to motivate learners to achieve more and to reach their true potential.

extra lessons. Parents highlighted the fact that they do not have enough resources to help their children to do the work, such as Internet access, magazines, and relevant textbooks.

Most of the parents mentioned that they prefer that their children remain in the school and keep trying to master the work. They were happy that their children are taught in English, which they regard as an international language. They would further like them to know and understand their HLs, as well. It is unfortunate that some parents withdraw their children from the school for different reasons, such as that teachers pick on their children all the time due to lack of progress, they are bullied, or they want to send them to boarding schools to be more independent, and send them to other schools instead of addressing the learning problems.

Parents commented about the negative effect of the lack of English proficiency on other LAs. Their children's marks go down because they do not always understand or manage to interpret the questions. When tests or formal assessment papers are written, the questions are not usually read or interpreted by the teachers. Parents perceive this as a barrier to learners with LEP.

The teachers could support the learners with LEP by reading through the question paper at least once before they start writing so that they can hear the questions and may then understand it better when they read it for the second time. That would cater for the learners' different learning styles. During comprehension-test exercises, there are learners with LEP who actually do not even read the questions carefully because they are so anxious and all that they worry about is finding the answers from the passage.

Parents see the reading, spelling and writing homework as an opportunity to learn English, but as a barrier when there are other projects, tasks and research that their children must also do for other LAs. They frowned upon the fact that their children get discipline slips for English homework that is not done. Parents feel that the teachers can at least find out why the homework had not been done. Sometimes it is because the parents lack an understanding of tasks, the time allocated to complete the task is not enough or they do not have the resources to support their children.

Parents mentioned that a further contributing factor is that the teachers move very fast with the teaching of concepts, and their learners with LEP move on without understanding the previous concepts that had been taught. They suggested that it would be better if the tasks are typed out, the learners paste them in their diaries and least two to three days be allocated to collect the information and complete the task.

4.6.1 Summary of the interview with the parents

The learners with LEP's parents register them at school to get formal teaching. They register them knowing that the language of learning and teaching is English and that English is not their home language. The learners with LEP come to school knowing their HL, which is an indigenous language that they have acquired automatically at home.

The parents of learners with LEP see English which is used at school as the language of learning and teaching being a challenge. Irrespective of the latter feeling, the parents register their children because they want to give them a better quality education. English is therefore a first, second or third additional language to the learners with LEP who come to school with little or no English as compared to their L1 peers.

Most learners with LEP have been exposed to English in grade1 and they have done their preschool in township preschools. The learners with LEP attend school with little ability to communicate in English with their peers outside the classroom and no ability to communicate in class.

The learners with LEP attempt to have conversations during this kind of communication because they use simple, high-frequency words. This is referred to as Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills in Chapter 2. Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills do not enable the learners with LEP to cope with the demands made in the classroom, for example writing paragraphs, presenting speeches, discussing topics, and the like.

The Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency is however required for higher-order thinking skills. The learners with LEP often fail their assignments, tests, exams and written assessments because of an insufficient background in English. The Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency includes low-frequency academic words, and they are expected to write sentences and texts. Knowing a language does not mean that one has to know its grammar only.

The learners with LEP are expected to practise the concepts with which they struggle as homework. This is not always possible as their parents either have limited English proficiency, or do not understand the work themselves. The teaching and learning material -- magazines, dictionaries, pictures and storybooks -- can be used to help explain concepts. Some learners learn easily when they see objects. Functional competence is a challenge. When a learner is expected to prepare a speech, the parents will need to help the child to pronounce the words correctly and keep the order of events correct.

During assessment, the teacher actually expects more than just the correct pronunciation and order of events to give a learner a reasonable mark. Marks are allocated for aspects such as facial expression, tone of voice; gestures, eye contact, and the like. The learners with LEP who for instance: speaks Zulu as a home language, can easily lose marks in this type of assessment. S/he will not keep eye contact with the teacher as that is disrespectful in his/her culture.

The learner with LEP will also focus on presenting the speech by using the expected, correct English vocabulary and pronunciation, and forget about facial expressions and gestures. In this way, they score lower marks when compared to their L1 peers who already have the vocabulary from their home background and only prepare their expressions, tone and gestures but do not struggle with pronunciation. Teachers and parents need to work together to motivate the learners with LEP to persevere and work hard.

4.7 LEARNERS' RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEW

The selected learners completed a questionnaire and a general interview was conducted afterwards. Twelve learners answered the questions in the questionnaire by marking their choices with a cross, and participated in the interview that was conducted in the afternoon after school in the Technology Centre.

Learners in the Foundation Phase were guided to complete the form whilst learners in the Intermediate and Senior Phase managed to do so individually. Figure 4.2 below indicates their responses to each question.

Questions	😊 Happy	😐 Middle	😞 Unhappy
1. Learning in English is exciting.	7	3	2
2. I am proud of my English work.	4	1	8
3. I take part in class discussions.	0	4	8
4. I am not shy of standing in front of the class to do a presentation.	5	5	2
5. How do you feel about these types of homework:			
a. Learning words for spelling	11	1	0
b. Reading	7	1	4
c. Preparing speeches	4	6	2
d. Writing paragraphs	4	3	5
e. Thinking and reasoning activities	3	5	4
6. I have the following people who help me:			
a. My parents	12	0	0
b. My tutor	2	1	9
c. My teachers	10	1	1
d. My friends	4	5	3
7. I visit the media centre after school hours.	4	3	5
8. I have magazines, textbooks and educational games at home.	9	2	1
9. I enjoy giving a speech in class.	7	5	0
10. I enjoy listening to my classmates talking.	8	4	0

11. How do you feel about expectations from the following people?			
a. Teachers	3	6	3
b. Parents	8	4	0
c. Friends and peers	2	3	7

Figure 4.3 Learners' responses to the questionnaires and interviews

More than nine learners with LEP found learning in English exciting. During the interview, they indicated that it was a good opportunity that their parents had given them. They also felt that it would be easy for them to face the outside world if they knew and understood English. Some three of 12 learners with LEP felt that they did not enjoy being taught in English because it was difficult to understand and answer questions correctly, but they understood that it is a good opportunity that their parents were giving them.

Four of the 12 learners with LEP were happy about the quality of their work and marks. The learners with LEP tried hard to do what they were requested by their teachers. One of 12 learners indicated that it was disappointing to give his/her best in an activity and to then obtain 1 as a mark= (1 = has not satisfied the requirements) whilst his classmates obtained 4s and were smiling.

The other children responded that they were proud of their work even if they did get low marks because that was the best they could do. The other (seven of 12) learners with LEP said that they were not proud of their work but that they were trying hard. They said that they did not always understand what was required of them. They sometimes felt that they did well in a test but when the scripts were returned, they were always disappointed.

Most (eight of 12) of the learners with LEP did not always take part in class discussion. Their reason was that if they did understand the task or question, they did take part, but if they did not understand, they waited for their L1 peers to lead the discussion and then followed. Four of 12 learners with LEP replied that it depended on whether they had knowledge of the topic or not. If they had been exposed to

situations related to the topic, they actively joined and contributed. Standing in front of the class was not easy as they were not always sure that what they had to say would be correct.

When their L1 peers laughed at them, they told them that English was not their mother tongue and they were at school to learn it. The learners with LEP also reported that there were L1 peers who were kind and offered to help when necessary. They further said that their peers did not openly laugh at them as their teachers always expected the audience to respect the speakers.

Two of 12 learners with LEP did not like to stand in front of the class to do a presentation. Five of 12 said that they were shy. Five of 12 said that they liked it and did well when expected to do so. The challenge was that they did not score good marks as their L1 peers did. The learners with LEP perceived doing presentations as an easy way to collect marks and found it actually easier than writing tasks.

Most learners with LEP (11 of 12) stated that they enjoyed learning words for spelling because they had enough time to learn them. They achieved good marks when they wrote spelling tests. Another learner with LEP (one of 12) found it very hard and did not like spelling tests because even if he tried, the teacher dictated the words too fast and he ended up mixing the words. The problem was further that he was marked wrong even if he wrote the correct spelling of a word in the wrong place.

More learners with LEP (seven of 12) liked reading because they did it daily and their teachers helped them. One of 12 learners with LEP indicated that it was good because they learnt how to read questions in other subjects, as well. Some learners with LEP (four out of 12) did not like reading tasks because they sometimes read without understanding and failed to answer the comprehension-test questions.

Some learners with LEP (four of 12) enjoyed preparing speeches because they were given time to prepare, and their parents could help them. Six of 12 Learners with LEP were not sure whether they liked it as sometimes they prepared their speeches and the teachers found them too short or irrelevant. Sometimes the teachers asked them which mark they thought they deserved for their speech, which they found

embarrassing. Two of 12 learners with LEP did not like preparing speeches because their parents did not know how to help them with the work.

Five of 12 Learners with LEP did not like writing paragraphs because they struggled with the spelling and sentence construction. They sometimes knew and understood the tasks, but their grammatical incompetence made it hard to construct sentences correctly, which brings down their marks. They apparently struggled to write down their ideas in the correct way.

Four of 12 learners with LEP saw writing paragraphs as an opportunity to develop their writing skills. They first made sure that they understood what they are expected to do before starting to write. It was not easy as the teachers did not always have time to re-explain tasks to them. Three of 12 learners with LEP were not sure if they would do well in the upcoming exams as they struggled with paragraph questions.

Five of 12 Learners with LEP were not sure whether they liked thinking and reasoning tasks because it depended on whether the topic was easy or complicated. Four responded that they did not like this kind of activity because they did not always know how to put their facts if they would satisfy or be acceptable to the teacher. Three learners with LEP liked such activities because it offered an opportunity to give their opinions. There was no right or incorrect answer, as long as one could support his/her statement.

All the L2 learners stated that their parents helped them with their studies.

Nine of 12 learners with LEP did not have tutors to help them with their homework and projects in the afternoons. Two did have tutors whom they loved because they were university students, had good ideas for projects, helped them do the work, simplified the work, and explained activities to them. One learner with LEP was not sure whether her learning problems would improve if she were to find a tutor as her mother was capable of helping her, yet she did not achieve good results.

Most of the learners with LEP responded that their teachers were of great help to them and guided them when they asked for help. They further indicated that when

their teacher explained or asked who did not understand the work, they sat quietly and pretended that they understood even though they did not because they were too shy or did not like to be seen as stupid or wasting time.

One learner with LEP was not sure whether his teacher was always helpful, as the teacher would sometimes explain the concepts, and at other times s/he would tell him that he should listen carefully when she explained. The other learner felt that the children laughed at him when he asked questions all the time and thought that he did not qualify to be in that grade. He thought that they perceived him to be stupid, but he simply did not understand all the questions.

Five of 12 learners with LEP indicated that they were not sure whether their L1 peers really wanted to help them because they helped them when they were in class but teased them about it later on. Four responded that their friends were helping them, even in the absence of the teachers. Three did not like the help of their peers because they later expected favours from them or made fun of them.

Five learners did not visit the media centre after school hours because they were rushing for transport. Four did visit the media centre when they had projects but did not go for fun reading. Three learners responded that they were not sure because they had other extra-murals to attend and did not attend because they did not want to do so.

Nine responded that they had resources at home but they sometimes struggled to use them correctly. Learners claimed that sometimes their parents worked until late and hoped that when they had the resources prescribed for the homework, they would manage to do the work correctly themselves.

Two learners stated that it would be helpful for them to have someone to guide and assure them that they were on the right track when they used their resources for their homework. One learner with LEP felt disappointed to sit for hours doing their homework, only to find the next day that they had not answered the questions correctly.

Most learners with LEP (seven of 12) enjoyed giving a speech in class. They found it easy because the teachers told them exactly what should be covered in their speech (rubric), and they were given enough time to prepare themselves. Five were neutral - they did not like giving a speech, especially if they were chosen to start because they did not get a chance to compare what they had prepared with that which their L1 peers were going to say.

The learners with LEP did not mind because it was an opportunity to grow and develop. They only wanted to avoid embarrassment. The general consensus was that one would not ever know whether one understood the work unless one tried to do so. Learners stated that it caused them stress to carefully choose what they were saying and make sure that they pronounced the words correctly at the same time. It made them feel nervous and sometimes they simply forgot some of the information that they had prepared and froze in front of their classmates.

Eight learners with LEP enjoyed listening to their peers talking because they learnt from them and felt motivated that they could also speak well. Four of the learners with LEP did not mind listening to their L1 peers but felt nervous afterwards when they were expected to present a speech, as well.

Three learners with LEP said that the expectations from their teachers were reasonable and that they understood that teachers wanted the best for them. Six learners feel that it was fine that teachers had high expectations of them but also felt that their teachers should understand them and their backgrounds as they sometimes felt that they were drowning in deep waters of expectations as they were taught by more than eight teachers in the Intermediate and Senior Phases.

The learners with LEP said that they then chose to absent themselves from school, and later claimed that they had been ill. The learners with LEP absented themselves to take a break from school to alleviate the pressure, but this did not help either as all the teachers expected them to catch up the work they had missed during their absence as soon as they were back at school.

Eight stated that they were happy about their parents' expectations because they wanted the best for them and encouraged them to work harder. Other learners mentioned that their parents always feared that, should they fail a grade, they would have to pay the school fees for two years for one grade.

Four stated that their parents are worried about their lack of progress and sometimes blamed them for not working hard at school because they seemed to understand the work when their parents helped them with their homework, but they fared poorly in their class assessments.

Seven of the learners with LEP complained that the expectations of their L1 peers were very high, especially when they were doing group work. The L1 learners sometimes expected miracles from them, and did not always at least appreciate what they had collected for a task. The learners with LEP wished that their L1 peers would at least understand their LEP problem and be careful with their comments.

4.7.1 The learners and the language

1. *My favourite TV channel is* _____.

The learners watched different programmes on different television channels. Most learners chose cartoons, robots and sport on English-medium channels as their favourite programmes. One learner with LEP indicated that she watched an educational programme -- *Thabang Thabong* -- on SABC 2. She said that her parents had told her that it would help her with her schoolwork.

2. *I speak in* _____ *[language] to my parents.*

Learners speak their mother tongue to their parents because they know and understand it very well. They added that sometimes they did try to communicate in English at home because their teachers had advised their parents to help them practise it in the hope that it would improve their confidence in English and speaking the language.

3. I speak in _____ [language] to my friends.

Learners speak English to their friends because English is recognized as being cool; and makes one feel part of the group; and one feels confident. They added that their L1 peers felt intimidated when they (the L2 learners) spoke their mother tongues, and reported them for swearing or gossiping in their HL even if they had not been doing it.

The L2 learners felt that their L1 peers should understand their HL as that was one of the ways that would help them to connect as learners. They suggested that teachers should discuss the language issue in class and guide all learners about language issues during assemblies. They also said that there were indigenous games that they would like to play but they were not allowed to do so as their L1 peers felt ignored and that was against the school rules.

4. I speak in _____ when I answer the telephone.

Most learners use English when they answer the phone at home. Eight learners with LEP indicated that their parents always insisted on their answering the phone in their mother tongue, as it might be their rural relatives or their grandparents calling, and they might not understand English or feel that they had lost their language and culture. They further explained that the above happens because some words that are polite in English may sound impolite in Zulu, Xhosa or Sotho. Examples are as follows:

- *Hallo, Grandfather > Sawubona, mkhulu; or*
- *No, Grandpa > Cha, akunjalo mkhulu.*

5. I wish that my teachers could understand the _____ language.

All learners wished that their teachers could understand their mother tongues so that they could help them when they struggled in English. The researcher asked them whether they thought that it would be possible for the teachers to understand all the

languages that they were speaking. The response was that they should at least understand a few indigenous languages.

6. *I feel motivated when* _____ .

Some learners felt happy when they achieved good marks for assessment tasks, and the teachers praised them. Other said that they did well in sporting activities and that it made them happy about themselves because there was something that they could do better than some of their L1 peers. One learner indicated that she liked it when her classmates corrected her mistakes because she was learning from them.

7. *I feel discouraged when* _____ .

Most learners feel discouraged when their peers make jokes about their mistakes and laugh at them because of their inability to cope in class. They indicated that they felt embarrassed to read out their low marks, but that some teachers were kind and allowed them to come to the teacher's table if they did not want to read out their marks. Some teachers simply read out the names and marks to the entire class. The learners with LEP think that the teachers are trying to motivate them to get a better mark but it actually breaks their spirits to persevere and keep on trying so hard.

8. *I wish to let you know that* _____ .

Learners wished to achieve excellent result as their parents were paying a lot of money for them to be in such a good school. They wanted to make them proud, and get awards at the end of the year like their L1 peers do. The learners with LEP further mentioned that they did not choose to struggle in English.

Every time that they try to explain that English is not their mother tongue, they are referred to their other, fellow black South African learners in the school who do not have a sufficient English background but are coping in English, maybe because they had early exposure to English.

These learners would like to have free English remedial and adaptation classes. The researcher reminded them that there were language classes in the afternoons, and the teachers reported that some learners were referred to attend those classes, but chose not to do so.

One learner replied that maybe those were the learners who ignored the fact that they were not coping with the requirements, or were avoiding the embarrassment of having their friends tease and laugh at them. She said that she was attending the "Readers are leaders Programme"; that it had led to a huge improvement in her studies; and she had gained confidence to at least participate in class discussions, as well.

4.7.2 Summary of the learners' responses

The learners with LEP experience difficulties with their written tasks. Their grammatical and textual competence is limited and this causes them anxiety because they cannot meet the school's requirements. The learners with LEP's spelling and vocabulary are limited, so they cannot build coherent sentences and paragraphs to write a meaningful text. If a text is not coherent, it causes the learners with LEP to lose marks as the text will be meaningless.

Tasks like tests, assignments, exams and projects, which challenge them to demonstrate their textual competence, are challenges. The learners with LEP often perform poorly in their assessment tasks, which makes them feel inferior to their L1 peers who are coping. The language used at school requires them to be able to answer questions that need them to explain, suggest, solve, discuss, analyze, comprehend and justify aspects of the work. Their CALP is context reduced, and the tasks are cognitively demanding.

BICS is often confused with CALP as more often BICS is taken to assume CALP, that is: if a child converses well, s/he can also do well academically. The latter causes more pressure on the learners with LEP to perform in their academic studies. The learners with LEP are often anxious about their performance and not in favour of taking risks to answer questions because of the fear of embarrassment. They have a

low self-esteem because they see their L1 peers' answers as their guidelines at all times unless they are called to present first.

The learners with LEP have English resources but do not always use them correctly to do their assignments and projects and, as a result, their attempts end up being marked as 'irrelevant'. They have access to the media and computer centre but cannot always go, sometimes because of extra-mural activities, or owing to rushing for transport.

English is the learners with LEPs' FAL *and* it is used as the LOLT. This causes problems because, according to the school requirements, learners with LEP are expected to come to school with some English language background that will then be formalized at school. Learners learn easily when they are instructed in their HLs, but this is not the case with the learners with LEP.

4.7.3 Class visits

The researcher visited the teachers and the learners in their classes to observe how the lessons were presented and how the learners behaved during the presentation. Several language barriers were identified.

The classrooms are situated in an ex-Model C School that is in an affluent suburb in Pretoria. The MoI (LOLT) is English, whilst Afrikaans is the FAL. The school starts at 7:40 and ends at 13:30, Mondays to Fridays. Different extra-mural activities and meetings take place daily in the afternoon. There are 32 to 34 learners per class and one teacher.

The teachers' desks are often in the front of the class near the blackboard, and the learners' desks are arranged in groups so that less time is wasted when organizing groups for discussions. In other classes, the desks are in straight lines as some learners copy from others and that makes it difficult for the teachers to judge the individual learner's actual potential. The learners are seated in alphabetical order to avoid possible racial or discriminating remarks, such as, *Black learners aside / white learners aside, or Clever, average and slow group.*

The alphabetical-order seating does not apply to the learners who are experiencing problems in LAs. It is the school's support strategy to offer all the learners that need support and learners with LEP front seats or offer them seats close to the teacher's desk. This strategy helped the teachers to keep an eye and offer support to the learners with LEP. The school follows a six-day cycle, and each period lasts 30 minutes.

The school starts at 7:40 with a reading period daily, but some of the L2 learners are often late and miss out on this opportunity. The learners with LEP have to wake up early in the morning and be ready to come to school. If they do not oversleep, they experience transport problems and traffic jams, and get to school late. School ends at 13:30, after which the extra-mural activities start.

The learners with LEP often stay late at school in the afternoon because they have to wait for their parents to finish work at 17:00 and, by the time they go home, it is late, the homework is not done and they are tired. The learners with LEP who are fetched straight after school, said that their parents could not help them with homework before 19:00, because they were still helping at their employers' houses.

There are class rules -- learners are given three chances for misbehaviour. A first-level offence slip is issued if they break the rules, and they are warned three times. Two first-level offence slips mean a detention on a Friday afternoon. The learners with LEP said that the rules make them feel safe because they know what is expected of them, for example: If a learner is absent, it is his/her responsibility to follow up with the teachers to find out what they had missed when they were absent. No apology is accepted for homework or assignments not done on the due date owing to being absent.

The learners communicated freely with their teachers. The teachers are approachable, strict, but fair. There are multi-opportunities for the learners who want to see the teachers. Learners are free to do so before or at the end of a lesson, during the register period, during breaks, or straight after school.

During the class presentation, the teachers as facilitators shared the topics with the learners and asked questions to lead and guide them. The learners with LEP struggled to ask the teacher questions but kept on fidgeting as though they were writing or taking notes.

A learner in Grade 3 kept on asking an L1 learner sitting next to him to translate or explain what the teacher was saying. The teacher said that it often happens. Yet she does not mind because when she checks why they are talking, the reason is related to the lesson that is presented and the lack of understanding experienced by the learner with LEP.

The learners and the teachers use English to communicate and that is a challenge for the learners with LEP as they are not always sure what they want to ask or say and sometimes do not understand the topic. After the presentation, the learners are expected to quietly do their class work.

The teachers try to strike a balance but it is not always possible to keep the lessons learner centred as some learners think that group discussion is a joke and a time to relax, especially in the lower grades. The teachers work hard to make sure that the learners do not lose focus of what needs to be discussed by walking around and listening to what the learners say. The teachers offer guidance and support where necessary.

Work that is not complete should always be completed as homework. The teachers reported that it is time-consuming to leave the learners to carry on for too long with discussions because of the other requirements by the school, such as a test that is due in a week's time, mark books to be submitted to HODs, and marks to be entered in the mark sheets. The teachers' goal is to educate and support the learners as they want to see them progressing. The learners with LEP want to learn English and produce as good results as their L1 peers do.

The teachers encourage all the learners to take part in the discussions but the learners with LEP become inactive when the teacher moves on to the other groups in the class. Different activities are offered during the lessons, such as discussions,

presentations and evaluations. The learners with LEP give their opinions during discussions but struggle when chosen as scribes, and panic because of their LEP when they are asked to report back to the class on group discussions.

The learners with LEP lack CALP to criticize, explain or justify their answers, which makes them lose confidence. Learners wait for a turn to talk by raising a hand until they are chosen by the teacher to talk. They may not shout out the answers. The learners are not allowed to laugh at or tease a learner who makes a mistake, but the learners with LEP do not want to risk asking or answering questions and be embarrassed. Learners are encouraged by the teachers to be helpful and to assist one another, and to ask questions rather than keeping quiet because they will not learn. Both learners and teachers address one another with respect and friendliness.

The school has different resources to simplify learning and make it easy. They use posters, pictures, magazines, DVDs, textbooks, television sets, overhead projectors, computers and books. The learners with LEP enjoy conversational activities more than written activities, even if they have resources to use for these.

The teachers read the learners stories. They listen, discuss topics, get pictures from magazines and newspapers, do computer searches, and the like. The learners with LEP struggle because they cannot apply what they have heard or read by writing. The learners just copy what is in the book when they have to re-write a story in their own words -- they lack the textual competence to do so.

4.7.4 Learners' work examples

During the visit, the researcher asked to see the learners with LEP's books and realised the extent of the language problems that cause them to perform poorly.

The grade 1 learners with LEPs work was characterized by numerous spelling errors. In some cases, the incorrect spelling caused the learners with LEP to lose a mark, and the words became meaningless. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the teacher dictated the following words: *lad, had, mad, pad*; and the learner wrote: *___, ant, pha, and mph*.

The learner with LEP was marked wrong as *had* and *ant* does not mean the same thing. Should the teacher have asked the learners to build sentences by using the dictated words, the learner would still have the sentences incorrect.

The researcher noticed that this above barrier caused the learners to lose more marks in questions where they were asked to complete sentences and paragraphs. The Grade 5 learners with LEP wrote any word as an answer. Some examples are as follows:

- *Proteins enryg and stengt our bodies > Proteins build and repair our bodies.*
- *Another name for a squatter camp is Stan. > Another name for a squatter camp is informal settlement.*

The words that the learners used were wrong and meaningless and, as a result, they failed the assessment task.

In the interpretation of questions, the researcher noticed that the learners did not understand questions that require higher levels of thinking. For example: A learner with LEP who was given a problem in a story and requested to *suggest* three ways in which the problem could be solved, copied the problem from the passage and wrote it down as an answer. The learner did not show any sign that s/he had understood the question.

The researcher further noticed that teachers set questions to see if the learners read the questions completely and carefully. The learners with LEP were confused by this type of question. An example is as follows:

- *Name the six (6) strategies to study that you need to apply when you study for the exam. Write them in the correct order.*

The learners with LEP answered without reading the whole question. They read only the first part of the question. They knew the strategies, but could not place them in the correct order.

The teachers assess the learners' work and give them corrections. In assessing class activities, the teachers write comments such as:

- *Your spelling errors are far too many,*
- *This is shocking,*
- *Incomplete work,*
- *Careless errors,*
- *Write full sentences,*
- *I cannot read your handwriting,*
- *I will not mark such sloppy work again,*
- *You did not listen to instructions,*
- *Did you read the question?*
- *You can do better,*
- *Come and see me,*
- *Work not done;* and the like.

Comments can encourage or discourage a learner. The learners with LEP are aware of their inability to perform academically. They lose hope if they try hard to do the work and then receive comments such as those mentioned above.

The learners with LEP are faced with a challenge to understand English, read with comprehension, listen to instructions, read the questions correctly, construct correct sentences and write neater. Above all the learners must ensure that their texts are meaningful. The learners with LEP become anxious when they are faced with tasks due to the academic pressure that they experience.

As a result, they choose to write in short sentences to avoid making too many spelling errors. They complain that writing neatly slows down their work pace. They end up with incomplete work or cannot think of better ideas to present themselves

until they run out of time. Of course, some learners with LEP choose to write in short sentences because they are too lazy to try harder.

Meetings are arranged where parents are informed of their children's slow progress. The learners with LEP tend to struggle with written work (CALP). The 'Readers are leaders Programme', remedial classes, and English adaptation classes are in place to support them. Parents get tips from teachers on how to help their children to, for example, read daily, practise spelling words, check the diary for messages and sign daily and join *Kumon*.

After discussing an activity with their child, parents are encouraged to let the child write a short paragraph to re-explain what the parent had said in his/her own words; draw up a study timetable, supervise homework, and play educational games. Both the teachers and parents have to check to see if the intervention had been effective or not.

At times, parents feel that their children are doing much better than what the teachers say. It may be that this is due to the confusion between BICS and CALP. Parents tend to judge their children's progress based on their conversational fluency and not on considering their ability to use the language at school for learning purposes. The parents often become defensive and do not co-operate with further suggestions by the teachers to assist the learner. However, there are parents who acknowledge the teachers' findings and seek help.

Some parents become angry with their children and blame them for not taking responsibility of their learning and not appreciating their efforts of registering them in ex-Model C schools. In addition to their children's linguistic difficulties, parents mention that they are further faced with financial problems to obtain more academic support for their children.

4.8 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the researcher presented the data collected. It was discussed and interpreted. The finding was that black South African second-language learners in

ex-Model C schools face numerous challenges, and that they seriously need stakeholders' support. Their teachers and parents meet continuously to discuss and find ways to support them.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 1, the researcher stated that the main aim of this mini-dissertation was to investigate the nature of the challenges and the barriers experienced by learners with LEP and for whom the LOLT is not their mother tongue. The study further aimed to determine the needs of the learners with LEP, and to offer suggestions about how they could be assisted in developing their LEP and thus to learn and achieve according to their full potential.

The researcher started the research by looking at the retention schedules and checked the number of learners with LEP who were supposed to repeat their grades in the following year. She then gave the headmaster, the teachers, the parents and the learners questionnaires to complete so that one could determine their experiences in relation to learning in English, and teaching learners who do not speak English as a home language.

She further interviewed the parents, teachers and learners with whom she had wanted to clarify some points that had appeared in their responses on the questionnaire. The researcher observed lesson presentations to investigate the learners' behaviour and difficulties when lessons were presented in English. After the lesson observations, she requested to peruse learners' work to see what the status of their written work was, and which marks the teachers had been given or which comments they had made.

The researcher would like to state her findings regarding the challenges that the learners with LEP face, and suggest ways in which they could be assisted by the different stakeholders to overcome their learning barriers and achieve according to their full potential.

According to the retention schedules, the learners with LEP struggle in all the LAs. They score very low marks (Level1) in the Foundation, Intermediate and Senior Phases. This means that they are not meeting the requirements for their grades, and are thus retained. They repeat the grades, which has an impact on the learners, as they feel like failures, incompetent, and not clever.

The parents are frustrated when they have to pay the same fees, if not more, for an extra year in the grade. The teachers thus have to put into place a support programme to assist the learners with LEP who are repeating their grades to improve their studies. These factors make it clear that the parents and teachers must support the learners with LEP to cope as they form part of the school community.

5.2 THE LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The limitations of this study relate to validity and reliability. The researcher's position in the school as a superior, a subordinate, a head of department, a teacher, a colleague, a school based support team coordinator and as a friend might have an effect on the results of the interviews and class observations.

People react in different ways when they are put on the spot. The quiet learners may easily be dominated by the outspoken learners. Even though the researcher has assured the participants that all the findings will only be used for the research purpose, some participants might have not given their honest feelings because of doubt that they might be perceived as negative, not working hard enough or as being impossible.

Factors such as anxiety, fatigue and emotions could also have played a role on the validity of the results. The learners with LEP were informed in advance about the times and days when the interviews will take place but they were still anxious. They wanted to know if they will be able to answer the questions, what would happen if they could not answer, what would happen if they fail the interviews and what were they suppose to study to prepare for the interviews.

The interviews took place in the afternoons and some of the learners with LEP looked tired already as they wake up early to come to school. Some learners brought an afternoon snack to eat before the interviews and some did not have. Some learners were in a hurry to go and meet their friends in the waiting area or take part in extra murals even if they have committed to sit for the interviews.

Parents kept on saying that they do not want to sound as if they do not appreciate what the school is doing for their children but they had some concerns as stated in chapter four. The fear to be mistaken could have made them to withhold some information about how they experience being parents of learners with LEP.

5.3 THE SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings indicate that the black South African second-language learners in ex-Model C schools face numerous challenges, and that they urgently need support from all the stakeholders.

The learners with LEP come from different areas to be registered in this ex-Model C school, with different backgrounds, and speaking different languages. These learners have conversational fluency but struggle with CALP. Their work is often full of errors and is therefore meaningless. The learners with LEP are not confident to take part in class discussions and to do class presentations. They cannot risk being laughed at by their peers if they make mistakes. The learners with LEP struggle to cope with the minimum requirements of the grades in which they are placed, and thus fail their grades.

The main reason for their incompetency is that the LOLT is not their mother tongue, and that some of these learners with LEP do not have an English-medium Grade R background. This makes learning in English difficult for them. Teachers prepare different activities to assist the learners with LEP. It is sometimes difficult to do so as the teachers have more administrative work to do, and the number of learners in class is a negative factor in this regard. Parents need to be supportive even though some of them are illiterate.

The L1 learners help the learners with LEP during discussions in the classroom. Different meetings are held to discuss the learners' progress, and to find strategies to assist them. The learners with LEP's inability to cope make them lose confidence. Teachers find it difficult to assist the learners with LEP in the languages that they understand, as the teachers do not know the indigenous languages.

5.4 WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

The recommendations will focus on which actions the different stakeholders should follow or take to assist the learners with LEP to meet the challenges in English as the LOLT in ex-Model C schools:

5.4.1 The Gauteng Department of Education

As employers, the GDE expects the teachers to deliver good quality education. This is often not possible because of the amount of administrative work that needs to be done by the teachers is too much. Teachers focus more on the administrative work than on teaching the learners. If the GDE could ensure that there is less paper work, the teachers would be enabled to give more attention to teaching and support the learners who are not coping.

According to the GDE policy, the FAL (Afrikaans) could be introduced to the learners in the Foundation Phase level. The researcher would like to recommend that the learners with LEP rather be given more time to be exposed to the English language, that is, from Grades 1 to 3. They should focus on the LOLT (English) throughout. Once the learners with LEP understand English, it will be easier for them to cope with the requirements of the other LAs.

The L1 learners could be given more challenging activities (expanded opportunities) to learn more as they already know English. The FAL could be introduced only in Grade 4 when learners are used to the English language. The first two years in the intermediate phase (Grades 4 5) should be spent on building up only vocabulary, basic reading and spelling. In Grades 6 and 7, the learners can be expected to start writing basic sentences and do more reading at different levels in the FAL.

5.4.2 The school governing body (SGB)

The Schools Act states that the SGB may determine the language policy and may choose the LOLT of the school. The SGB needs to check and evaluate the language policy to cater for the needs of the learners who are admitted to the school. The policy should promote the value of multilingualism and acknowledge that there are many languages and cultures represented in the school. All languages should be respected and be protected.

The introduction of a Grade R class on the premises could be an advantage to the Foundation Phase, as it will mean that there will be fewer learners with no English in Grade 1. The teachers in Grade R will need to make sure that they equip their group with the necessary linguistic skills to cope in Grade 1. The learners with LEP will get an extra opportunity to be exposed to English for a longer period than only hearing it on the radio and television. The SGB can assist by budgeting for the building of the classrooms and pay the Grade R teacher. If funds are available, the teachers must prioritise and buy the teaching and learning material for the classes (from the grade or LA budget).

The school could employ more teachers who speak indigenous languages to help the learners with LEP when necessary. Such teachers could help the learners who need more clarification about the conducted lessons or the topics discussed, as well as those who do not adequately understand the English language. Support teachers can help to supervise the learners' homework in the afternoon for one hour straight after school, before the extra-mural activities and extra classes start. If the learners could overcome the language barrier concerning English, it would be easier for them to access their learning.

During the interview with the teachers, they reported that the learners with LEP experience linguistic problems and it is sometimes difficult for their parents to believe as they know their children to be conversational competent.

The researcher suggests that the school employ an educational or school psychologist to assist in identifying the academic problems experienced by the learners and use his/her expertise to assist the teachers, parents and learners with recommendations on how to cope with the teaching and learning barriers that face them.

5.4.3 The headmaster and school management team (SMT)

Considering what the headmaster stated in his responses to the questionnaire that he had completed, parents register their children with LEP in the ex-Model C school because they want to offer them a better educational opportunity. However, the learners do not benefit from the situation owing to the learners with LEP's lack of proficiency in English and the academic requirements that go with it.

The researcher further recommends that the school introduce a system to ensure that the newly admitted learners with LEP attend bridging classes in English for the first year. The classes should be compulsory (a condition for admission) and at no cost, because if a fee were to be charged, only a handful of learners with LEP who could be supported by their parents would attend. In addition, parents would be faced with a greater financial challenge to make it possible for their children to attend these classes.

The abovementioned classes should be conducted as extra-mural classes (in the afternoon) and should not take up the learners with LEP's formal contact time. During these lessons, the learners with LEP must be motivated to use the language to communicate (BICS) by telling the others about themselves; discussing the school rules; ask questions about things that they had found out during school time; find out about the homework that they do not understand, and the like. The learners with LEP will gradually gain confidence in their conversational competence by practising in front of a smaller group; experiencing the same barriers; and having a teacher to facilitate the process.

By the time the learners with LEP are faced with topics to present in front of the whole class, it would be less intimidating and they will be aware of what is expected

when they are to present a speech. They would, for example, have learnt about eye contact, body posture, and voice projection. However, it is important that the learners have an opportunity to attend extra-mural activities, as well.

The researcher also suggests that, before the learners write an exam, the school should allocate a compulsory revision week during which the teachers could revise the work with the learners, give them an opportunity for group discussions and to ask questions if they are confused about any aspect of the work. During the exams, the teachers could read the question papers with the learners as, by the time that they had first read the questions by themselves, they would have heard them from the teachers, as well, which would help them to learn to read the full question before answering.

During assemblies, learners could be educated on the importance and value of multilingualism. L1 and L2 learners need to know that the school is diverse and that every language is important and should be respected. Learners should not be allowed to use their home languages to say mean things about their peers and teachers when they think that the other learners would not know what they had said. It leads to conflict. Learners should speak to people in the language that they understand. Different holidays could be celebrated at school, allowing learners from other indigenous cultures do presentations for the whole school.

Learners should further not laugh at one another when they are referred for extra classes. Learners refuse to go to extra classes owing to teasing by their peers, and often ask their parents to write the school letters of excuse to allow them not to attend the classes. Learners who make fun of those who attend extra classes should be sent for detention.

5.4.4 The teachers

The learners' written work that the researcher analyzed, was characterized by numerous grammatical errors such as spelling, punctuation and poor sentence construction, and the teachers had made numerous comments when marking these activities.

The researcher suggests that, as a continuation of what is done in the English bridging class (BICS), remedial classes should be introduced for all grades, and that the learners with LEP should attend these classes at least twice a week. In these remedial classes, the learners should be helped with activities that improve their grammatical, textual, functional and sociolinguistic competence.

During the remedial classes, the teachers could further explain to the learners with LEP how to approach different questions. They could, for example, learn what is expected if the question demands that a learner *define, explain, suggest, compare, tell in your own words, criticize, evaluate, discuss or describe* aspects (academic competence).

If the learners with LEP understand what is expected of them, as explained above, their basic knowledge could help them answer the questions correctly. This will also help them to write coherent and cohesive texts. Teachers should be careful not to assume that the learners already know how to approach the questions. The learners with LEP could be taught later how to conduct themselves in different situations, for example during speech festivals, storytelling and role-play.

During the remedial lessons, the learners with LEP need to be taught reading skills (sight-words reading) so that they are able to read and interpret the questions correctly. During the reading period, once a week and possibly on the Friday after the test on Thursday, the teachers could pair L1 with learners with LEP and encourage them to review question papers of the previous week and discuss them.

The general corrections lessons should be discouraged because the learners simply copy the corrections without understanding them at all. Instead, the teachers could provide learners with memoranda, summaries of textbook notes, or spider diagrams of essay questions and discuss the memorandum systematically before letting the learners copy the corrections.

The learners should understand where they went wrong so that they do not repeat the same mistakes in future tests. Reading through the test and exam papers could

benefit the learners, as they would hear exactly what the content is and what is asked before they read these on their own.

Spelling tests should not be left to the parents to deal with as some parents are guardians, some work until late and some are illiterate, especially in English. Teachers can go through the list with the learners and let them hear the correct pronunciation before trying to pronounce the words at home. The learners could then practise the words or sentences afterwards and their parents could assist them with writing write the words correctly, or supervise them.

This will minimise the cases whereby parents only sign the diary even if the work has not done because they do not know how to assist their children. More often, the problem is that parents do not have the time to help their children because of work-related reasons, and the children are tired in the evenings.

The researcher believes that, as soon as LEP is addressed, the learners with LEP will improve in the other LAs as well, because they are also taught in English. Content teachers (Mathematics, Social Sciences and Technology) should also give attention to the standard of English used in their subjects.

It is every teacher's responsibility to keep his/her learners motivated to learn. Hence the teachers should try to motivate the learners by making positive comments in the learners' books as some of the learners feel discouraged when they study and prepare for the tests but fail, and get a negative comment about their work. The learners with LEP lose confidence when they receive discouraging comments on their work and become reluctant to try harder the next time.

The learners with LEP wish that their teachers could understand that they also like to do better such as their L1 peers, who understand the English language, do. The researcher recommends that, should a teacher want to tell a learner how s/he feels about the quality of work that the learner produces, it must be done with love and respect. This discussion could take place in private at the teacher's desk, at the end of the lesson, or at break, but not in front of the class. The learners feel embarrassed

when the teacher calls out the low mark that the learner obtained for a test or an exam.

Lesson planning should be done to cater for different English language learning styles. The terminology from different learning areas should be taught and should form the basis of the different lessons. Teachers from all the LAs could attend workshops and developmental courses to be empowered to use different ways in which to assist learners with LEP to perform according to their potential.

School matters (practices) should not take preference over quality teaching. Teachers should further ensure that the learners have understood the concepts taught before testing them. The problem is that, if timeframes are set by the GDE/school, there is very little that the teachers can do except rush through the work so that they can set the papers and write the test. The SMT can be helpful in solving the timing aspect.

It is essential that the teachers be required to acquire the major African language for the region, which, in this case, is sePedi. In this way, teachers would be able to assist the learners with LEP to understand their schoolwork as they could do so in the learner's HL.

The parents indicated that they wanted the best for their children but could not help them owing to different reasons. For example: Parents' LEP, working until late, not being sure of the questions asked by the teachers and the level thereof, are challenging to them. Home is often seen as an extension of school but that does not help if the support from home is inappropriate or inadequate.

A good example is that the parent would teach the child the letters of the alphabet, whilst the teacher expects the child to sound the letters. The amount of homework frustrates the learners when they have to do projects and prepare for tests, as well. It is difficult for the learners with LEP to learn the language and the content at the same time as compared to their L1 peers.

The researcher suggests that the teachers ensure that homework that is sent home has been explained to the learners and that they know what to do. Teachers can also avoid sending home tasks that will be marked as formal tasks, because those tasks are often completed by the parents, or a learner gets naught because the parents did not understand what the teacher was asking or requested the learners to do. New concepts could be dealt with in class, and extension or incomplete work could be sent home as homework.

Formal tasks should be done during class time. Teachers can ask the learners to collect the information at home, such as to cut out different pictures at home, and to do the task in class so that the true potential of the child can be identified. If that does not happen, the learner should be assisted immediately. Homework could mainly be given by the English and Mathematics teachers. That would give the learners enough time to prepare for other tests as learners with LEP struggle with both the language and the content of subjects at the same time.

During meetings with parents, teachers should remember to state the strengths of the learners as well as their weaknesses. They should further give the parents tips on how to assist their children at home.

5.4.5 The parents

The parents have the responsibility to pay their children's school fees or to arrange for assistance in this regard, such as being exempted from payment if they have financial problems. The funds collected for school fees will enable the SGB to appoint support teachers, buy teaching- and learning-support materials, and construct Grade R classes.

If parents would like to register their children in ex-Model C primary schools, they need to ensure that those children attend English-medium Grade R classes. This will give them some English background before they go to Grade 1.

If the parents are illiterate, they could arrange for a tutor who could help the child at least three times a week, but that is rather expensive. Regular attendance of extra

classes is important. Parents should discuss the afternoon class timetable with their children and arrange where they would meet one another outside the class to go home. This arrangement would ensure that the children would attend the extra classes as their parents will meet them outside those classes. Parents should further talk to the learners to enquire what that had learnt in class, and perhaps arrive about five minutes early to fetch them and wait at the classroom. With such actions in place, the learners will know that they are firmly under the teachers' and parents' supervision, which would make them feel supported.

Parents need to make sure that their children are collected on time after school so that they can have a break before they do their homework. The homework needs to be supervised. Parents should listen to their daily reading. However, they must not take over the work and do it for their children as the children would not learn to do the work themselves.

Parents should further ensure that their children are always present at school as they miss so much work when they are absent. When they are back at school then, they struggle to deal with the day's work and would have to catch up all the work that they had missed when they were absent. Having a proper breakfast in the morning and healthy food in their lunch boxes will help to improve their concentration in class.

Parents should preferably attend the school meetings when invited and not assume that they already know what the teachers will say. They should further follow up on the recommendations of the teachers regarding their children's work and communicate by letters, diary messages, calls to the teachers, or appointments with them if they are not sure what they need to do. This would be an opportunity for parents to tell the teachers about their experiences at home, and what they hear from their children if they are not sure of events or messages. Parents should avoid making negative statements about teachers in front of their children when matters are not going well.

Parents could use English when they help their children to do school work or allow them to watch English television programmes. Learners must further be allowed to use their home language in their family environment, and be proud of it.

5.4.6 The learners

The learners with LEP have a right to education but need to take responsibility and learn by doing their work as expected by the schoolteachers. The learners with LEP need to take part in discussions and overcome their fear of speaking up as they will not learn if they do not ask questions or discuss matters in class. They should attend the programmes to which they are referred as the school has bought the supportive programmes to help them. It is meaningless for teachers to stay until late, waiting for children who do not arrive to attend these programmes. It is a waste of human resources.

L1 learners need to understand that learning a new language is not easy for the learners with LEP. They need to respect and support one another. They could work together in groups and correct the learners with LEP when they make mistakes. Some learners learn easily from other learners. The L1 learners should show appreciation when they are corrected and not make funny comments about it. Such comments are rude, and further make the other learners laugh at the learners with LEP, which then lower their self-esteem.

The L2 learners should write down their homework in their diaries and make sure that they do it daily. They need to be involved in their learning so that the teachers can establish whether they are lazy in not doing their work, or whether they find difficult. In the latter case, they could assist them. The learners with LEP need to study hard every day and prepare for the formal tasks.

The learners with LEP should join at least one extra-mural activity to take a break from their schoolwork. Often the teachers get an opportunity to see the other side of the learner. Some children struggle in class but are good at sport. Parents need to support them in this regard so that they could gain confidence from being part of the school activities and would motivate them to try harder in class.

Peer tutoring could further take place during the reading periods twice a week. Learners can learn better from one another. The learners with LEP could ask

questions about the work that had been done in class previously if they had not understood it. The L1 peers could also ask the learners with LEP questions to test their understanding. By so doing, the L1 learners will also benefit because they will be revising their work.

5.4.7 The community

It takes an entire community to educate a child. The school needs to make contact with the University of Pretoria and request that students help as language therapists. The speech therapists would not only focus on the articulation of words, but would further help with extra vocabulary and the construction of different types of sentences.

Drama students could help to make afternoon classes fun. The learners could be taught how to use body language and facial expressions during a speech presentation. The learners with LEP will not forget the scenarios that they have dramatized in this way. It would be easier when they are asked to present speeches in front of their peers because they would have had guided practice in presenting speeches or public speaking.

The school is situated in an area where most of the residents are well educated. A group of volunteers from the community could adopt groups of learners with LEP in the school. The volunteers would then take turns to read the learners stories and discuss the stories with them. They could also do different comprehension tests with them.

5.5 THE FUTURE RESEARCH PROSPECTS

Great emphasis of future research should go into investigating the following:

- Policy issues in relation to language adaptation in the curriculum.
- How to authentically cater for the individual needs of learners with LEP in bigger mixed abilities classes.

- How to empower the teachers that teach mixed abilities classes and are not remedial trained.
- A need to assist the parents that are illiterate to support their children with LEP.

5.6 CONCLUSION

The researcher believes that, if the GDE, the SGB, the headmaster and the SMT, the teachers, the learners, the parents and the community work together to assist the learners to understand the LOLT, the learners could produce better results as compared to how they are currently performing. The learners will be exposed to L1 English speakers and the English language, and will obtain relevant assistance, coaching, guidance, and supervision.

It is surprising that some parents put the blame on teachers and they claim that teachers do not do enough to help their children. The fact that the learners with LEP sometimes bunk the support classes is a contributing factor as teachers cannot always chase them, especially after school hours. To be honest, I think by the end of the day these learners need a break and do not want to be in the class anymore. Their parents must join hands with the teachers in the endeavour to assist their children.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Application letter to the school



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
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UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Departement Afrikaans

Geesteswetenskappe

Tel : (012) 420-4075

Faks: (012) 420-2349

E-posadres: hein.willemse@up.ac.za

14 April 2009

The SGB and Headmaster
Waterkloof Primary School
306 Milner Street
Waterkloof
Pretoria
0181
Dear Sir

REQUEST TO CONDUCT THE RESEARCH AT WATERKLOOF PRIMARY SCHOOL

My name is Charlotte Monyai, I am a student at the University of Pretoria and am currently enrolled as a Masters student in African Languages Studies.

I have completed the coursework part of my study and now have to submit a mini-dissertation as part of the requirements. I am supervised by Professor V. N. Webb. My research deals with the challenges facing learners with Limited English Proficiency in ex-model C schools.

My research methodology will include observations, interviews, questionnaires and the perusal of relevant documents, for example: learner profiles, mark schedules, learner's books and support forms. The findings of this study will be used to develop recommendations for the school. Such recommendations may be useful in assisting Limited English Proficiency learners to achieve according to their potential.

Privacy and confidentiality are basic ethical issues when conducting the research. As a researcher, I pledge to respect the participant's rights, needs, interests, beliefs, attitudes and values as well as the good name of the school.

Your co-operation will be appreciated.

Yours faithfully

Mrs S. C. Monyai (082-297-4774)

Universiteit van Pretoria
Pretoria, 0002
Suid Afrika

Telefoon : 012 420 2360
Faksimile : 012 420 4501

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www.up.ac.za

Appendix 2

Permission from the school

See the attached letter
that was received from
the school.

Appendix 3

Application form to the GDE

See the attached
application form

Appendix 4

Permission from the GDE

See the letter that
was received by the
researcher.

Appendix 5

General letter to the
headmaster,
teachers, parents
and learners.

Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Kantoor van die Dekaan
Departement Afrikaans
Geesteswetenskappe
Tel : (012) 420-4075
Faks: (012) 420-2349
E-posadres: hein.willemse@up.ac.za
3 June 2009

Dear

REQUEST FOR CO-OPERATION IN RESEARCH WORK

My name is Charlotte Monyai, I am a student at the University of Pretoria. I am currently enrolled as a Masters student.

I have completed the coursework part of my study and have to submit a mini-dissertation as part of the requirements. I am supervised by professor V. N. Webb. My research is on meeting the challenges of black English second language South African learners in ex-model C school.

The findings and recommendations of this study will assist in meeting the challenges faced by the abovementioned learners. My research methodology will include observations, interviews, questionnaires and the perusal of documents. Please read the attached consent form and decide if you would be willing to contribute to the success of this study.

Privacy and confidentiality are basic ethical issues when conducting research. As a researcher, I pledge to respect your rights, needs, interests, beliefs, attitudes and values. The following ethical assurances are applicable:

- The researcher must have your written consent.
- The participant has the right to accept or decline the request.
- The participant may choose to withdraw at any stage.
- Measures will be taken to reduce any distress that may be experienced.
- The participant will remain anonymous.
- Participants will be given a summary of findings and recommendations.
- Participants may give any suggestions that may contribute to the success of this study.
- All the data collected will be kept confidential and will not be used for any purpose other than this study.

If you are willing to co-operate, please complete the relevant section in the attached form.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. It will be a pleasure to work with you in this study.

Yours faithfully

Monyai Sarah Charlotte (012-460-3221)

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Appendix 6

Headmaster's consent form



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**UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA**

Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Kantoor van die Dekaan
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Geesteswetenskappe

Tel : (012) 420-4075

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3 June 2009

HEADMASTER'S CONSENT FORM: PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

I.....,

Headmaster of the school where the research is conducted have read and understand the contents of your letter requesting me to participate in your research study on **Meeting the challenges of black English second language South African learners in ex-model C schools.**

I understand that I will be expected to complete the relevant questionnaire and if necessary participate in a follow-up interview. My decision is as follows:

Option A

I AGREE to take part in the research.

Signature: Date:

Address:

.....

Option B

I DO NOT AGREE to take part in the research.

The reason for my decision is as follows:

.....

.....

Signature: Date:

Universiteit van Pretoria
Pretoria, 0002
Suid Afrika

Telefoon : 012 420 2360
Faksimile : 012 420 4501

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Appendix 7

Teachers' consent form



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3 June 2009

TEACHER’S CONSENT FORM: PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

I,.....

teach in Grade and have read and understand the contents of your letter inviting me to participate in your research on **Meeting the challenges of black English second language South African learners in ex-model C schools.**

I understand that I will be requested to complete a questionnaire, if necessary participate in a follow-up interview and that official school documents (like textbooks, other booklets, examples of learners’ work, mark books, etc.) will be perused (with my permission). My decision about your request is as follows:

Option A

I AGREE with consent to take part in the research.

Signature: Date:

Address:

.....

Option B

I WILL NOT take part in the research.

The reason why I do not want to participate in this research is as follows.

.....

.....

Signature: Date:

Universiteit van Pretoria
Pretoria, 0002
Suid Afrika

Telefoon : 012 420 2360
Faksimile : 012 420 4501

gwdekaan@up.ac.za
www.up.ac.za

Appendix 8

Parents' consent form



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

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UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Kantoor van die Dekaan
Departement Afrikaans
Geesteswetenskappe
Tel : (012) 420-4075
Faks: (012) 420-2349
E-posadres: hein.willemse@up.ac.za
14 April 2009

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH: CONSENT FORM OF PARENTS AND LEARNERS

I.....(name and surname)

parent of (name of learner)

in grade have read and understand the contents of your letter requesting me and my child to participate in your research study on **Meeting the challenges of black English second language South African learners in ex-model C schools.**

I understand that I will be expected to complete a questionnaire and return it to you, that you will interview my child and observe him/her in the classroom. I have decided as follows:

Option A

I agree and give consent that my child and I will take part in the research.

Signature: Date:

Address:

Option B

My child and I **WILL NOT** take part in the research.

The reason why I do not want to participate in the research is as follows:

.....

.....

Signature: Date:

Universiteit van Pretoria
Pretoria, 0002
Suid Afrika

Telefoon : 012 420 2360
Faksimile : 012 420 4501

gwdekaan@up.ac.za
www.up.ac.za

Appendix 9

Learners' consent form

Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe

Kantoor van die Dekaan

Departement Afrikaans

Geesteswetenskappe

Tel : (012) 420-4075

Faks: (012) 420-2349

E-posadres: hein.willemse@up.ac.za

14 April 2009

Dear

My name is Mrs Monyai. I am a student at the University of Pretoria. I would like you to help me with my project. You will be expected to answer questions. I will discuss the questions with you. Our discussion will be used for the project only.

OPTION A

I agree to take part in the research.

Name of learner	
Date of birth	
School	
Grade	
Home language	

OPTION B

I do not agree to take part in the research.

Name:

Date:.....

Thank you for reading my letter.

Yours faithfully

Monyai S. C.

012 460 3221

Appendix 10

Headmaster's questionnaire

HEADMASTER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

TOPIC: Meeting the challenges of black English second language South African learners in ex- model C schools

General instruction

Thank you for taking your time to answer this questionnaire.

This is not a test.

There is no right or wrong answer.

Answer the questions according to your best knowledge.

The information gathered will be kept confidential and be used for research purposes only.

Please add any information that will help to make this research a success.

Headmaster

Name: _____

Gender: _____

Highest education: _____

Where was it obtained: _____

When was it obtained: _____

Did you do English didactics in your training: _____

What do you teach: _____

Years of teaching experience: _____

Home Language: _____

1. Are there learners that are experiencing difficulties because English is used as the language of learning and teaching?



2. If the answer to Q.1 is yes, shortly describe how this is a problem?

(a) Amongst your learners:

- How many are English Home Language speakers? _____
- How many are English First Additional Language learners? _____
- How many are English Second Additional Language learners? _____

(b) Amongst your teachers:

- How many are English Home Language speakers? _____
- How many are English First Additional Language speakers? _____
- How many are English Second Additional Language speakers? _____



(c) How many learners with Limited English Proficiency are in your school?

3. What initiatives do you take to empower your teachers to assist LEP learners?

SCHOOL LANGUAGE POLICY

4. What is the language policy in your school?

5. When was your school's language policy developed?

6. Who was involved when the policy was drafted?

7. What was the procedure that was followed?

8. What are the documents that inform your language policy?

9. When do you review the language policy?

10. How do you inform the parents about the language policy?

ASSESSMENT

11. Learners must be assessed. What is the assessment procedure in your school?

12. How is determined that a learner has Limited English Proficiency?

13. Are there any expanded opportunities given to these learners by your teachers and how does this happen?

14. How do you inform the LEP learners' parents about any learning barriers?

SUPPORT

15. What are the functions of your school based support team= SBST?

16. Are your English L2 learners' parents supportive when discussing barriers?

CHALLENGES

17. What are your challenges with learners with LEP?



18. What is your feeling and attitude about the abovementioned problem?

19. Should an indigenous be introduced in your school:

(a) Will it be a LOLT or a subject? _____

(b) If a subject, at what level will it be represented? (HL, FAL or SAL)

Appendix 11

Teachers' questionnaire



TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

TOPIC: Meeting the challenges of black English second language South African learners in ex- model C schools.

General instructions:

Thank you for taking your time to answer this questionnaire.

This is not a test.

There is no right or wrong answer.

Answer the questions according to your best knowledge.

The information gathered will be kept confidential and be used for research purposes only.

Please add any information that will help to make this research a success.

Teacher

Name: _____

Gender: _____

Highest education: _____

Where was it obtained: _____

When was it obtained: _____



Did you do English didactics in your training: _____

What do you teach: _____

Years of teaching experience: _____

Home Language: _____

1. What English knowledge do learners need to have at the level of the grade that you are teaching?

2. What is their level of word building and sentence construction?

3. How do the learners with LEP pronounce English words when they are speaking or reading?

4. What is their level of vocabulary and do they know the relationship between words?



5. What is their understanding and knowledge of the position of words in a sentence?

6. What are the different texts that they are expected to write?

7. What is their ability to use the texts to conduct conversations?

8. What is their ability to use the texts to conduct conversations?

9. What is the quality of their written work?

10. What is their level of using the English language to describe a situation?

11. How does their level of English language knowledge affect their attempts to explain or argue in a class?

12. What is their ability to criticize things or situations?

13. How do they act when questions are asked in class?

14. How do they perform in tests and formal assessment tasks?



15. What is their level of participation during class discussion?

16. What is their ability to of using language at different social settings?

17. What are the difficulties that they are facing because of their LEP?

18. What are the reasons for learners LEP?

19. What are the reasons for learners LEP?



20. What exposure do they need to improve their situation?

21. What are the preferred learning styles used by the learners with LEP?

22. What are the preferred learning styles used by the learners with LEP?

23. What is the relationship between the intelligence of the learner with LEP and English language acquisition?

24. How does the personality of the learner with LEP affect his/her English Language Proficiency?

25. What is the role of learner's attitudes to the acquisition of English Language proficiency?

26. What strategies do you use to help learners to overcome their LEP?

27. What methods and procedures do you use to assess English language proficiency?

Appendix 12

Parents' questionnaire

PARENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

TOPIC: Meeting the challenge of black English second language South African learners in ex-Model C primary schools.

General Instruction

- Thank you for taking your time to answer this questionnaire.
- This is not a test.
- There is no right or wrong answer.
- Answer the questions according to your best knowledge.
- The information gathered will be kept confidential and be used for research purposes only.
- Please add any information that will help to make this research a success.

PARENT:

Name: _____

Gender: _____

Highest Education: _____

Contact No: _____

Home Language: _____

In which Grade was your child first exposed to English? _____

CHILD

Name: _____

Gender: _____

Grade: _____

A. Answer the following questions by ticking under the correct column.

		STRONGLY	DISAGREE	NOT SURE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1	I know my speaking language (speaking, reading and writing).					
2	My level of education enables me to help my child to do his/her homework.					
3	I communicate with my child in English at all times.					
4	My child is coping with English as a language of learning and teaching.					
5	Learning in English is an exciting activity for my child.					
6	I am pleased with my child's progress in English as a subject.					
7	I am pleased with my child's progress in the other learning areas (subjects) that are taught in English (eg: Tech, Maths, SS, EMS, LO)>					
8	I have enough time to help my child with his/her homework.					
9	I have enough resources to help my child to do his/her homework (textbooks, magazines etc.)					
10	My child is confident in doing his/her homework by him/herself.					
11	My child is receiving extra help from the teachers.					



12	Educational psychology assessments assist in identifying learning problems.					
13	Discussing my child's progress with teachers is helping.					

B. Please ✓ in the relevant block, for example: ☺ ☹ ☹

How do you feel about the following:

		☺	☹	☹
1	Extra English classes offered by the school			
2	Weekly spelling words			
3a	The reading homework			
b	The writing homework			
c	Preparing speeches for presentations			
4	Weekly tests			
5	Readers are Leaders school computer programme			
6	Remedial classes by teachers			
7	Child assisted by a tutor			
8	The amount of English homework given			
9	Punishment given for not doing English homework			
10	Being called to school to be informed about your child's progress			
11	Given tips on how to help your child			
12	Knowing in advance about what your child will be assessed on			



C. 1. My child is taught in English which is not his mother tongue:

One thing I do not like about that is:

I wish that:

2. If you were offered an opportunity whereby your child would be taught in an indigenous language, which languages you would choose in order of preference:

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

D. If there is any question that you feel that should have been asked, please add it in the space provided and answer it.

Question: _____

Answer: _____

Appendix 13

Learners' questionnaire



LEARNERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____

Grade: _____

Boy/Girl: _____

No.	Questions	☺	☹	☹
A 1	Learning in English is exciting			
2	I am proud of my English work			
3	I take part in class discussions			
4	I am not shy of standing in front of the class and reporting back			
5	How do you feel about these types of homework:			
	i) Spelling words			
	ii) Reading			
	iii) Preparing speeches			
	iv) Writing paragraphs			
	v) Thinking and reasoning activities			
6	I have people that help me:			
	i) My parents			
	ii) My tutor			
	iii) My teachers			
	iv) My friends			
7	I visit the media centre after school hours			
8	I have enough resources at home			
9	Having to give a speech in class			
10	Listening to class mates talking			
11	Expectations from:			



i) Teachers			
ii) Parents			
iii) Friends and peers			

- B. 1. My favourite TV channel is _____
2. My favourite radio programme is _____
3. I speak in _____ language to my parents.
4. I speak in _____ language to my friends.
5. I speak in _____ when I answer the telephone.
6. I wish that my teachers could understand the _____ language.

C.

1. I feel motivated when _____

2. I feel discouraged when _____

3. I wish to let you know that _____

Appendix 14

Interview schedule

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Dear participants

As stated in the general letter that I have sent you, part of my research will be to conduct interviews and observations. Kindly complete the following section by indicating the date, time and the convenient venue where you will be available to be interviewed.

The interview period will be from to

.....

Name	Date	Venue	Time

Yours faithfully

Monyai Sarah Charlotte

012 460 3221

Appendix 15

Lesson-observation form



LESSON OBSERVATION FORM

Teacher's name:

.....

Class:

.....

Date:

.....

Learner:

.....

Setting:

Participants:



Ends/ Goals:

Acts:

Key:



--

Instrumentality:

Norms:

Genres:



--

General:

Appendix 16

GDE: Learners 450 support form

See the attached
support form