CHAPTER 6

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

> *Because bilingualism and multilingualism are worldwide phenomena, bilingual education is a worldwide enterprise. However, the particular form of bilingual education, its goals, and its reason for being vary from locale to locale (Hoff, 2004:363).*

6.1   INTRODUCTION

Empirically grounded knowledge broadens the information needed in practice by providing situation-specific data which may be used as basis for informed decision-making and change (Delport & De Vos, 2002:50). Educational research in South Africa has been largely conducted at macrolevel, and may be of little relevance if teachers are unable to transfer the knowledge to their own school environments (Mafisa, 2001:36). This study attempted to address the context-specific educational needs of nine multilingual preschools in the Pretoria Central Business District (CBD) and Sunnyside area. Over the past decade, a challenging environment has been created in these areas by the enrolment of Black learners in preschools with English as the only Medium of Instruction (MoI). The research explored the existing situation and analysed the current opinions and perceptions relating to language diversity in multilingual preschools, as well as the possible barriers to learning and development created by learning in English as Language of Learning and Teaching (ELoLT).

The main aim of the empirical research was to describe the specific educational context of multilingual preschools in the Pretoria CBD and Sunnyside area. First, the researcher had to determine the needs and strengths of preschool teachers and preschool learners in the specific research context, and once they were identified, the researcher could explore

the role of speech-language therapists in support of the preschool teachers and multilingual preschool learners.

The aim of this chapter is to present the results graphically in figures or tables, and to interpret and discuss the findings. The results are described and presented according to the three research phases described in Chapter Five, Section 5.6, as schematically illustrated in Figure 6.1.
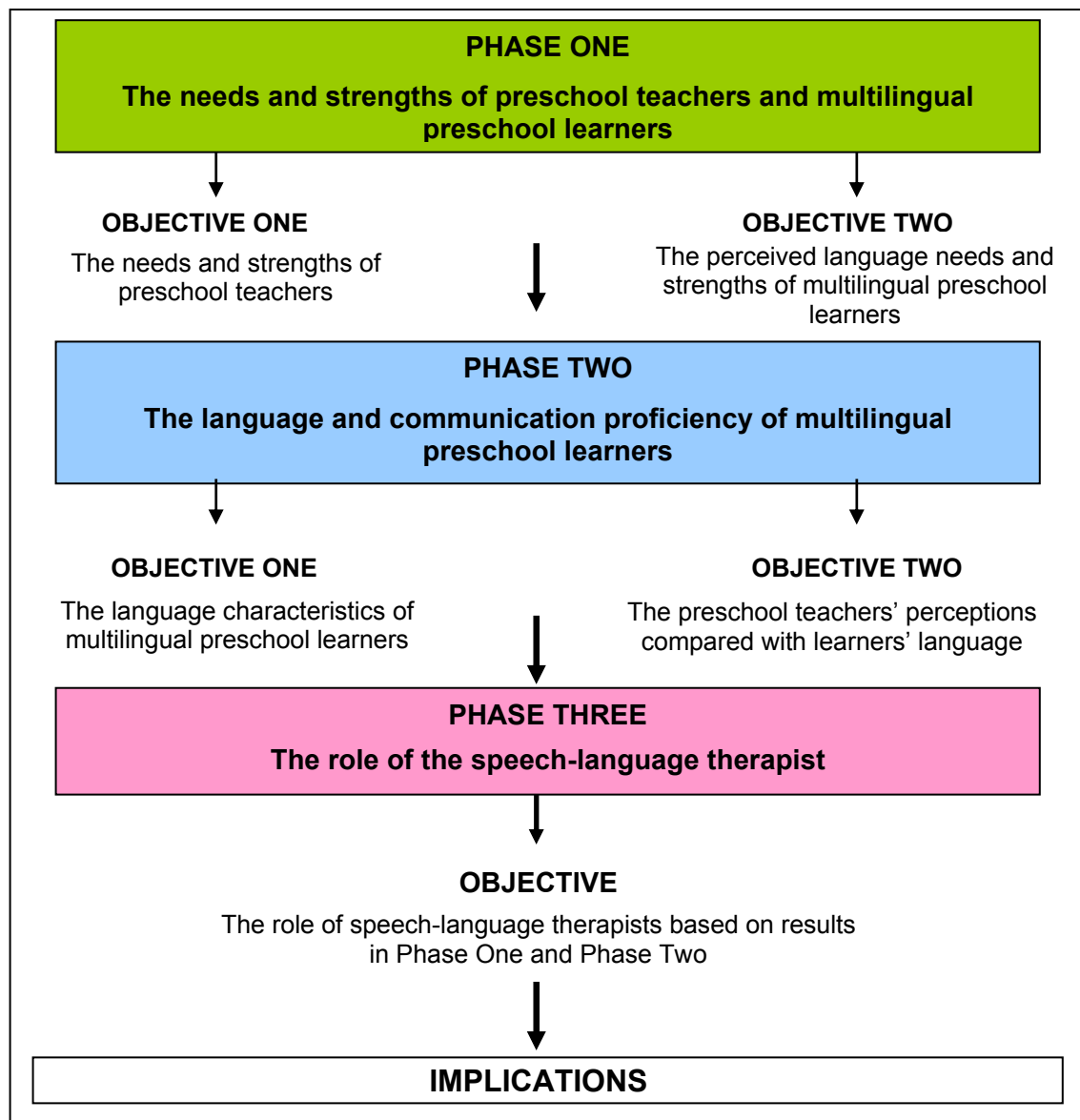

FIGURE 6.1: SCHEMATIC PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

6.2   NEEDS AND STRENGTHS OF THE PRESCHOOL TEACHERS AND PRESCHOOL LEARNERS

The overall objective of Phase One was *to describe the needs and strengths of preschool teachers and multilingual preschool learners in the Pretoria CBD and Sunnyside area from the preschools teachers' perspectives.* The results are based on the responses obtained from the questionnaires completed by the teacher participants and will be presented according to the objectives presented in Figure 6.1.

6.2.1 Context-specific information

Important *context-specific demographic information* was gathered regarding the participating preschools, the teacher participants, and the preschool learners.

6.2.1.1   Description of participating preschools

Section One (Variable 19, 23, 24, 26) of the questionnaire requested information on selected characteristics of the nine participating preschools in the research context.   Table 6.1 provides a summary of the relevant characteristics.

Table 6.1 reveals that most of the participating preschools (66%) were independent and received no financial support from the government. Independent preschools are usually funded with parents' or caregivers' fees and community fundraising, and educational material is sometimes donated. Early Childhood Education (ECE) in the research context was mainly fee-based and concurred with the findings reported in White Paper 5 (RSA, 2001a:11) that approximately 75% of ECE in South Africa is fee-based and therefore restricted in terms of access and equity. Learners from urban areas and higher income groups generally have more access to ECE services than learners from poor or rural areas (RSA, 2001a:11).   In terms of the research
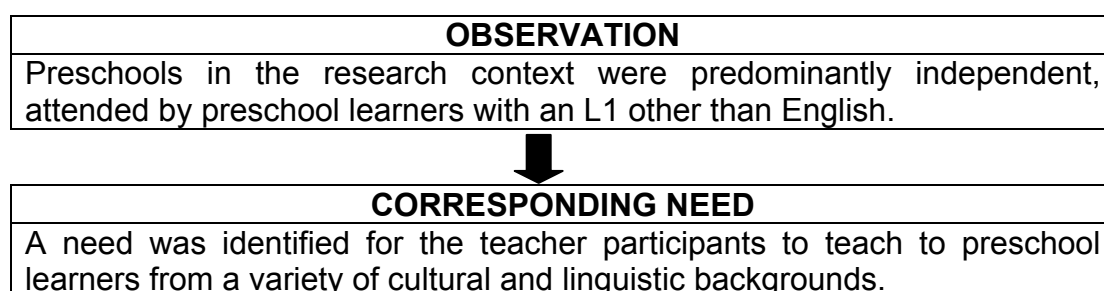
TABLE 6.1: DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPATING PRESCHOOLS (N=9)				
NUMBER ALLOCATED TO SCHOOLS	**TYPE OF SCHOOLS**	**NUMBER ALLOCATED TO CLASSES**	**NUMBER OF LEARNERS IN CLASSES**	**NUMBER OF ELoLT LEARNERS IN CLASSES**
1	Independent preschool	25	11	11
		26	21	21
		27	20	14
2	Independent preschool	19	24	24
		20	24	20
		28	20	20
3	Government-subsidised preschool	11	24	24
		12	28	28
		13	24	24
		14	28	26
		15	27	26
4	Independent Preschool	29	25	22
		30	23	20
		31	32	29
5	Government-subsidised preschool	17	20	19
		18	20	20
6	Government-subsidised preschool	1	27	20
		2	26	24
		3	32	31
		4	33	20
		32	34	19
7	Independent preschool	22	19	16
		23	22	18
		24	21	21
8	Independent preschool	21	Not provided	Not provided
9	Independent preschool	5	26	26
		6	22	22
		7	26	26
		8	20	19
		9	30	28
		10	30	29
		16	21	21
TOTAL 9 schools		**32 classes**	**760 learners**	**688 learners**

setting learners with parents or caregivers from the medium income group were likely to be accommodated in the independent participating preschools, as this group could afford the school fees.

As seen in Table 6.1 three of the participating preschools were government-subsidised preschools and were funded by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE).   In these schools fees played a relatively smaller role compared to the financial burden of independent preschools. The quality of education in the government-subsidised preschools was controlled by employing only teachers registered with the South African Council of Educators and by using preschool programmes approved by the local Department of Education. The ECE in the research setting varied in terms of type, but the South African government expressed concern in White Paper 5 (RSA, 2001a:14) about the variable quality of ECE services in independent preschools.

In all of the 32 participating classes, most of the learners (90.5%) were ELoLT learners, with only 9.5% learners with English as mother tongue (L1). The preschool teachers in the research setting therefore had to cope with English L1 and ELoLT learners in the same classroom and had to teach at different language levels to individual learners in the class. This trend is typical to the South African educational context and has also been pointed out by Dawber and Jordaan (1999:2), as well as by Barkhuizen (1993:77).

From the above findings, the following observation is made and a corresponding need is identified.

OBSERVATION
Preschools in the research context were predominantly independent, attended by preschool learners with an L1 other than English.

CORRESPONDING NEED
A need was identified for the teacher participants to teach to preschool learners from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

6.2.1.2   Characteristics of teacher participants

Section One (Variable 4 - 18, 20 - 22, 40) of the questionnaire determined relevant characteristics of the 32 teacher participants. The results illustrate

how the teacher participants' characteristics contributed to the complexity of the teaching situation in the research context.   Table 6.2 provides details of these characteristics.

TABLE 6.2: DESCRIPTION OF TEACHER PARTICIPANTS' CHARACTERISTICS (N=32)			
CHARACTERISTIC	**DESCRIPTION**	**FREQUENCY OF PARTICIPANTS**	**PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS**
HOME LANGUAGE	Afrikaans English SeSotho IsiZulu	27 3 1 1	84% 10% 3% 3%
ADDITIONAL LANGUAGES SPOKEN*	English Afrikaans SeSotho German IsiZulu IsiXhosa SePedi SiSwati XiTsonga Dutch Sign language	28 5 3 2 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	87% 15% 10% 6% 3% 3% 3% 3% 3% 3% 3%
LANGUAGE PREFERENCE	Not provided Afrikaans English Afrikaans and English	1 26 3 2	3% 81% 10% 6%
AGE	Not provided 18 - 25 years 26 - 35 years 36 - 45 years 46 - 55 years 55 + years	2 6 6 9 5 4	6% 19% 19% 28% 15% 13%
HIGHEST QUALIFICATION	Not provided Lower than matric Matric Diploma Degree Post-graduate qualification	1 2 1 25 2 1	3% 6% 3% 79% 6% 3%
TEACHING EXPERIENCE	Not provided Less than 1 year 1 - 3 years 4 - 5 years 6 - 9 years 10 + years	2 0 7 2 3 18	6% 0% 22% 6% 10% 56%
TEACHING EXPERIENCE WITH MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS	Not provided 1 year 2 years 3 years 4 years 5 years 6 years 7 years 10 years 17 years 21 years	1 5 3 4 6 3 3 3 2 1 1	3% 15% 10% 12% 18% 10% 10% 10% 6% 3% 3%

* Some teacher participants listed more than one additional language.

According to Table 6.2, most of the teacher participants (84%) were White and Afrikaans-speaking, but they were teaching mostly in English and not their mother tongue (L1). The large number of Afrikaans-speaking teacher participants may be attributed to the fact that the majority of White people in the Gauteng Province has Afrikaans as L1 (Census in Brief, 1998), and Afrikaans-speaking teachers are therefore more readily available than teachers with English as L1.   Another explanation for such a high percentage of Afrikaans-speaking teachers may be that they retained their teaching positions at the Pretoria CBD and Sunnyside preschools, while the population in these areas became culturally integrated (Wolhuter, 2000:155).   The urbanisation of Black families, as well as more opportunities for tertiary education for Black students since 1994, may account for the two teacher participants who had African languages (SeSotho and IsiZulu) as L1, but they also taught in English in the research context.

As seen in Table 6.2 only 10% of the teacher participants had English as L1. When considering that all participating preschools had English as MoI, it is clear that 90% of the teacher participants were not teaching in their L1. As numerous authors, including Cele (2001:188), Cunningham (2001:212), Barkhuizen (1993:80), and Macdonald (1991:19), have voiced their concerns about the English proficiency of South African teachers, a question arises about the English skills of the teacher participants in this study. The *language preference* as displayed in Table 6.2 may provide an indication of the teacher participants' proficiency in English, as language preference is defined in the literature as *self-assessment of the more proficient language* (Dodson, as cited by Baker, 1993:17). The 10% of teacher participants who had English as L1 preferred English as language for communication. Six percent of the teacher participants indicated Afrikaans as well as English as preferred languages and it is postulated that these teachers were fully multilingual. However, 81% of the teacher participants preferred to communicate in Afrikaans, which may imply that *some* of these teacher participants were not fully multilingual, but had better proficiency in Afrikaans than English. Kaschula and Anthonissen (1995:71) explained that perfect multilingualism is extremely rare and that with multilingual speakers one language is more often

dominant and the other subordinate. The teacher participants did, however, still meet the selection criterion which specified that they had to be *proficient* in English, not necessarily *fully proficient* in English.

The difficulties that *some* of the teacher participants experienced with English were evident from the manner in which they provided explanations in narrative questionnaire answers. Observation and personal interviews with preschool principals in the research context, also revealed that *some* teacher participants were indeed not *fully proficient* in English. This could complicate the teaching situation, as limited English language skills may inhibit conversational exchanges in the classroom (Lemmer, 1995:88; Barkhuizen, 1993:80). As it is commonly held that the quality of exposure to English is important for improving the learners' proficiency, the teachers' command of English also strongly influences the learners' use of ELoLT (Cele, 2001:189). If learners are exposed to a less than ideal model of English, it may influence their acquisition of English negatively (De Klerk, 2002b:21).

Table 6.2 further reflects that the teacher participants' additional languages (L2) covered nearly the whole spectrum of official South African languages, *excluding* IsiNdebele, SeTswana and TshiVenda, and *included* German, Dutch and Sign language. IsiNdebele and TshiVenda are among the three languages with the lowest percentage of speakers in the Gauteng Province (Census in Brief, 1998), which may explain why no teacher participant spoke these two languages.   Another interesting fact that became evident was that some of the Afrikaans-speaking (White) preschool teachers were able to speak African languages as additional languages, enabling them to provide additional support to multilingual preschool learners by code-switching as explained in the literature (Lemmer, 1995:88).

It is evident from Table 6.2 that 88% of the teacher participants received tertiary education and were therefore academically well qualified. However, personal interviews with preschool principals revealed that their training was not necessarily in ECE. Twelve percent of the teacher participants employed as preschool teachers by independent preschools, did not have any teacher

training. It seems reasonable to suggest that inappropriate qualifications may impact significantly on the teacher participants' competence and theoretical knowledge of preschoolers' cognitive, emotional, social, and language development. The value of increased knowledge of the preschool learners' development lies in a better understanding of the needs of preschool learners. The inequities in the qualifications of ECE educators were also pointed out in White Paper 5 (RSA, 2001a:14), and the possible impact thereof on the quality of ECE was recognised in this document. In the South African context, however, there is currently no mechanism that requires independent preschools to employ preschool teachers with appropriate qualifications or registration with the South African Council of Educators (RSA, 2001a:14). Individuals with inappropriate qualifications may therefore teach at independent preschools.

According to Table 6.2 the ages of the teacher participants indicated a broad age spectrum. The importance of the teacher participants' ages pertains to the fact that their age can be directly linked to their teaching experience. The teacher participants younger than 36 years had markedly less teaching experience than the teacher participants older than 36, all of whom had more than 10 years experience. The teaching experience with multilingual learners, however, differed from the teacher participants' general teaching experience and only 9% the of teacher participants had 10 or more years experience with multilingual learners. Although many of the teacher participants (56%) had more than 10 years general teaching experience, 56% of the teacher participants had *less than five years* experience in teaching multilingual classes. These findings indicate that although many preschool teachers in the research context were already at an advanced stage in their careers, they were only starting to gain experience with multilingual learners.   Young (1995:107;111) explained that the reality of multilingualism in South Africa are challenging teachers to adapt to the diversity of communicative needs and language proficiencies of multilingually composed classes. Political and demographic changes in South Africa are actually forcing all teachers to adapt to new situations in which they are faced with the challenge to become

knowledgeable about and learn to relate to learners from a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

The results demonstrated in Table 6.2 emphasise that the selected characteristics of teacher participants did indeed add to the complexity of the teaching situation in the research context.   The analysis of these characteristics provided an indication of some of the personal challenges encountered by preschool teachers.

From the above findings, the following observations are made and a corresponding need and strength are recognised.

OBSERVATIONS
• Most teacher participants were not teaching in their L1, but in their L2.   • Some teacher participants were not trained in ECE.   • Many teacher participants were inexperienced in teaching multilingual classes.

CORRESPONDING NEED AND STRENGTH
• A perceived strength was identified in that many teacher participants had some experience with multilingual learners.   • A need was identified to understand how the teacher participants' personal challenges impacted on their teaching in the research context.

6.2.1.3   Languages of preschool learners

Section One (Variable 27 – 39) of the questionnaire gathered information on the representation of the various mother tongues of preschool learners in the study, as recorded by the 32 teacher participants.   The results are displayed in Table 6.3.

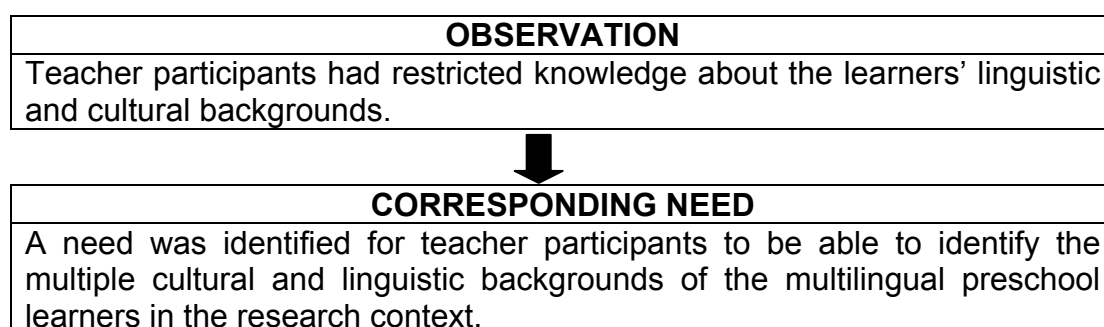| TABLE 6.3: LANGUAGE DATA FOR 760 PRESCHOOLERS AS RECORDED BY 32 TEACHER PARTICIPANTS		
HOME LANGUAGE	FREQUENCY OF LEARNERS	PERCENTAGE OF LEARNERS
Unknown to teacher	281	36,9%
Afrikaans	198	26%
SeSotho	76	10%
English	72	9,5%
SeTswana	50	6,6%
IsiXhosa	20	2,6%
SePedi	19	2,5%
IsiZulu	17	2,2%
Other specified African languages	9	1,2%
TshiVenda	4	0,5%
Other unspecified African languages	3	0,4%
French	3	0,4%
SeSwati	2	0,3%
XiTsonga	2	0,3%
IsiNdebele	2	0,3%
Portuguese	2	0,3%
TOTAL	760	100%

An alarming fact revealed in Table 6.3 is that the L1 of a large number of preschool learners (36,9%) was unknown to the teacher participants. The researcher observed that these preschool learners spoke African languages. The fact that the teacher participants could not recognise the L1 of such a large number of learners illustrated the complex situation in the Pretoria CBD and Sunnyside area. Identifying the learners' L1 was a difficult task for the teacher participants and might pertain to their limited contact with some parents or caregivers, or to their restricted experience with multilingual learners. Not only were multiple languages represented in the classrooms, but because some learners spoke more than one language at home, the principal L1 was often difficult to identify (Sadiki, 2002:10; Kaschula & Anthonissen, 1995:71).

Table 6.3 further indicates that the largest language group known to the teacher participants, was the Afrikaans-speaking preschoolers who constituted 26% of the total number of preschool learners in the research context. The teacher participants' ability to recognise the Afrikaans is not surprising since their own L1 was Afrikaans (84%). Most of the teacher

participants could therefore code-switch to Afrikaans in support of the Afrikaans-speaking preschool learners, whereas the same support could not be provided by all teacher participants to preschool learners speaking African languages.   English, on the other hand, was correctly and easily identified as a learner's L1, as English is the most often used official language in education in South Africa, and most of the Afrikaans teacher participants had English as L2.

The importance of being aware of the cultural background of learners is frequently emphasised in the literature (Tabors, 1997:91; Venter, 1996:86; Makin, Campbell & Diaz, 1995:42), and is recognised as part of cultural competence. The first step towards cultural competence would be to learn the name of the culture as assigned by its members (Battle, 1998:xiii) and then to refer to it in class (Robb, 1995:17). Preschool teachers' sensitivity towards linguistic diversity in multilingual classes will communicate to preschool learners the worth of their L1 (Viljoen & Molefe, 2001:125 Combrink, 1996:9). Such cultural support builds the self-esteem preschool learners need to function successfully in a multilingual, multicultural learning environment (Driscoll & Nagel, 2002:513; NAEYC, 1996:4).

From the above findings, the following observation is made and a corresponding need is identified.

OBSERVATION
Teacher participants had restricted knowledge about the learners' linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

CORRESPONDING NEED
A need was identified for teacher participants to be able to identify the multiple cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the multilingual preschool learners in the research context.

6.2.2 The needs and strengths of preschool teachers in teaching multilingual preschool learners

To describe the needs and strengths of preschool teachers, the teacher participants' *perception of problems, perception of own competencies, training, perception of own needs for support and knowledge, beliefs on L2 acquisition, and strategies to facilitate ELoLT comprehension were determined.*

6.2.2.1 Perception of problems

The teacher participants' concerns regarding the teaching of ELoLT preschool learners were identified from responses obtained from Section Ten of the questionnaire, which was an open question to allow narrative answers. The response rate to this Open question was 84% and regarded as representative of the selected teacher participants' opinions. It is surmised that non-respondents had no comments to add, as Section Ten was the last section of the questionnaire and many problems regarding ELoLT learners had been addressed in previous sections. Alternatively, teacher participants may have experienced response fatigue as the open question was the last question in a lengthy questionnaire. Responses to the Open question ranged from a single problem to multiple listing of problems.   The responses were systematically analysed into main ideas, using indexing in order to identify categories. Units (words, phrases, sentences) relevant to the research aims were identified and responses were categorised and numbered. Three categories emerged from the teacher participants' responses, namely perceptions regarding *parents or primary caregivers,* perceptions of the *difficulties that teachers experience*, and *concerns regarding ELoLT learners*. The results are presented in Tables 6.4 and 6.5. As the Open question allowed teacher participants to comment freely, the number of categories identified in each narrative answer varied. The frequency of teacher participants who expressed the same idea is noted in Tables 6.4 and 6.5, as this provides important information on whether it was an individual opinion or group consensus.

TABLE 6.4:	GROUP'S PERCEPTIONS OF PROBLEMS IN TEACHING ELoLT PRESCHOOL LEARNERS (N=27)	
CATEGORIES	**PROBLEM AREAS**	**EXAMPLES OF TEACHER PARTICIPANTS' STATEMENTS**
Perceptions regarding parents or primary caregivers	Caregivers act irresponsibly in sending learners to English schools although they have no comprehension of English (n=5)	*Parents cannot expect the child to be ready for an English school next year when we only have one year left*
	Caregivers do not speak English at home and are therefore not supporting ELoLT development (n=3)	*Another problem is parents who continue to speak Sotho/Zulu and do not speak English at home*
Difficulties teachers experience	Learners do not stay on the task because they do not understand the instructions and often distract other learners (n=6)	*Distract others during theme discussions as they do not understand me*
	Teachers fail to understand the pronunciation of ELoLT learners (n=5)	*Pronunciation*
	Teachers find they cannot complete their programme for the day as too much extra time is required for explanations (n=5)	*Vocabulary is limited. Much time is wasted. Repetition and demonstration needed*
	Teachers fail to understand the messages ELoLT learners attempt to convey (n=3)	*They speak to me in their mother tongue and do not understand if you do not react*
Concerns regarding ELoLT learners	Learners' comprehension of English is insufficient for learning, most notably vocabulary (n=13)	*No communication possible*
	Learners have limited verbal expression in general terms, as well as in specific aspects, e.g. pronouns (n=13)	*They cannot express themselves easily/adequately and are often misunderstood*
	Learners rely on gestures and mix languages to convey messages as a result of their limited English vocabulary (n=9)	*In the beginning we battle to understand each other. They use lots of gestures*
	Learners' behaviours such as distractibility and inadequate task completion are related to inadequate comprehension (n=6)	*They show boredom during story time as they do not understand*
	Teachers are especially concerned that learners cannot express their emotions (n=2)	*When they are hurt they cannot explain to the teacher what happened*

The three categories that were identified from the Open question involved the major role-players in the acquisition of ELoLT as described in Chapter Three, namely learners, teachers, and parents or primary caregivers. Each of these categories will be discussed forthwith.

The first category identified in Table 6.4 was *perceptions regarding parents or primary caregivers.* As reflected in the literature (Lemmer, 1995:85), the teacher participants recognised the authority of parents or primary caregivers as decision-makers regarding L1 and the MoI for their children. In addition, teacher participants perceived that they need the support of parents or caregivers in the development of ELoLT. Parents or caregivers may not be aware of this perception, because of a misconception about roles or poor communication between the two groups. Since parents or caregivers may require help and guidance from the school to be able to support learners, teachers may have to explain their expectations of language use. Parental or caregiver support cannot be left for chance encounters and occasional conversations, instead their involvement needs to be planned and managed in a professional manner and should be part of the schools' activities (Lemmer & Squelch, 1993:102). Although various barriers to parental or caregiver involvement were identified in Chapter Three (Section 3.5.2), Lemmer and Squelch (1993:96) are of the opinion that through support, parents or caregivers could become the teachers' partners in learners' education.

The second category identified was *difficulties that teachers experience.* Table 6.4 indicates that the teacher participants were concerned about the multilingual learners' communication barriers leading to, among others, problems with the effective management of their classrooms. The teacher participants recognised the negative impact that the learners' poor proficiency in English had on the flow of activities in their classrooms. This finding corresponds with previous research findings (Diedricks, 1997; Barkhuizen, 1993) that poor ELoLT proficiency hindered classroom activities, which led to teachers feeling frustrated because they were unable to cope with these situations. Currently teachers are challenged to include a diverse population of learners in their classrooms while continuing to fulfil their traditional role of educators – to provide each learner with a responsive learning environment and maintain educational standards (Harris, 2003a:80). Classroom management is a skill valued in teachers (Elksnin & Capilouto, 1994:259), and one of the primary management functions in the multicultural class is to ensure an atmosphere that promotes learning (Le Roux, 1997:94).

The third category identified was *concerns regarding ELoLT learners.* Table 6.4 shows that teacher participants were concerned about factors which may impact on the overall development of multilingual learners, such as their receptive and expressive abilities in English and their emotional well-being. From these results it appears that language problems and social behaviour are intertwined in complex ways, and that behavioural problems may be indicative of maladjustment to the learning environment. The specific needs and strengths of preschool learners as perceived by teacher participants, were included as closed-ended questions in the questionnaire. These will be discussed in greater detail in Section 6.2.3 to provide a more in depth-view of the teacher participants' perceptions of multilingual preschool learners and their ELoLT proficiency.

Table 6.4 indicated group consensus on teacher participants' perceived problems, but individual teacher participants provided responses that could be categorised into emotional difficulties that learners experience and will therefore be presented separately. Table 6.5 displays the responses of individual teacher participants to Section Ten: Open question of the questionnaire. Even though these problems were mentioned only by individual teacher participants, the information is still important to the researcher as it may reflect important needs within the research context.

TABLE 6.5:   INDICIDUAL PERCEPTIONS OF EMOTIONAL DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED BY ELoLT PRESCHOOL LEARNERS
Learners do not develop self-confidence if they are not understood (n=1)
Black learners who speak African languages reject other Black learners who speak only English (n=1)
Learners are apt to withdraw if they do not understand (n=1)
Discipline becomes a problem when learners do not understand verbal instructions (n=1)
Socialisation is inadequate if learners cannot understand each other (n=1)
Cultural diversity leads to conflict among learners (n=1)
Teachers observe frustration and aggression when learners are not understood (n=1)

Table 6.5 reveals that individual teacher participants perceived the ELoLT learners' social adaptation to the preschool classroom to be a problem. Preschool teachers are used to social interaction being facilitated by the preschool environment where learners socialise and interact (Tiegerman-Farber, 1995:206). It is documented (Beilinson & Olswang, 2003:154) that preschool learners with limited language skills may exhibit deficits in the area of social communication, including initiating play and entering peer groups, which further limit opportunities for social interaction. The literature suggests that teachers should provide the linguistic support that could initiate interaction to integrate learners into the peer group (Beilinson & Olswang, 2003:154;155). Learners may benefit from adults structuring activities to guide learners through play and games in such a way that they can be fully included in playground activities with peers (Fujiki, Brinton, Isaacson & Summers, 2001:109). The observation of a teacher participant of categorisation and the formation of groups in which the learners speak the same L1 has also been described in the literature. De Klerk (2002b:21), and August and Hakuta (1998:36) found that learners from similar cultural backgrounds have a tendency to group together and revert to their L1. In the research context, a teacher participant perceived that such cultural grouping could lead to conflict among learners, as indicated in Table 6.5. This perception of one of the teacher participants needs to be viewed in the light of the fact that many of the teacher participants were not always aware of the learners' L1, as revealed in Table 6.3.

Table 6.5 further reflects a perception of one of the teacher participants that Black learners with English as L1 might be rejected by Black learners speaking African languages. It appears that Black learners in this teacher participant's perception may have accepted that White learners do not speak African languages, but find it unacceptable in Black peers. The negative consequences of English replacing the traditional L1 may manifest in the preschool learners as a loss of confidence, social isolation, and the potential loss of identity and the feeling of belonging to a community, as discussed by Makin et al., (1995:51).

From the above findings, the following conclusion is reached and corresponding needs as well as strengths are identified.

CONCLUSION
Teacher participants may feel ill-prepared to handle the dynamics that are associated with multilingual classrooms and are concerned about the impact on the learners' emotional, social and intellectual development.

CORRESPONDING NEEDS AND STRENGTHS
Perceived needs were identified to: • Establish partnerships with the parents or caregivers • Design a multilingual classroom environment that support the needs of the multilingual preschool learners in the research context • Develop insight into the relationship between language and social behaviour • Address the social issues that influence the learners' well-being. Perceived strengths were identified: • Teacher participants seemed to have a clear and sophisticated understanding of the multilingual learners' language needs. • Teacher participants appreciated the importance of social-emotional development to academic learning.

6.2.2.2 Perception of own competencies

Section Two (Variable 64) of the questionnaire ascertained whether teacher participants felt competent in teaching preschool learners acquiring ELoLT . The results are displayed in Table 6.6.   The two teacher participants who did not provide their years of teaching experience (as shown in Table 6.2) were not included in Table 6.6 as cross-tabulation was done. The results were still considered to be representative of the teacher participants' perceptions as the response rate to this question was high at 93.75%.

TABLE 6.6: TEACHER PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THEIR OWN COMPETENCE (N=30)				
Perception of competence in teaching multilingual learners	Experienced teachers (5+ years general experience)	Inexperienced teachers (1 – 5 years general experience)	Frequency of teacher participants	Percentage of teacher participants
In all circumstances	6	2	8	27%
In most circumstances	7	2	9	30%
In some circumstances	7	6	13	43%
Total	20	10	30	100%

Table 6.6 indicates that 57% of teacher participants (27% in *all* circumstances and 30% in *most* circumstances) were confident of their own competencies to teach multilingual learners, whereas 43% did not have total confidence in their own competencies to teach multilingual preschool learners. Similar findings in a study by Diedricks (1997:46) indicated that feelings of incompetence and insecurity in multilingual classes often created stress, both on emotional and physical levels.

It is interesting to note that findings related to general experience versus confidence revealed that the length of teaching experience did not always affect confidence positively. Experienced *and* inexperienced teacher participants experienced confidence regularly, whereas teacher participants from *both groups* perceived incompetence at times. On account of this analysis, the question arises whether the teacher participants' specific teaching experience with multilingual learners improved their confidence. In Figure 6.2, the relation between general teaching experience and multilingual experience of the 17 confident teacher participants (in *all* and *most* circumstances) is illustrated.

FIGURE 6.2: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENERAL TEACHING EXPERIENCE AND MULTILINGUAL EXPERIENCE OF CONFIDENT TEACHER PARTICIPANTS (N=17)

When the results in Figure 6.2 are considered and compared with those in Table 6.2, it is clear that *all* the teacher participants who had 10 years or more experience in multilingualism were confident in teaching multilingual learners. Sixty-six percent of the teacher participants with six to seven years experience were confident, while less than 50% of the teacher participants with less than six years experience were confident. These results give a clear indication that specific experience with multilingualism affected the teacher participants experience of confidence positively.

As mentioned earlier and shown in Table 6.6, a large percentage (57%) of teacher participants perceived themselves to be relatively confident (in all and most circumstances) in teaching multilingual learners, despite English proficiency and personal challenges which may be experienced as indicated previously. These teacher participants, confident of their own competence, may act as resources to aid colleagues in gaining mastery or control over the teaching situation.   By working together teachers themselves could become valuable resources and may help to build capabilities through productive staff

223

development. Such collaboration or working together to develop strategies and programmes is advocated in White Paper 5 (RSA, 2001a:18) and White Paper 6 (RSA, 2001b:47). Swart and Pettipher (2001:41) referred to this process where educators work together to develop new skills as *peer coaching*.

If collaboration, as implied above and recommended in the literature (Nieman, 1994:16; Barkhuizen, 1993:273), can build confidence, it becomes necessary to explore whether collaboration in the research context also improved confidence.   In Section One (Variable 59-63) of the questionnaire teacher participants were requested to indicate in which manner they collaborated with other teachers and speech-language therapists. Cross-tabulation was done with results obtained in Section Two (Variable 64) which ascertained the teacher participants' confidence in all, some, and most circumstances. The results are presented in Table 6.7.   It was established in the pretest that preschool teachers without formal qualifications were also referred to as caregivers. The teachers/caregivers referred to in Section One (Variable 59 – 60) are therefore indicative of teachers as per definition in Section 1.7.

TABLE 6.7: TEACHER PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTION OF COMPETENCE IN RELATION TO COLLABORATION (N=30)						
Perception of own competence in teaching multilingual learners	Collaborate only with other teachers	Collaborate only with speech-language therapists	Collaborate with both teachers and speech-language therapists	No collaboration	Frequency of participants	Percentage of participants
In all circumstances	1	0	6	1	8	27%
In most circumstances	1	1	3	4	9	30%
In some circumstances	1	2	2	8	13	43%
Total	3	3	11	13	30	100%

An analysis of Table 6.7 reveals that most of the teacher participants who perceived confidence in *all* circumstances were those who collaborated with other teachers, as well as speech-language therapists, whereas most of the

teacher participants who perceived only confidence in *some* circumstances did not collaborate with others at all. The fact that collaboration improves teachers' perception of their competence and contributes to the expansion of knowledge of team members has been documented in the literature (Engelbrecht, 2004:254; Du Plessis, 1998b:63). However, these results may also indicate that teacher participants who have developed the greatest confidence and, therefore, are least defensive, may also be those who are most open to and most likely to seek out the experience of other professionals.

Section One (Variable 59 – 63) of the questionnaire also explored the manner in which the teacher participants collaborated with other teachers and speech-language therapists. The results are presented in Table 6.8. As the data were collected by means of an open-ended question, teacher participants could provide more than one response.

Table 6.8 reveals that some teacher participants collaborated with colleagues in what appears to be the sharing of ideas and resources while planning and working together. Other teacher participants informally discussed problems with colleagues, as they have in their profession constant contact during the day. Both these groups of teacher participants were therefore not working in isolation, but collaborating in different ways with teaching colleagues.

TABLE 6.8: TEACHER PARTICIPANTS' MANNER OF COLLABORATION IN THE RESEARCH CONTEXT (N=32)	
COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS	**MANNER OF COLLABORATION**
Teachers	Informal discussions with colleagues (n=7)
	Formal lesson planning with colleagues (n=7)
Speech-language therapists	Refer individual learners to speech-language therapists (n=8)
	Refer individual learners to speech-language therapists. Speech-language therapists present information sessions during staff meetings (n=5)
	Refer individual learners to speech-language therapists. Speech-language therapists periodically present lessons to classes (n=5)
General assistants	Consistently translate learners' utterances during the day (n=5)

Results concerning collaboration with speech-language therapists indicate some contact and collaboration, although possibly not on a regular basis. Individual intervention, utilising the traditional *pull-out* service delivery, appears to be the model of choice. Local research by Venter (1998:114) showed that 73% of speech-language therapists provided individual intervention without any form of collaboration with teachers in the acquisition of ELoLT. In both studies no clear evidence could therefore be found of collaborative assessment, planning, or intervention.

From the above findings, the following conclusion is drawn and corresponding needs and strengths are identified.

CONCLUSION
Experienced teacher participants perceived more confidence which may influence them positively to collaborate with others.

CORRESPONDING NEEDS AND STRENGTHS
• The perceived confidence of many teacher participants is a prominent strength and resource.
• A strength was identified in that the majority of teacher participants recognised the value of collaboration.
• The recognition and admittance of not always being confident may be regarded as both a need and a strength since such recognition often motivates change.
• A perceived need was identified in some teacher participants with less multilingual experience to receive appropriate training.
• A perceived need was identified to form collaborative partnerships with other professionals.

6.2.2.3 Teacher participants' training

Section Two (Variable 46-58) of the questionnaire addressed the issue of the teacher participants' training to teach ELoLT learners. The results are presented in Table 6.9. *Courses* and *workshops* were combined as they are indicative of training over a shorter period of time than *formal training.*
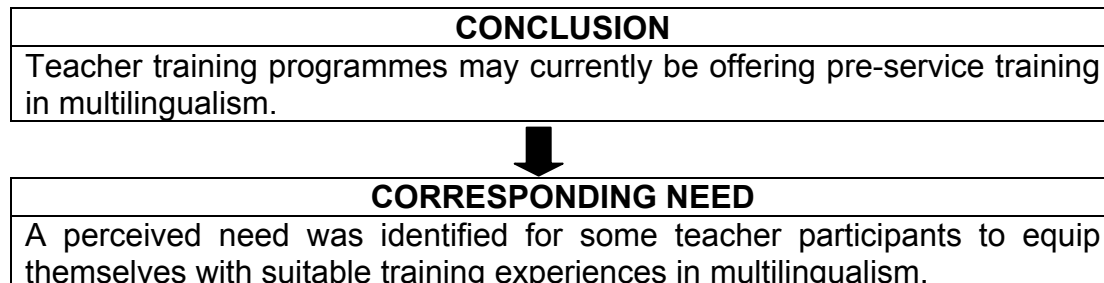
SPECIFIC TRAINING REGARDING MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS AND MULTILINGUALISM	AGE OF TEACHERS						
	18-25 YEARS	26-35 YEARS	36-45 YEARS	46-55 YEARS	55+ YEARS	Frequency	Percentage
Formal training	2	0	0	0	0	2	7%
Courses and workshops	2	0	3	0	0	5	17%
Self-study	0	0	0	1	0	1	3%
No training	2	6	6	4	4	22	73%
TOTAAL	6	6	9	5	4	30	100%

TABLE 6.9: TRAINING OF TEACHER PARTICIPANTS IN MULTILINGUALISM (N=30)

Table 6.9 indicates that the majority of teacher participants (73%), most of them older than 26 years, did not receive pre-service training in multilingualism. Literature (Lemmer, 1995:4) substantiates this and revealed that teachers acquired their training and experience in mono-culture institutions during the apartheid period and were not trained to teach linguistically diverse learners.   It is alarming to note that only a small number of these teacher participants, with no baseline multicultural training, have attended workshops and courses. Although not all the teacher participants felt confident to deal with aspects of multicultural education, as discussed previously, Table 6.9 shows that not many have equipped themselves with the suitable training experiences. Even self-study (interpreted as the reading of academic journals by the only responding teacher participant), was not favoured by them. Such low incidents of reading (3%) on multilingualism may be further explained by the research findings of Elksnin and Capilouto (1994:264) that reading journals to obtain information was a least preferred activity. This may also point to a passive approach to learning, where teacher participants expect others to tell them what they need to know.

According to the results, teacher participants younger than 25 years completed modules on multilingualism as part of their teacher training, whereas older teacher participants did not receive any training on multilingualism. The fact that the younger teacher participants received pre-

service training may indicate that teacher training in South Africa is currently undergoing transformation. However, four teacher participants in the younger age group did not receive pre-service training, which imply that current teacher training practices vary. The two teacher participants with formal training on multilingualism were the two participants who perceived themselves to be confident in *all* circumstances, as shown in Figure 6.2. Their training may have contributed to knowledge and insight regarding the issues surrounding multilingualism and equipped them with skills that empowered them in the teaching context. However, multicultural education is currently offered to teacher trainees by many institutions as only a single module within other educational courses, which may not be sufficient and continue to leave some teachers not fully trained and prepared to teach in multicultural contexts (Gumbo, 2001:240).

From the above findings, the following conclusion is reached and a corresponding need is identified.

CONCLUSION
Teacher training programmes may currently be offering pre-service training in multilingualism.

CORRESPONDING NEED
A perceived need was identified for some teacher participants to equip themselves with suitable training experiences in multilingualism.

6.2.2.4   Perception of support needs

To establish the support required, the teacher participants' perception of their own support needs was explored.

● **The manner of support**

The first part of Section Nine (Variable 172-177) of the questionnaire determined the manner of support teacher participants perceived to be important. Table 6.10 provides a summary of their responses.

TABLE 6.10: VARIABLES RELATING TO PERCEIVED SUPPORT NEEDS BY TEACHER PARTICIPANTS (N=32)			
Variable	**Frequency**		
	yes	**no**	**No response**
Advice on how to handle the multilingual learner	25	5	2
Workshops on multilingualism	28	2	2
Formal training on multilingualism	18	12	2
Assistance by speech-language therapists in planning language lessons	24	6	2
Material to use in language lessons	26	4	2
Professionals to help evaluate the language needs of multilingual learners	28	2	2

From Table 6.7 it is clear that the general trend of the teacher participants' responses was extremely positive towards support regarding multilingual learners in their classrooms. The teacher participants were also in agreement regarding their perception of the manner in which they required support. It is of interest to note that the teacher participants were more in favour of workshops (28), as opposed to formal training (18), which may give an indication of the amount of time and money the teacher participants were prepared to spend on training, as well as their preference for the interactive nature of instruction often prevailing at workshops.   Elksnin and Capilouto (1994:264) substantiate these findings that teachers preferred to obtain information by attending in-service training rather than formal courses. These results may assist school principals when planning staff development and training activities, as part of the whole school developmental programmes.

Upon further analysis of Table 6.10, it becomes clear that teacher participants' responses to three variables pointed to the sharing of responsibilities with other knowledgeable professionals. This sharing includes two components of teamwork, namely *consultation (advice* on how to handle the multilingual learner), and *collaboration (assistance* by speech-language therapists in planning language lessons and *to help* evaluate the language needs of multilingual learners).   These results confirm research results by Brits (1996:57) which indicated that teachers requested support in language acquisition planning in multilingual learners, and findings by Diedricks

(1997:vi) and Nieman (1994:16), in which teachers expressed the need for support and advice on the accommodation of multilingual learners in their classrooms.   However, it appears that the manner of support preferred by teacher participants to some extent indicates inactivity on their side, as also seen in Table 6.9 and Table 6.10. This may imply that educational support professionals will have to take the lead to initiate consultation and collaboration.

It is of interest to note that some of the teacher participants who perceived themselves to be competent in *all* circumstances (as displayed in Table 6.6) indicated that they did not require consultation and collaboration as discussed above, but were only interested in workshops and formal training.   It is postulated that their perceived confidence either included confidence about their own knowledge, or, alternatively, that they experienced domain conflicts when other professionals attempted to cross disciplinary borders, making them hesitant to collaborate.

● **The need for knowledge**

The second part of Section Nine (Variable 178-187) of the questionnaire presented the teacher participants with different topics to determine their topic preferences for workshops. The workshop topics presented in Section Nine were recommended in the literature for pre-service and in-service training of preschool teachers (NAEYC, 1996:10). The results are presented in Table 6.11.

TABLE 6.11: TOPIC PREFERENCES FOR WORKSHOPS (N=32)		
TOPICS	FREQUENCY OF TEACHER PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE OF TEACHER PARTICIPANTS
Habits and customs of different cultures	25	78%
Acquiring basic vocabulary in new languages	25	78%
Language and culture	24	75%
Second-language learning	24	75%
Language acquisition	19	59%
Community involvement	18	56%
Cross-cultural communication	18	56%
Sociolinguistics	14	44%
Use of translators / interpreters	14	44%
Working with diverse families	10	31%

Table 6.11 reveals that the four most frequently preferred topics for workshops were *acquiring basic vocabulary in new languages* (78%), *habits and customs of different cultures* (78%), *language and culture* (75%), *and second-language learning* (75%). All these topics preferred by the majority of teacher participants for workshops include cultural issues. The acknowledgement of the need to acquire cultural sensitivity and knowledge concurs with the findings displayed in Table 6.3, which identified a weakness in the ability to recognise African languages. The need for cross-cultural knowledge is well documented and often referred to in the literature (Gumbo, 2001:233-236; Viljoen & Molefe, 2001:125; Lemmer & Squelch, 1993:78; Macdonald, 1993:26), and although no teacher is expected to become knowledgeable about all cultures, a show of interest in learners' cultures will communicate feelings of value to learners.

Most of the teacher participants (78%) were willing to attend workshops on *habits and customs of different cultures*, whereas only 31% were interested in the topic of *working with diverse families*. Knowledge of the different cultures will be of great benefit to teacher participants, but they also need to learn about learners' families and communities to create an environment where respect for one another can grow and flourish. It is emphasised in the literature (NAEYC, 1996:10) that misunderstandings may occur if preschool teachers are unsure of how to relate to and work with parents or caregivers with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Misunderstandings may be one of the reasons why teacher participants perceived a lack of support from

parents or caregivers, as shown in Table 6.4. Literature (Cheng, 1996:350) has indicated that different discourse patterns from both groups could create uncertainty about expectations.

An interesting finding reflected in Table 6.11 is that only 44% of teacher participants showed interest in *working with translators/interpreters* as workshop topic. Similar results by Roseberry-McKibbin and Eicholtz (1994:159) indicated that less than a third of the participants in their study were interested in the use of translators/interpreters.   As the teacher participants themselves could not code-switch to African languages, as indicated in Table 6.2, it appears that they were not aware of the value of this strategy and, therefore, less interested to gain information on the subject. Translators/interpreters were already available at the preschools in the research context in the persons of general assistants and multilingual learners themselves. Table 6.3 indicated that 9.5% of the learners in the research setting had English as L1 and could therefore be used as peer-tutors. If managed correctly, they could become resources in the multilingual classrooms. Peer-tutoring, where learners are utilised as translators/interpreters to convey the teachers' instructions or summaries of lessons to fellow learners in a structured manner, is a creative way to experiment with language in multilingual classrooms (Lemmer & Squelch, 1993:83), and involves no cost to preschool teachers. In addition, peer-tutoring may be utilised optimally in view of the collective consciousness of people from African cultures and their feeling of responsibility towards each other (Smalle-Moodie, 1997:70).

The final variables (Variable 188-192) of Section Nine of the questionnaire was an open question to determine which other topics participants would like to be included in workshops. Only one teacher participant listed an additional topic, namely *how to teach learners specific language structures, e.g. pronouns*. The fact that teacher participants did not include more topics may imply that all their preferred topics were listed in the questionnaire.

From the above findings, the following conclusion is reached and corresponding needs as well as a strength are identified.

CONCLUSION
Teacher participants were willing to attend workshops with cross-cultural topics, and to collaborate with other professionals, including speech-language therapists.

CORRESPONDING NEEDS AND STRENGTH
• A perceived need was identified for the support of teacher participants through workshops, as well as consultation and collaboration with other professionals.   • The perceived need for workshops on cultural issues should be viewed as both a strength and a need, as this perception may be a motivation for change.

6.2.2.5 Beliefs regarding L2 acquisition

Section Eight (Variable 160-169) of the questionnaire explored the teacher participants' beliefs on general issues of L2 acquisition. The limitations of the questions in this section have been discussed in Section 5.6.1.4 and it is acknowledged that the questions may be regarded as leading questions. Owing to this limitation in the questionnaire, no conclusion will be drawn or any needs or strengths be identified from the results that are presented. The one teacher participant who did not provide information on teaching experience with multilingual learners was not included in the results, as cross-tabulation was done. The results are presented in Table 6.12.

Prominent findings from Table 6.12 are that the majority of teacher participants agreed with the body of existing knowledge on L2 acquisition, as stated in the questionnaire. The teacher participants with six to ten years multilingual experience answered *unsure* less often than the other two groups, thus indicating strong agreement or disagreement with the questions. The teacher participants with one to five years experience were more *unsure* than the other two groups about the answers.

TABLE 6.12: TEACHER PARTICIPANTS' BELIEFS ON L2 ACQUISITION (N=31)										
CATEGORIES	TEACHING EXPERIENCE WITH MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS									
	10+ YEARS (N=2)			6-10 YEARS (N=8)			1 - 5 YEARS (N=21)			NO RESPONSE
	AGREE	DISAGREE	UNSURE	AGREE	DISAGREE	UNSURE	AGREE	DISAGREE	UNSURE	
Sequential acquisition preferable	1		1	8			17	4		
L2 acquisition follows same steps as L1		1	1	4	4		9	6	6	
Change L1 to English	1		1	1	7		1	14	5	1
First comprehension, then use	2			6	1	1	15	1	4	1
Personality affects L2 acquisition	1		1	7		1	17	2	2	
Know learners' ability in L1	1		1	6	2		17	1	3	
L2 has a negative impact on L1		1	1		6	1	2	19		1
Multilingualism is an asset	1		1	7		1	20		1	
Learners benefit from code-switching	1		1	6	2		14	1	6	
Culturally appropriate curriculum needed		1	1	3	1	4	15	1	5	

It is interesting to note that 9 teacher participants (agree 3 + unsure 6) did not believe that the learners' L1 had to be maintained. Teachers are important decision-makers and often play the role of adviser to parents or caregivers when consulted during decision-making. The consequences of incorrect perceptions and advice, such as changing the family's L1 to English, may have a negative impact on the learners' future academic achievements and may restrict spontaneous interactions at home. Such a choice about language usage may, therefore, have repercussions beyond the classroom and the immediate community (Andreoni, 1998:9).

Table 6.12 further indicates that teacher participants in all three groups may have incorrect beliefs regarding L2 acquisition. The first prominent category of concern is *steps of L2 acquisition*. A number of teacher participants (11) did not agree that L1 and L2 are acquired in similar ways. However, Owens (2001:430) pointed out that the rate and manner of L1 and L2 acquisition appear to be essentially the same. These teacher participants either did not have the correct beliefs on L2 development, or were not aware of the

individual variability in L2 acquisition, influenced by both the characteristics of learners and the socio-cultural environment in which they are exposed to a L2 (Hoff, 2004:350). Nieman (1995:297) pointed out that preschool teachers, in general, may have a lack of knowledge on L2 acquisition as a result of their specific training, and highlighted that preschool teachers are not generally trained in educational strategies to enhance and support L2 acquisition. Nieman (1995:297) further explains that preschool teachers are not language teachers and their language goal in class is not to teach learners L2, but to communicate with them and develop social interaction.

The second category of concern is *L2 has a negative impact on L1.* A small number of the teacher participants (4) may, unfortunately, have an incorrect perception of the importance of L1 in cognitive development and the acquisition of L2. It appears as if a lack of experience with multilingual learners may have influenced the teacher participants' answers, as three of them were in the group with the least experience, while the remaining teacher participant was in the group with advanced experience. It is generally accepted that proficiency in L1 will be transferred to L2 because of a common underlying proficiency (CUP). Garcia and Stein (1997:147) viewed L1 as a resource and encouraged preschool teachers to move away from the needs assessment and L1-as-problem approach, to an asset inventory and L1-as-resource approach. In such an approach L1 development will be encouraged while fostering the acquisition of L2. It is recognised that learners will acquire the use of L2 even when their L1 is used and respected.

The third prominent category of concern identified from Table 6.12, is the use of a *culturally appropriate curriculum*. Thirteen teacher participants did not agree with or were unsure about this opinion stated in the questionnaire. Their perceptions may reflect personal attributes preventing them from making effective use of multicultural approaches. However, what may appear to be a lack of cultural sensitivity could be a need for multicultural knowledge, as stated earlier and implied in Table 6.11. Lemmer and Squelch (1993:81) stated unequivocally that the curriculum and teaching material have to be assessed to determine whether they meet the criteria for multicultural

education. One more challenge to multicultural education in post-apartheid South Africa, is, therefore, to strive towards a balance between the school and home cultures. Cultivating and developing a multicultural approach to teaching require a change of attitude and a commitment from teachers to adapt curriculum content to be culturally relevant and appropriate (Lemmer & Squelch, 1993:78).

6.2.2.6   Strategies to facilitate ELoLT comprehension

In Section Seven (Variable 144-159) of the questionnaire, the teacher participants were requested to indicate which strategies they employed to facilitate comprehension and participation for multilingual preschool learners. An open question was included in this section of the questionnaire to allow teacher participants to include techniques not listed, thereby preventing bias from limited possibilities. The results are presented in Table 6.13. The one teacher participant who did not provide information on multilingual teaching experience was not included in Table 6.13, as cross-tabulation was done.

Table 6.13 indicates that, apart from planning their lessons, teacher participants had to plan techniques to convey meaning. By employing their creative skills, multilingual learners were provided with opportunities to learn and participate in programme activities. Most of the strategies were verbal, but non-verbal strategies were also employed. Communication was supported with non-verbal reinforcements, such as gestures and bodily movements as cues to facilitate comprehension. Preschool classrooms usually provide multiple opportunities for such non-verbal support. This trend was also noted by Diedricks (1997:46) who observed how South African teachers displayed creative problem-solving skills and learned to relate to learners with linguistically and culturally different backgrounds.

According to Table 6.13, the majority of teacher participants used the verbal strategies as listed in the questionnaire *often*. It is postulated that these strategies delivered results, or, alternatively, the teacher participants were comfortable with these strategies and they were therefore utilised continually.

TABLE 6.13: STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY TEACHER PARTICIPANTS IN RELATION TO THEIR TEACHING EXPERIENCE WITH MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS (N=31)							

STRATEGIES	TEACHING EXPERIENCE WITH MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS						
	1-5 YEARS (N=21)			6-10 YEARS (N=8)			10+ YEARS (N=2)	
	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER	OFTEN	SELDOM
Simplify/rephrase	19	2	0	7	1	0	2	0
Repeat instructions	21	0	0	7	1	0	2	0
Accentuate keywords	21	0	0	7	1	0	2	0
Repeat new vocabulary	20	1	0	7	1	0	2	0
Additional visuals	20	1	0	6	2	0	2	0
Speak slower	16	4	1	7	0	1	2	0
Repeat learners' utterances	6	7	8	5	1	2	1	0
Expand learners' utterances	8	6	7	7	1	0	1	0
Use gestures	14	4	3	7	0	1	2	0
Mime	15	5	1	7	0	1	2	0
Involve parents/ caregivers	4	6	11	4	3	1	1	1
Adapt lesson plan	3	3	15	7	0	1	1	1
*Intentional misrepresentation	0			1			0	
*Stories, songs, rhymes	21			7			2	
*Translate to learners' L1	2			0			0	
*Dramatising	0			0			2	
*Learners as translators	0			2			0	
*Assistants as translators	2			2			1	
*Individual sessions	2			0			0	

* Responses to open question

An interesting trend revealed in Table 6.13 is that overall only a small number of the teacher participants *repeated* and *expanded* the learners' utterances. Whereas the majority of teacher participants with more than six years multilingual experience used these two verbal strategies *often*, the teacher participants with less than six years experience did not employ these strategies as a rule. The teacher participants with less multilingual experience may therefore be unaware of the value of such strategies.   This finding questions their effective use of verbal strategies, as there is strong indication in the literature   (Owens, 2001:233; NAEYC, 1996:11; Tiegerman-Farber,
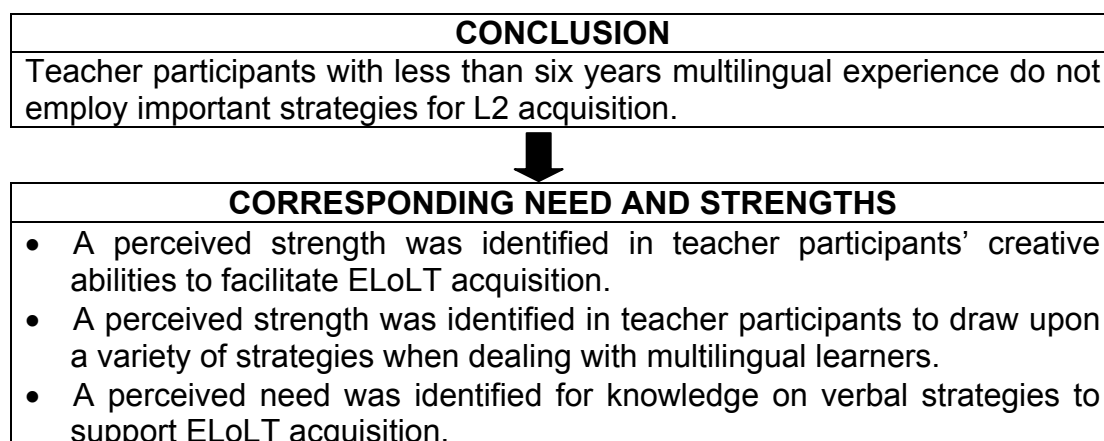
1995:194; Dunn, 1993:49; Manolson, 1992: 40; 48; 61) that *imitation*, *repetition*, and *expansion* of words and phrases are central to the language learning process and facilitate general language growth (Wilcox & Shannon, 1996:228).   Adult responses, therefore, facilitate linguistic development by maintaining or adding to the semantic content of what the learner says, while also highlighting structural aspects of language.

Upon further analysis of the results the same pattern emerged with the strategy *adapt lesson plan*. The majority of teacher participants (15) with less than six years multilingual experience *never* adapted lesson plans, as apposed to the teacher participants with more multilingual experience who *often* adapted lesson plans.   It appears that the latter group of teacher participants may be more flexible in their approach, viewing learner-directed activities as educational opportunities, even in an organised framework. Adaptability is also advocated by Manolson (1992:3) who pointed out that adults need to be responsive partners and allow learners to lead in language acquisition activities.

Table 6.13 also reveals that only 9 of the teacher participants involved parents or caregivers on a frequent basis (often).   Once again, this strategy was *seldom* or *never* employed by the majority of teacher participants (17) with less than six years multilingual experience.   As parental or caregiver involvement and alliance are regarded as critical to the successful generalisation of L2 skills (Tiegerman-Farber, 1995:198), a question arises about possible barriers to parental or caregiver participation in the research context. The results in Table 6.4 indicated that teacher participants perceived a lack of parental or caregiver support, which may indicate that teacher participants need to adjust their perceptions of the role of parents or caregivers and develop partnerships in L2 acquisition. Relationships between teacher participants and parents or caregivers need to be established in order to share knowledge and information regarding the multilingual preschool learners.

Table 6.13 indicates that 9 teacher participants employed some form of code-switching (2 translate to learners' L1 themselves + 2 use peer-tutors + 5 use assistants as translators). Only a small number of the teacher participants were therefore using code-switching as a resource. The use of code-switching and peer-tutoring has been prominently reported in this study and in the literature and holds great potential as technique and strategy to facilitate comprehension in ELoLT learners (Viljoen & Molefe, 2001:124; Kamwangamalu & Virasamy, 1999:64; Lemmer & Squelch, 1993:83). Adendorff (1993, as cited by Peirce and Ridge, 1997:174) argued that teachers need to be guided to explore and appreciate the functions of this strategy, drawing on sources already available to them.

From the above findings, the following conclusion is drawn and a corresponding need and strengths are identified.

CONCLUSION
Teacher participants with less than six years multilingual experience do not employ important strategies for L2 acquisition.

CORRESPONDING NEED AND STRENGTHS
• A perceived strength was identified in teacher participants' creative abilities to facilitate ELoLT acquisition.
• A perceived strength was identified in teacher participants to draw upon a variety of strategies when dealing with multilingual learners.
• A perceived need was identified for knowledge on verbal strategies to support ELoLT acquisition.

6.2.3 Summary of perceived needs and strengths of teacher participants

The perceived needs and strengths of teacher participants identified during Phase One of the research are summarised in Table 6.14.

TABLE 6.14: PERCEIVED NEEDS AND STRENGTHS OF TEACHER PARTICIPANTS IN SUPPORT OF ELoLT LEARNERS IDENTIFIED IN PHASE ONE		
PERCEIVED NEEDS	**PERCEIVED NEEDS AND STRENGTHS**	**PERCEIVED STRENGTHS**
• Accommodate different cultures and languages • To understand the impact of personal challenges • Identification of multiple cultural and linguistic backgrounds • Parent/caregiver partnerships • Design an appropriate classroom environment • Develop insight into relationship between language and behaviour • Address learners' social issues • Collaborative partnerships • Training if less experienced in multilingual teaching • Pre-service and in-service training • Workshops, consultation, collaboration • Knowledge of verbal strategies	• Perceived need to build competence • Perceived need for cultural knowledge	• Experience with multilingualism • Understand language needs • Understand the importance of social-emotional development • Recognise the value of collaboration • Confident teachers • Innovative use of techniques and development of own strategies • Variety of strategies

Preschool teachers, who are used to create exciting and enriching environments for young learners, may feel challenged when attempting to meet the needs of multilingual learners. From Table 6.14 the greatest challenges appear to be *first,* the need for knowledge, *and second*, the need for support. As each of these challenges requires sensitive, specific responses, there are no quick and easy solutions for many of these complex challenges. However, challenges provide opportunities, one of which is to form partnerships in problem solving. Educational support professionals would have to be sensitive to the unique needs of preschool teachers and strive to provide teachers with the information and support they need and desire.

6.2.4   The needs and strengths of multilingual preschool learners

To gain insight into the needs and strengths of multilingual preschool learners as understood by preschool teachers, information was gathered on the teacher participants' perceptions of *coping strategies to facilitate comprehension, socio-emotional behaviour, receptive ELoLT proficiency, expressive ELoLT proficiency, and pragmatic skills* in multilingual preschool learners.

6.2.4.1 Multilingual preschool learners' coping strategies to facilitate comprehension

The variables (Variable 65 – 80) in Section Three of the questionnaire were grouped for analyses into three categories according to the aim of the section. Variable 65, 66, 78 provided data on coping strategies, Variable 75 – 77, 80 provided data on socio-emotional behaviour, and Variable 67 – 74, 79, provided data on general comprehension of ELoLT. The category on socio-emotional behaviour will be discussed in Section 6.2.4.2, and the category on general comprehension of ELoLT under Section 6.2.4.3. The category on coping strategies will be discussed forthwith.

In Section Three (Variable 65, 66, 78) of the questionnaire information was acquired on the teacher participants' perception of coping strategies employed by multilingual learners to facilitate comprehension. The results are shown in Table 6.15.

TABLE 6.15: TEACHER PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTION OF MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS' COPING STRATEGIES (N=32)						
STRATEGIES	**OFTEN MANIFESTED**		**SELDOM MANIFESTED**		**NOT MANIFESTED**	
	Frequency of teacher participants	Percentage of teacher participants	Frequency of teacher participants	Percentage of teacher participants	Frequency of teacher participants	Percentage of teacher participants
Switching from one language to another (code-switching)	27	84%	4	13%	1	3%
Substituting English words with words from first language (code-mixing)	19	66%	7	24%	3	10%
Using gestures to supplement speech	22	73%	7	23%	1	4%

According to Table 6.15, the majority of teacher participants indicated that code-switching and code-mixing were often used as coping strategies by multilingual learners. Therefore, in any of the preschools in the research context, 50% or more of the learners in any class found it difficult to express themselves in ELoLT and reverted to their L1 to facilitate comprehension. Zulu (1996:108) observed that code-switching often occurred in South African classrooms where many learners are from multilingual backgrounds. It appeared that learners drew on their language resources by code-switching, and used it as a communicative strategy (SASHLA, 2003:2). Makin, Campbell and Diaz (1995:94) argued that multilingual learners may be using their L1 to assist understanding and communicating in the context within which the language is used.

The current results concur with those displayed in Table 6.4, which indicated that teacher participants perceived the learners' limited English vocabulary as the reason for mixing languages to convey messages. Whereas teacher participants perceived code-switching as a concern, the literature increasingly reflects it as normal and widely used in the discourse of multilinguals. The code-switching by multilingual learners was therefore not a confusion of languages, but typical of L2 acquisition.

Table 6.15 also provides an indication of the teacher participants' perceptions on the use of gestures by multilingual learners.   The relatively high percentage (73%) of perceived gestural use also indicates limitations in the learners' ELoLT proficiency. The use of gestures as coping strategy to

facilitate comprehension is a common phenomenon during the non-verbal phase of additional language acquisition (Roseberry-McKibbin, 2000:4), as the learner often listens and focuses on understanding the additional language. It is a phase of active observation and rehearsal or sound experimentation, usually done quietly (Tabors, 1997:51-54).

Similar findings were displayed in Table 6.4, which indicated that one of the concerns of teacher participants was that learners relied on gestures to convey information. It therefore appears that the teacher participants may not have sufficient knowledge about the non-verbal phase or *silent period* of L2 acquisition. Gestures should be viewed as normal behaviour and not as a course for concern during the initial phases of the acquisition of ELoLT. Learners should also not be forced to produce language and all attempts to communicate should be accepted.

From the above findings, the following conclusion is drawn and corresponding strengths are identified.

CONCLUSION
Teacher participants perceived the multilingual preschool learners in the research context to employ effective coping strategies to facilitate comprehension in communication partners.

CORRESPONDING STRENGTHS
Perceived strengths were identified in the research context: • The multilingual preschool learners showed typical patterns of L2 acquisition. • The multilingual preschool learners employed creative communication strategies to convey information.

6.2.4.2 Multilingual preschool learners' socio-emotional behaviours

Section Three (Variable 75 - 77, 80) of the questionnaire ascertained whether teacher participants observed any negative socio-emotional behaviours related to poor ELoLT skills in multilingual learners. The perceptions of the teacher participants provided important data as the teacher participants had the most constant contact with the preschool learners in the natural classroom

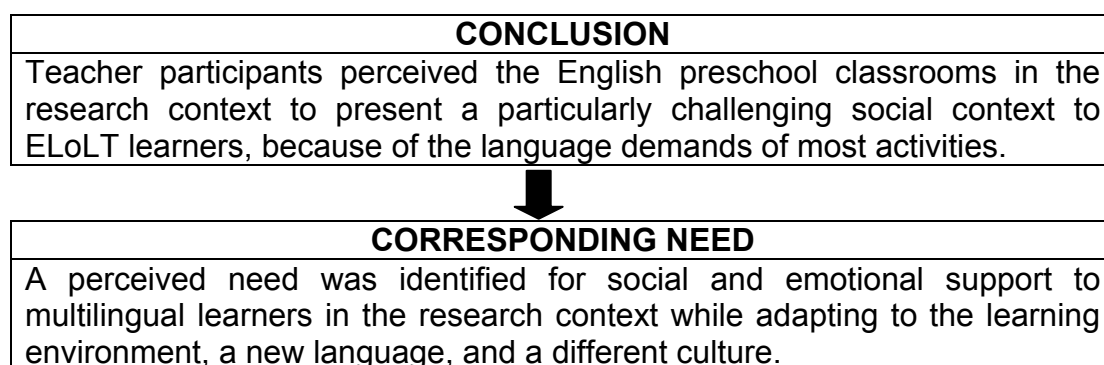context, offering many opportunities for interaction and observation. The results are contained in Table 6.16.

TABLE 6.16: TEACHER PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTION OF RELATED SOCIO-EMOTIONAL BEHAVIOURS IN MULTILINGUAL PRESCHOOL LEARNERS (N=32)						
BEHAVIOURS	**OFTEN MANIFESTED**		**SELDOM MANIFESTED**		**NOT MANIFESTED**	
	Frequency of teacher participants	Percentage of teacher participants	Frequency of teacher participants	Percentage of teacher participants	Frequency of teacher participants	Percentage of teacher participants
Social isolation/withdrawal because of inadequate language abilities	18	60%	7	23%	5	17%
Frustration because of inability to explain needs	18	60%	9	30%	3	10%
Presenting difficulties in discipline because of poor comprehension	13	45%	13	45%	3	10%
Cautious to answer – do not volunteer answers	20	67%	8	27%	2	6%

As shown in Table 6.16, only a small number of the teacher participants (withdrawal 17%, frustration 10%, discipline problems 10%, and not volunteering 6%) *did not* observe any negative social or emotional behaviours that could be associated with poor ELoLT skills. In most cases more than 45% of the teacher participants observed negative behaviour in each category. It is clear that teacher participants perceived language proficiency to influence school performance and social behaviour significantly.

Research has highlighted that multilingual learners are at risk to develop social problems in the classroom. Crutchley, Botting and Conti-Ramsden (1997:272) reported on monolingual and multilingual learners arriving at schools with no difference in emotional and behavioural measures, but over time, multilingual learners developed and exhibited more emotional and behavioural problems than monolingual learners. The same perceived negative kind of behaviours as illustrated in Table 6.16, were reported by Viljoen en Molefe (2001:126), who observed frustration and discipline problems in ELoLT learners. Fujiki, Briton, Isaacsen and Summers (2001:18)

found that ELoLT learners displayed more withdrawal and aggressive behaviours than other learners. The observations by Viljoen and Molefe (2001:123) that many of these negative behaviours were not present on the playground (where ELoLT learners interacted in their L1 with peers from their own culture), verify the findings that communication barriers in the classroom, caused by poor ELoLT proficiency, contributed to a large extent to these learners' emotional and behavioural problems. The results of Table 6.16 corroborate those displayed in Table 6.4, which revealed the teacher participants' perceived concerns about the ELoLT learners' self-confidence, withdrawal, and acceptance of discipline.

From the above findings, the following conclusion is reached and a corresponding need is identified.

CONCLUSION
Teacher participants perceived the English preschool classrooms in the research context to present a particularly challenging social context to ELoLT learners, because of the language demands of most activities.

CORRESPONDING NEED
A perceived need was identified for social and emotional support to multilingual learners in the research context while adapting to the learning environment, a new language, and a different culture.

6.2.4.3 Multilingual preschool learners' receptive ELoLT skills

The researcher required information on the receptive language needs and strengths of multilingual preschool learners as perceived by the teacher participants. Information was gathered on *general comprehension* of ELoLT and *comprehension of specific words and concepts*.

● **General comprehension of ELoLT**

Section Three (Variable 67 – 74, 79) of the questionnaire explored the general comprehension of ELoLT by multilingual learners as perceived by the teacher participants. The results are presented in Table 6.17. The items listed first

and last in Table 6.17 were worded differently, but the underlying concept measured is the same. Although no statistical factor analysis was done, the consistent level of the teacher participants' responses to these two items may increase the reliability of the findings.

TABLE 6.17: TEACHER PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTION OF MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS' GENERAL COMPREHENSION OF ELoLT (N=32)						
BEHAVIOURS	**OFTEN MANIFESTED**		**SELDOM MANIFESTED**		**NOT MANIFESTED**	
	Frequency of teacher participants	Percentage of teacher participants	Frequency of teacher participants	Percentage of teacher participants	Frequency of teacher participants	Percentage of teacher participants
Can answer questions in L1 but not in English	22	73%	6	20%	2	7%
Inability to follow simple instructions (1 - 2 instructions)	17	55%	11	35%	3	10%
Inability to follow difficult instructions (2 - 4 instructions)	24	77%	5	16%	2	7%
Inability to follow a conversation	21	70%	7	23%	2	7%
Inability to understand a story	16	53%	13	43%	1	4%
Imitation of words without comprehension	19	68%	8	29%	1	3%
Use of stereotype utterances without comprehension	18	60%	11	37%	1	3%
Slow down class activities because of poor comprehension	20	69%	9	31%	0	0%
Inability to answer questions in English	21	70%	8	27%	1	3%

In Table 6.17 the same pattern emerged as in Table 6.15 and Table 6.16. A large number of the teacher participants perceived the behaviours listed in the questionnaire to manifest *often* in multilingual preschool learners. The teacher participants' responses generally indicated perceptions of poor ELoLT comprehension skills in multilingual preschool learners. Similar South African research results were reported by Viljoen and Molefe (2001:121), who found that poor comprehension skills prevented ELoLT learners to follow instructions in school through the medium of English.

As the traditional perception of comprehension is *behaviour which indicates the association between a linguistic form and its meaning* (Carrow, 1985:3), it is apparent that the teacher participants perceived a limited English vocabulary to be barrier to the comprehension of classroom activities and instructions. Apart from interactions containing vocabulary that was not comprehended by the learners, it appears that more than one instruction given in ELoLT was perceived by teacher participants to be a difficult task for the learners. In addition, *the imitation of words without comprehension* may be viewed as automatic utterances by learners without full knowledge of their meaning (Carrow, 1985:4). These findings on limited understanding are in agreement with results reflected in research by Diedricks (1997), who reported that the flow of classroom activities in ELoLT classes was hindered by poor comprehension of English vocabulary.

In general, Table 6.17 shows perceptions of poor vocabulary comprehension, concurring with the results displayed in Table 6.4 which indicated that teacher participants perceived multilingual learners' comprehension of English vocabulary to be insufficient for learning. The results on the item: *slow down classroom activities because of poor comprehension* (perceived by 69% of the teacher participants to manifest *often*) are also in agreement with the results of Table 6.4. This revealed that teacher participants perceived that too much extra time was required for explanations to complete their day programme.

As teacher participants perceived the general comprehension of English to be a barrier to classroom activities, it becomes necessary to explore the perceived levels of vocabulary proficiency in multilingual learners in the research context. In the first part of Section Four (Variable 81 – 85) of the questionnaire, teacher participants were requested to indicate the levels of English vocabulary proficiency they perceived in multilingual learners. The limitation of the rating scale in relation to the question in this section has been discussed in Section 5.6.1.4, and will be acknowledged in the conclusion and needs identification. The results are presented in Table 6.18.

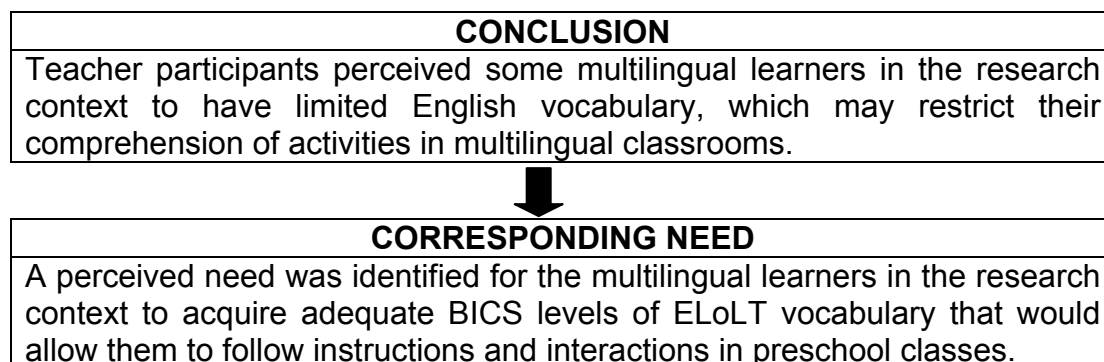| TABLE 6.18:	TEACHER PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTION OF MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS' ENGLISH VOCABULARY PROFICIENCY (N=32)					
PROFICIENCY LEVELS	**PERCEIVED IN ALL LEARNERS**		**PERCEIVED IN SOME LEARNERS**		**PERCEIVED IN NO LEARNERS**	
	Frequency of teacher participants	Percentage of teacher participants	Frequency of teacher participants	Percentage of teacher participants	Frequency of teacher participants	Percentage of teacher participants
Understand and use only a few English words	3	11%	23	85%	1	4%
Understand and use only English words used regularly at school	11	39%	16	57%	1	4%
Understand and use English words related to experiences outside the school environment	0	0%	20	77%	6	23%
Have a large vocabulary and understand most of what is said to them	2	7%	18	67%	7	26%
Vocabulary is like that of a natural speaker of English	0	0%	16	57%	12	43%

An analysis of the results presented in Table 6.18 indicates that the majority of teacher participants perceived *some* of the multilingual learners in their classes to have reached proficiency levels in each listed category. It is clear that the teacher participants perceived the learners to be on different proficiency levels, confirming the results of Table 6.1, which indicated the variation in language levels of learners in the same classroom. It can be assumed that learners who had more exposure to English may show greater vocabulary proficiency. Although many factors influence the acquisition of an additional language, as discussed in Chapter Two (Section 2.4), Jordaan (1993:137) presented research results indicating that learners who were exposed to English at home, were more proficient then those who were not. Learners' acquisition of ELoLT will therefore be positively influenced if adequate amounts of time are spent on exposing them to grammatically correct English.

From Table 6.18 it appears that 57% of the teacher participants perceived *some* learners to comprehend everyday conversations in the preschool environment with its highly contextualised situations. This type of language

used in relation to personal matters, real objects, and present events is generally known as Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and takes approximately two years to develop in optimum circumstances (Roseberry-McKibbin & Brice, 2000:5).   It is often suggested that the preschool environment offers the ideal background for BICS acquisition, because the language used is usually easy to follow (Dawber & Jordaan, 1999:10). Learners could develop and practise BICS in preschools not only during specific classroom activities, but also on the playground.

It is recognised that the rating scale may have constrained the results of this section. Acknowledging this limitation, the following conclusion is drawn and a corresponding need identified.

CONCLUSION
Teacher participants perceived some multilingual learners in the research context to have limited English vocabulary, which may restrict their comprehension of activities in multilingual classrooms.

CORRESPONDING NEED
A perceived need was identified for the multilingual learners in the research context to acquire adequate BICS levels of ELoLT vocabulary that would allow them to follow instructions and interactions in preschool classes.

- **Comprehension of specific words and concepts**

The items that specifically measured language comprehension were selected for analysis from the second part of Section Four of the questionnaire. Variable 88 - 91, 93 - 97 determined the teacher participants' perceptions on the comprehension of specific words and concepts. The results are displayed in Table 6.19.

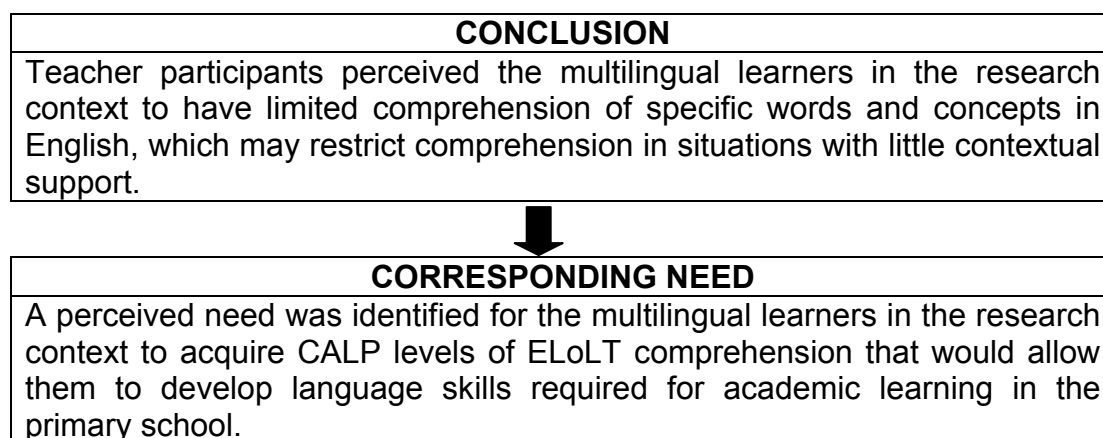| TABLE 6.19:	TEACHER PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS' COMPREHENSION OF SPECIFIC WORDS OR CONCEPTS (N=32)							
BEHAVIOURS	**PROBLEMS MANIFEST ALWAYS**		**PROBLEMS MANIFEST OFTEN**		**PROBLEMS MANIFEST SELDOM**		**PROBLEMS MANIFEST NEVER**	
	Frequency of teacher participants	Percentage of teacher participants	Frequency of teacher participants	Percentage of teacher participants	Frequency of teacher participants	Percentage of teacher participants	Frequency of teacher participants	Percentage of teacher participants
Understand concepts *same/different*	9	28%	14	44%	7	22%	2	6%
Understand time concepts, e.g. *today, yesterday, tomorrow*	10	32%	18	56%	2	6%	2	6%
Understand comparisons, e.g. *bigger, smallest*	7	23%	16	52%	6	19%	2	6%
Know common shapes, e.g. circle, square, triangle	4	13%	10	32%	15	49%	2	6%
Understand abstract concepts, e.g. *jealousy*	9	30%	13	43%	5	17%	3	10%
Understand words with multiple meanings, e.g. *orange, ball*	12	39%	12	39%	5	16%	2	6%
Understand non-literal meanings as used in expressions, e.g. *"he's a real Tarzan"*	7	23%	17	55%	6	19%	1	3%
Understand humour	4	13%	15	49%	11	35%	1	3%
Understand specific questions: *who, what, where*	5	17%	16	53%	9	30%	0	0%

Although the learners' comprehension of specific words and concepts as displayed in Table 6.19 (perceived by the teacher participants) varied, a large number of the teacher participants indicated that they perceived learner participants to *often* experience problems understanding specific words and concepts in all categories. Many learners were perceived to lack the knowledge of crucial categories of words and concepts that may influence their comprehension of utterances where specific information needed to be conveyed. The perception was that a great deal of verbal interaction and instruction in the preschool classroom was not grasped by a large number of

the multilingual learners. In addition, it was perceived that the preschool learners did not have the depth of knowledge to understand humour, fixed expressions, and idioms which require metalinguistic skills.

The results displayed in Table 6.19 not only concur with the results in Table 6.4, but expand on the teachers participants' perceived concerns about the multilingual preschool learners' insufficient comprehension of ELoLT for learning. In preparation for formal schooling, preschool learners are expected to understand specific words and concepts as they will be required to comprehend the exact meaning of teachers' utterances, often without the opportunity to ask for clarification (Brice & Perkins, 1997:13). Learners, therefore, have to acquire Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) to cope with the decontextualised information that will be presented to them in primary schools (Makin et al., 1995:85).   Academic learning relies on the understanding of words without support from the non-linguistic context (Hoff, 2004:413).   The grasping of complex aspects of language is therefore necessary to comprehend English on higher levels of abstraction.

From the above findings, the following conclusion is drawn and a corresponding need is identified.

CONCLUSION
Teacher participants perceived the multilingual learners in the research context to have limited comprehension of specific words and concepts in English, which may restrict comprehension in situations with little contextual support.

CORRESPONDING NEED
A perceived need was identified for the multilingual learners in the research context to acquire CALP levels of ELoLT comprehension that would allow them to develop language skills required for academic learning in the primary school.

6.2.4.4   Multilingual preschool learners' expressive ELoLT skills

Section Five (Variable 103 - 122) of the questionnaire explored selected expressive language skills of multilingual learners as perceived by teacher

participants. The limitation of the rating scale in relation to the question in this section has been acknowledged in Section 5.6.1.4, and will be recognised in the conclusion and needs identification. The results are displayed in Table 6.20.
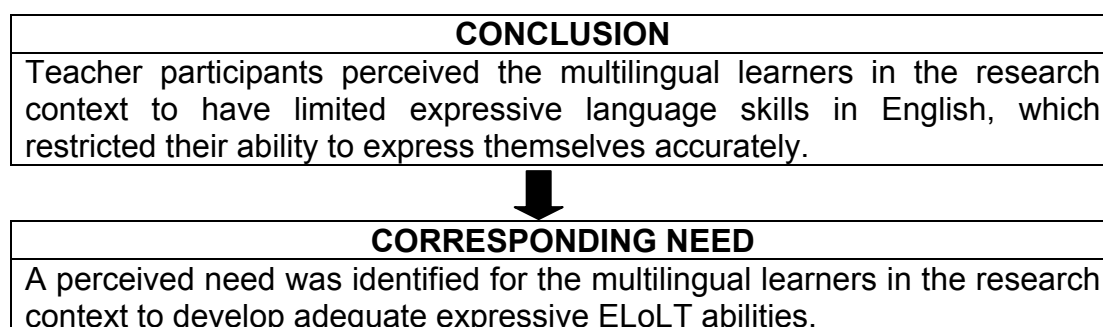
TABLE 6.20: TEACHER PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTION OF MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS' EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE SKILLS (N=32)						
EXPRESSIVE SKILLS	**ALWAYS AND OFTEN MANIFESTED**		**SELDOM MANIFESTED**		**NEVER MANIFESTED**	
	FREQUENCY OF TEACHER PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE OF TEACHER PARTICIPANTS	FREQUENCY OF TEACHER PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE OF TEACHER PARTICIPANTS	FREQUENCY OF TEACHER PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE OF TEACHER PARTICIPANTS
Correct word order in sentences	9	36%	13	52%	3	12%
Age-appropriate sentence length	4	15%	16	59%	7	26%
Combine sentences with *and*	10	39%	11	42%	5	19%
Combine sentences with *but, because*	10	37%	10	37%	7	26%
Correct use of plurals	13	48%	13	48%	1	4%
Correct use of pronouns	7	27%	15	58%	4	15%
Correct use of determiners	10	37%	12	44%	5	19%
Correct use of prepositions	14	52%	10	37%	3	11%
Correct use of diminutive	5	18%	15	56%	7	26%
Correct use of negatives	11	41%	13	48%	3	11%
Correct use of nouns	12	44%	12	44%	3	12%
Use of adjectives and/or adverbs	12	46%	8	31%	6	23%
Use more than one adjective	4	15%	10	37%	13	48%
Correct use of question words	11	42%	12	46%	3	12%
Correct use of regular past tense	4	15%	15	55%	4	30%
Use of contracted negatives	9	35%	7	27%	10	38%
Use comparisons	9	33%	11	41%	7	26%
Correct use of passive sentences	1	4%	11	44%	13	52%
Use emphatic stress	2	8%	10	38%	14	54%

In Table 6.20 the responses of the teacher participants on the options *always* and *often* were combined as both these options were of a positive nature and indicative of the presence of these skills. The results displayed in Table 6.20 indicate the teacher participants' perceptions of the multilingual preschool learners' strengths in expressive ELoLT skills on the one hand, and their weaknesses on the other hand. It is interesting to note that Section Five of the questionnaire was the section with the highest rate of non-responses by the teacher participants, possibly because they experienced difficulties assessing the multilingual preschool learners' expressive ELoLT abilities, or because of the constraints of the rating scale. This will be discussed in

greater detail in Section 6.3.3, where data from the questionnaires will be compared to data from the learner participants' language and communication assessments by the speech-language therapist.

According to Table 6.20, teacher participants indicated that in all categories of expressive skills except one (correct use of prepositions), less than 50% of the multilingual preschool learners could express themselves correctly in English. On the whole, the teacher participants' perceptions reflected negatively on the complexity of the expressive language used by multilingual preschool learners. These learners' command of English appeared to be restricted, and their expressive language skills limited their ability to express themselves adequately. The results shown in Table 6.20 not only concur with results in Table 6.4, but also expand on the teacher participants' concerns regarding inadequate expressive ELoLT skills for learning. A report by Hadley, Simmerman, Long and Luna (2000:281) confirms the above-mentioned findings, and indicated that preschool teachers teaching to non-English-speaking learners in the United States of America (USA) did not believe that the preschool learners' verbal English language abilities were sufficiently well developed to serve as a foundation for formal academic learning.

It is recognised that the rating scale may have constrained the results of this section. Acknowledging this limitation, the following conclusion is drawn and a corresponding need is identified.

CONCLUSION
Teacher participants perceived the multilingual learners in the research context to have limited expressive language skills in English, which restricted their ability to express themselves accurately.

⬇

CORRESPONDING NEED
A perceived need was identified for the multilingual learners in the research context to develop adequate expressive ELoLT abilities.

6.2.4.5   Multilingual preschool learners' pragmatic skills

In Section Six (Variable 123 -143) of the questionnaire, teacher participants were requested to record their observations regarding the *pragmatic skills* of ELoLT learners. The results are presented in Table 6.21.
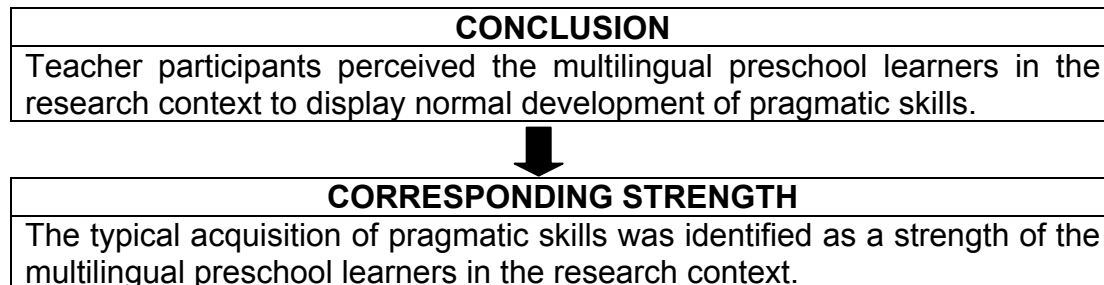
PRAGMATIC SKILLS	MANIFESTED IN ALL LEARNERS		MANIFESTED IN SOME LEARNERS		MANIFESTED IN NO LEARNERS	
	Frequency of teacher participants	Percentage of teacher participants	Frequency of teacher participants	Percentage of teacher participants	Frequency of teacher participants	Percentage of teacher participants
Make eye contact when talking	9	29%	20	65%	2	6%
Comment on personal actions while these are happening for example: "I am eating my sandwich"	2	7%	24	77%	5	16%
Comment on the action of others	8	26%	22	71%	1	3%
Are able to give an accurate description of their personal experience	2	6%	26	81%	4	13%
Describe a sequence of events in the order in which they occurred	-	-	25	78%	7	22%
Allow the person they are communicating with to speak and are able to listen without interrupting	-	-	26	81%	6	19%
Start conversations with adults and other learners	4	13%	25	81%	2	6%
Take turns during conversation	-	-	26	84%	3	16%
Are able to talk about a topic of discussion over several sentences during a conversation	-	-	20	65%	11	35%
Respond appropriately to simple questions	2	6%	29	94%	-	-
Use language to get the attention of others	10	31%	22	69%	-	-
Ask questions to obtain information about people, actions, and events	1	3%	24	78%	6	19%
Use language to tell others what to do	8	26%	22	71%	1	3%
Ask for clarification when they do not understand what others have said	1	3%	21	68%	9	29%
Can inform others of their personal needs, for example can tell what they want	10	31%	21	66%	1	3%
Can express feelings such as joy, fear, and anger, using language	5	16%	21	66%	6	18%
Describe plans for events that will take place in the future	-	-	18	60%	12	40%
Express personal opinions and can provide a logical reason for their opinion	-	-	14	47%	16	53%
Describe the solution to a problem	-	-	18	56%	14	44%
Express imagination	1	3%	20	67%	9	30%
Greet people appropriately when they come or go	6	19%	22	71%	3	10%

TABLE 6.21: TEACHER PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTION OF PRAGMATIC SKILLS OF MULTILINGUAL PRESCHOOL LEARNERS (N=32)

Table 6.21 reveals that the teacher participants perceived general development of pragmatic skills in the whole group of multilingual preschool learners. The pragmatic skills observed by teacher participants reflected the learners' sensitivity to the speaker's role, and included greeting, comments on objects and events, requesting objects and actions, as well as initiating conversation. The same skills were observed in multilingual preschool

learners by Stockman (1996:360).   Tiegerman-Farber (1995:11) pointed out that as preschool learners become effective social communicators, they learn to express their needs across a range of contexts and people, and also attune themselves sensitively to the needs of others.

As indicated in Table 6.21, the following pragmatic skills were least perceived in multilingual learners: *describe plans for events that will take place in the future* (predicting), *express personal opinions and can provide a logical reason for their opinion* (reasoning), and *describe the solution to a problem* (hypothesising).   According to Creaghead (1984:242) behaviours such as providing reasons, predicting, and hypothesising appear to be more dependent on language for their manifestation and develop later than the other listed skills.

From the above findings, the following conclusion is drawn and a corresponding strength is identified.

CONCLUSION
Teacher participants perceived the multilingual preschool learners in the research context to display normal development of pragmatic skills.

CORRESPONDING STRENGTH
The typical acquisition of pragmatic skills was identified as a strength of the multilingual preschool learners in the research context.

6.2.5 Summary of the teacher participants' perceptions of the needs and strengths of the multilingual preschool learners

The perceived needs and strengths of multilingual preschool learners identified during Phase One of the research are summarised in Table 6.22.

TABLE 6.22:	TEACHER PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS OF NEEDS AND STRENGTHS OF MULTILINGUAL PRESCHOOL LEARNERS IDENTIFIED IN PHASE ONE
NEEDS	**STRENGTHS**
• To receive social and emotional support • To achieve BICS levels of ELoLT comprehension • To achieve CALP levels of ELoLT comprehension • To develop expressive ELoLT skills	• Show typical patterns of L2 acquisition • Employ creative communication strategies to convey information • Display typical pragmatic skills development

Through their perceptions the teacher participants provided valuable information on the needs and strengths of multilingual learners, with strong pointers for the provision of a responsive learning environment. As the multilingual preschool learners' barriers to learning did not fall into neat categories, interdisciplinary partnerships may have to be established to bring together different perspectives and expertise for intervention. This presents a challenge to all teachers and educational support professionals to form partnerships, and to share knowledge and skills related to the multilingual learners' strengths and barriers, working collaboratively to enhance the learning process.

6.3   LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION PROFICIENCY OF THE MULTILINGUAL PRESCHOOL LEARNERS

The overall objective of Phase Two was *to describe the language needs of the multilingual preschool learners acquiring ELoLT from the speech-language therapists' perspective.* The results are based on the responses obtained from the test battery (checklist) which was used to determine the learner participants' language and communication proficiency and are presented according to the objectives presented in Figure 6.1.

6.3.1 Learner participants' language characteristics

The language characteristics of the learner participants acquiring ELoLT are presented according to their *receptive language* skills, *expressive language* skills, and *pragmatic* skills*.*

6.3.1.1   Learner participants' receptive ELoLT skills

The receptive language abilities of the learner participants were analysed in terms of their *comprehension of English vocabulary*, *grammatical morphemes,* and *elaborated sentences.*

● **Vocabulary comprehension**

The learner participants' comprehension of English vocabulary was assessed with Section I: *Word classes and relations* of the Test of Auditory Comprehension of Language (TACL-R) (Carrow, 1985).   The descriptive statistics for this test are presented in Table 6.23.

TABLE 6.23: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR WORD CLASSES AND RELATIONS					
GROUPS	MEAN	SD	MIN/40	MAX/40	N
JUNIOR	18.3	4.80	10	26	10
MIDDLE	23.3	4.39	19	32	10
SENIOR	29.2	2.93	23	33	10

Table 6.23 provides an indication of the range of the learner participants' responses to *Word classes and relations* of TACL-R (Carrow, 1985).

The most important results that emerged during analysis and which are presented in Table 6.24, were that vocabulary comprehension did not necessarily increase across the three age groups, that the noun category was better understood than other word classes, that the Junior Group displayed insufficient comprehension of basic English vocabulary, and that all the

learner participants in the Senior Group did not have adequate receptive BICS in English.

Table 6.24 reflects that the learner participants' comprehension of English vocabulary varied across age groups and that the Senior Groups' comprehension was not necessarily better than the Junior and Middle Groups. The complete categories of *adjectives - quality, adjectives – quantity,* as well as *adverbs – direction,* revealed increased comprehension across age groups, in other words progress along a developmental age continuum were shown. However, two categories exhibited limited progression in reception with age, namely the *nouns category* (letters, collection, pair) and *verbs category* (going, giving, finishing). As language acquisition is related to age, progression in reception with age is in line with the developmental nature of language comprehension. The findings of Dawber and Jordaan (1999:2) and Calitz (1990:20) substantiate the variation in vocabulary comprehension across ages in multilingual learners. These authors explained that the multilingual learners were entering South African preschools at different ages, and often as late as Grade R, with the expectation to acquire sufficient levels of English before entering primary schools.   The variation in comprehension implies that preschool teachers in the research context had to adjust their levels of language usage to the levels of the learners' comprehension, and had to teach at different language levels to individual learners. This challenge requires planning and preparation above their lesson preparation and may create stress if teachers are unsure how to handle the situation (Diedricks, 1997:46).

Further analysis of Table 6.24 indicates that learner participants comprehended the words in the *noun* category better than those in other word classes.   Hadley, Simmerman, Long and Luna (2000:286) explain that learners' vocabulary skills are often built around the names of objects. These authors emphasised that the comprehension of a diversity of word classes had to be supported, such as *verbs* – which are central to grammatical development, and *prepositions* – which overlap with basic concepts and are important to the MoI, as well as adjectives – which increase learners' lexical

TABLE 6.24:	LEARNER PARTICIPANTS' COMPREHENSION OF ENGLISH VOCABULARY (N=30)		
WORD CLASSES	**PERCENTAGE OF ERRORS IN SAMPLES**		
	JUNIOR GROUP (N=10)	**MIDDLE GROUP (N=10)**	**SENIOR GROUP (N=10)**
NOUNS			
girl	0%	10%	0%
cat	10%	0%	0%
bird	10%	0%	0%
box	0%	0%	0%
half	30%	40%	0%
cross	30%	50%	10%
letters	**80%**	**60%**	**60%**
collection	**100%**	**100%**	**60%**
pair	**100%**	**90%**	**90%**
VERBS			
jumping	0%	0%	0%
cutting	10%	20%	0%
drawing	20%	30%	40%
going	**40%**	**40%**	**30%**
giving	**70%**	**20%**	**10%**
ascending	100%	100%	100%
finishing	**100%**	**100%**	**80%**
ADJECTIVES – QUALITY			
blue	**20%**	**20%**	**0%**
little	**60%**	**30%**	**0%**
together	**30%**	**40%**	**10%**
round	**40%**	**10%**	**0%**
fast	**70%**	**50%**	**30%**
same	**80%**	**40%**	**0%**
soft	**90%**	**70%**	**60%**
high	**90%**	**60%**	**10%**
elderly	**100%**	**100%**	**70%**
ADJECTIVES – QUANTITY			
four	**60%**	**10%**	**0%**
some	**70%**	**50%**	**40%**
many	**50%**	**20%**	**10%**
most	**80%**	**70%**	**30%**
equal	**100%**	**80%**	**60%**
ADVERBS – DIRECTION			
up	**20%**	**20%**	**0%**
second	**100%**	**70%**	**40%**
left	**100%**	**100%**	**40%**
WORD RELATIONS			
a bird and a cat	0%	0%	0%
no eyes	40%	0%	0%
a girl jumping	50%	20%	30%
a large blue ball	40%	60%	50%
riding a little bicycle	50%	10%	30%
eating the fish	50%	30%	10%
a little bird eating	100%	40%	50%

- Variables were arranged according to difficulty within Word classes and relations (TACL-R, Carrow, 1985).

diversity (Hadley et al., 2000:286).   As local research by Du Plessis (1998b:139) revealed that language lessons in the preschool concentrated on the labelling of objects, it may be appropriate to plan learning environments that allow the acquisition of basic concepts from a variety of word classes and to target vocabulary for language lessons in word classes other than nouns in order to facilitate the acquisition of functional language skills in learner participants.

It is clear from Table 6.24 that a large number of learner participants in the Junior Group showed insufficient comprehension of basic English vocabulary. This may be attributed to the fact that these learners had recently entered preschool and may have had little exposure to English prior to entering the preschool in the research context.   Jordaan (1993:69) pointed out that the period of time a learner had spent at an English preschool was considered an important predictor of proficiency, but suggested that once the attendance exceeded one year, the proficiency difference between learners would be less obvious (Jordaan, 1993:139).   According to Carrow (1985:4), any learner acquiring an additional language may initially experience difficulty with comprehension and expression, comprehension being the easier of the two. Owens (2001:250) explained that the comprehension of vocabulary precedes production and, although the discrepancy between comprehension and production appears to be large at first, it seems to decrease later in language acquisition.   It is postulated that the learner participants in the Junior Group have been at an early stage of ELoLT acquisition with limited comprehension of English vocabulary, and that they may need additional support, such as gestures or visual aids to facilitate comprehension.

As illustrated in Table 6.24, learner participants in the Senior Group have acquired some basic ELoLT vocabulary, but some learners did not display adequate knowledge of basic concepts or BICS in English.   Some learner participants, who were in their final year at preschool, did not show adequate comprehension of the assessed concrete vocabulary required for the more complex language of formal schooling.   It is generally accepted that the development of more complex language depends on the initial mastery of

simpler language elements (Carrow, 1985:51).   Roseberry-McKibbin and Brice (2000:5), as well as Lemmer and Squelch (1993:42), warned that multilingual learners who have to acquire English BICS simultaneously with CALP in primary school, will face major challenges when they have to understand curriculum content. As basic concepts are often used in formal instruction, it is clear that some learner participants in the Senior Group may be at risk of academic failure in the primary school because of inadequate receptive vocabulary skills.

● **Grammatical morphemes**

The learner participants' comprehension of grammatical morphemes was determined with *Section II: Grammatical morphemes* of the TACL-R (Carrow, 1985). The descriptive statistics for this test are presented in Table 6.25.

TABLE 6.25: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR GRAMMATICAL MORPHEMES					
GROUPS	**MEAN**	**SD**	**MIN/40**	**MAX/40**	**N**
JUNIOR	7.2	5.49	0	18	10
MIDDLE	11.7	4.23	6	19	10
SENIOR	18.2	3.93	10	23	10

Table 6.25 presents a general indication of the learner participants' achievement on the test of *Grammatical morphemes* of the TACL-R (Carrow, 1985) in terms of means, standard deviation, as well as minimum and maximum scores within each group.

The most significant results which emerged during the analysis were that comprehension of grammatical morphemes developed across a diversity of morpheme categories, and that learner participants experienced problems understanding personal pronouns and the English verb tenses. These results are presented in Table 6.26.

According to Table 6.26, learner participants on the whole displayed different levels of comprehension of grammatical morphemes across a diversity of morpheme categories. They were therefore simultaneously developing understanding of the meaning of grammatical morphemes from different categories, although at different rates. This finding demonstrates development in accordance with the general premise of language comprehension that learners develop comprehension of a variety of language structures simultaneously (Carrow, 1985:51), not only in L1, but also in L2 acquisition.

TABLE 6.26: LEARNER PARTICIPANTS' COMPREHENSION OF GRAMMATICAL MORPHEMES (N=30)			
CATEGORIES	**PERCENTAGE OF ERRORS IN SAMPLES**		
	JUNIOR GROUP (N=10)	**MIDDLE GROUP (N=10)**	**SENIOR GROUP (N=10)**
PREPOSITIONS			
The cat is in the box.	10%	0%	0%
The cap is on the toothpaste.	100%	80%	70%
The boy is next to the car.	40%	30%	10%
The dog is in front of the car.	60%	50%	40%
The cat is between the chairs.	90%	30%	50%
The ball is under the book.	80%	50%	60%
The rope is through the box.	60%	30%	10%
The circle is around the car.	70%	50%	10%
She is pointing at the pencil.	90%	100%	70%
PRONOUNS – PERSONAL			
She feeds her.	**70%**	**70%**	**50%**
She jumped rope.	**80%**	**90%**	**80%**
He rode the bicycle.	**80%**	**70%**	**40%**
He feeds himself.	**100%**	**100%**	**80%**
His dog is big.	**90%**	**40%**	**70%**
The girl said, "We're eating popcorn."	**100%**	**70%**	**20%**
The lady said, "This shoe is mine."	**90%**	**80%**	**50%**
They swam.	**100%**	**70%**	**70%**
Mother gave the ball to her.	**90%**	**100%**	**100%**
PRONOUNS – DEMONSTRATIVE			
Father said, "I have these."	70%	30%	10%
The boy said, "I want this."	90%	60%	60%
NOUN NUMBER – REGULAR			
She feeds the birds.	40%	30%	0%
The cat drank milk.	80%	50%	10%
NOUN NUMBER – IRREGULAR			
The man sees the children play.	20%	30%	20%
The men ran.	100%	80%	90%
NOUN CASE			
There is the baby elephant.	100%	70%	70%
There is the grandfather's clock.	100%	100%	40%
VERB TENSE			
The girl is jumping.	**40%**	**20%**	**0%**
The man painted the house.	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
She sewed the dress.	**100%**	**100%**	**80%**
She is going to shop.	**100%**	**100%**	**90%**
She will hit the ball.	**100%**	**100%**	**90%**
The man has been cutting trees.	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
She would have jumped.	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
VERB NUMBER			
The fish are eating.	80%	60%	30%
The buck is drinking.	100%	100%	80%
NOUN VERB – AGREEMENT			
The fish swim away.	100%	90%	50%
The buck eats apples.	100%	100%	80%
DERIVATIONAL – SUFFIXES			
The farmer is big.	90%	90%	60%
Show me the shortest man.	100%	70%	40%
Here is the pianist.	100%	100%	80%

- Variables were arranged according to difficulty within each category.

Categories of significant interest are the comprehension of *personal pronouns* and *verb tense*. The results in Table 6.26 illustrate that the learner participants experienced varying degrees of difficulty in the comprehension of *personal pronouns*. The inconsistent understanding of personal pronouns correlates with local research results of Jordaan (1993:136), who identified the same difficulties and explained that the pronoun system as found in English does not exist in African languages. In African languages the morphological structures of words express pronominal contrasts (Suzman, as cited by Jordaan, 1993:136).   The pronoun system of English is therefore particularly foreign to learners who have African languages as L1 and it is only natural that they will find it difficult to understand pronouns.

Nearly all the learner participants across all age groups experienced problems comprehending the English *verb tenses*. This category is important as specific time information is conveyed through the verb tenses. South African research results by Nxumalo (1997:27) also pointed out the incorrect use of verbs by multilingual preschool learners. Nxumalo (1997:27) stressed that the English tenses are cognitively complex notions. The Senior Group did not understand the verb tenses although they were considered mature enough to understand the cognitive concept of future and past tenses. As young ELoLT learners like the learner participants initially often limit their utterances to the present tense because of their engagement with their immediate surroundings, they often understand the present tense better than the other tenses.

The findings of the current research substantiate international research. Crutchley, Botting and Conti-Ramsden (1997:270) found that multilingual learners in their research project arrived at schools with complex receptive and expressive morphological difficulties, which seemed to persist over the learners' school years. It appears that multilingual learners, because of L1 interference, are very likely to exhibit morphological problems. Learners' comprehension of grammatical morphemes should therefore be developed and supported in class to enable them to interpret small variations in linguistic structure that often convey specific information.

- **Elaborated sentences**

Section III: Elaborated sentences of the TACL-RC (Carrow, 1985) determined the learner participants' comprehension of elaborated sentences. The descriptive statistics for the test are presented in Table 6.27.

TABLE 6.27: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR ELABORATED SENTENCES					
GROUPS	**MEAN**	**SD**	**MIN/40**	**MAX/40**	**N**
JUNIOR	3.6	2.11	1	8	10
MIDDLE	6.7	3.43	2	14	10
SENIOR	12.8	3.08	8	17	10

Table 6.27 presents a general indication of the learner participants' achievements in the test of *Elaborated sentences* of the TACL-R (Carrow, 1985) in terms of means, standard deviation, as well as minimum and maximum scores within each group.

The most noteworthy result that emerged during the analysis was that the learner participants' comprehension of elaborated sentences was insufficient for learning, as shown in Table 6.28.

The learner participants in the Senior Group achieved 100% comprehension on only one elaborated sentence (Who is by the table?). Of the 40 elaborated sentences which were assessed, 15 sentences were comprehended by 50% or more, whereas 25 sentences were comprehended by less than 50% of the senior learner participants. The comprehension of the Senior Group of learner participants is of particular interest, as they were in Grade R and being prepared for formal schooling where receptive CALP, similar to the elaborated sentences assessed, will be required.

The difficulties the Senior Group displayed with the comprehension of elaborated sentences imply that they may be at a constant disadvantage and may experience formal classroom discourse difficult to understand.

TABLE 6.28: LEARNER PARTICIPANTS' COMPREHENSION OF ELABORATED SENTENCES (N=30)			
CATEGORIES	**PERCENTAGE OF ERRORS IN SAMPLES**		
	JUNIOR GROUP (N=10)	**MIDDLE GROUP (N=10)**	**SENIOR GROUP (N=10)**
INTERROGATIVES			
Who is by the table?	0%	10%	**0%**
When do you sleep?	100%	100%	50%
The man said, "Can you reach it?"	100%	100%	70%
With what do you eat?	100%	80%	90%
Mother said, "Is it raining?"	100%	100%	90%
NEGATIVES			
It's not round.	100%	70%	50%
The man isn't drinking.	90%	100%	80%
It's not a cup.	90%	90%	50%
She wouldn't ride on the clown's horse.	100%	80%	100%
VOICE – ACTIVE			
The mother kisses the baby.	40%	20%	20%
The boy pushes the girl.	100%	40%	50%
PASSIVE			
The boy is chased by the dog.	100%	80%	70%
DIRECT/INDIRECT OBJECT			
She takes the puppy to the boy.	100%	90%	60%
She shows the girl the boy.	100%	100%	80%
COORDINATION			
The girls are eating and watching TV.	10%	0%	10%
The man and the boy ate popcorn.	50%	60%	50%
The boy rode his bicycle home, and his sister went home in the car.	70%	60%	30%
The lady is eating a banana, and the man is drinking milk.	90%	50%	30%
Neither the girl nor the boy is swinging.	100%	100%	90%
She wanted a blouse, however, she got a skirt.	100%	100%	90%
The girl asked her father to throw her the ball, but he didn't.	100%	100%	100%
SUBORDINATION			
While the girl saw the movie, she ate some popcorn.	90%	50%	30%
After he cut her hair, the hairdresser took a coffee break.	100%	100%	70%
Before taking the packages to the post office, he had to wrap them.	100%	100%	90%
He couldn't reach it although he was tall.	100%	100%	50%
Besides the baseball glove, she bought a CD.	100%	100%	70%
Reading, the boy fell asleep.	100%	100%	80%
Having put her coat in the wardrobe, she took off her shoes.	100%	100%	80%
If her mother had baked a cake, the girl would have gone to the party.	100%	100%	100%
Before she jumped in the pool, the girl waved to her mother.	100%	100%	100%
Had it been possible, he would have ridden in the car or on the bicycle.	100%	100%	100%
EMBEDDING			
The lady who was standing on the corner by the hamburger stand called to the taxi driver who was driving by.	100%	80%	30%
The boy who was laughing saw the girl.	100%	80%	30%
Mary, her daughter, drank some milk.	100%	90%	80%
The man spoke to the little girl's mother, who was in the car.	100%	90%	40%
The boy the dog watched was eating.	100%	100%	100%
The boy called the girl with the baseball cap.	100%	100%	100%
The baby the woman held clapped her hands.	100%	100%	100%
The boy the girl pulled had on a baseball cap.	100%	100%	100%
The policeman the waitress with the white cap served was holding some coffee.	100%	100%	100%

* Variables were arranged according to difficulty within each category.

Although Carrow (1985:4) explained that L2 speakers' comprehension is aided by redundancies in linguistic or situational messages and by information from which inferences can be made, it appears that redundancies in the assessed sentences did not support the learner participants' comprehension skills sufficiently. Apparently, the learners did not find cues in the sentences to the meaning that was transmitted. As the assessed sentences were supported by pictures, it is evident that the learner participants will find it difficult to comprehend contextually reduced communication which is restricted to words only. The preschool teachers may, therefore, have to modify their language input to facilitate comprehension in multilingual preschool learners.

Important issues emerged in terms of sufficient exposure of the learner participants to elaborated sentences in the research context. It may be necessary to consider earlier findings indicating *first,* that a majority of the teacher participants simplified instructions to facilitate comprehension (Table 6.13), and *second,* that a majority of the teacher participants taught in their L2 (Table 6.2) and perhaps did not include elaborated sentences in their verbal interactions. Jordaan (1993:142) explained that some language components are best learned through native speaker input as it may not occur frequently in the language of L2 speakers. It is, therefore, possible that learner participants may not be adequately exposed to elaborated sentences in class to stimulate comprehension of such sentences.

From the above findings, the following observation is made, conclusion is reached and corresponding need is identified.

OBSERVATION
The TACL-R (Carrow, 1985) was considered an appropriate assessment tool and served its diagnostic function, as learner participants readily recognised the people, objects, and actions depicted in the material.

CONCLUSION
Learner participants displayed inadequate comprehension of vocabulary, grammatical morphemes, and elaborated sentences in English for learning.

CORRESPONDING NEED
A need was identified for learner participants to improve receptive English skills for academic success.

6.3.1.2   Learner participants' expressive ELoLT skills

Language samples from each of the learner participants were elicited by employing the following measuring instruments: *Picture description* from the MWM Program for Developing Language Abilities (Minskoff, Wiseman & Minskoff, 1972), *Sequence Story* from the Kindergarten Language Screening Test (KLST-2) (Gauthier & Madison, 1998), and *Personal experience narrative* (Tönsing, 1998). An error analysis of the expressive language of learner participants was done according to the categories identified by Nxumalo (1997:16-30) and comprised the following categories: noun errors, preposition errors, errors of article/determiner, verb errors, complex sentence errors, individual variations, and interaction patterns.

A representative section of the total transcription, for the Senior, Middle, and Junior groups of learner participants, was selected. The agreement between the two raters was computed by counting the number of points of analysis (see below), the number of points of analysis where the two raters were in agreement, and the number of points of analysis where disagreement occurred. The results were as follows:

Total number of points of analysis: 1832

Total number of disagreements: 35

Total number of agreements: 1797 = 98.1%

Interrater agreement per group:

Disagreement for Senior group:12 out of 425=2.8% (Agreement 97.2%)

Disagreement for Middle group: 8 out of 457=1.8% (Agreement 98.2%)

Disagreement for Junior group: 15 out of 950=1.6% (Agreement 98.4%)

It can therefore be accepted that there was a 98.1% agreement between the raters with regard to the syntactic analysis of the transcribed language samples.

- **Noun errors**

In Table 6.29 an analysis of learner participants' noun errors is presented. The most prominent results were that four new categories of noun errors were identified, that noun errors occurred more frequently in the Senior Group of learner participants, that gender confusion was displayed by all learner participants, and that the use of generic terms indicated a weakness in expressive vocabulary skills.

Four categories of noun errors were added to the categories identified by Nxumalo (1997:16-19). It is postulated that Nxumalo (1997) did not observe and, therefore, did not include these categories. The age range of learners in Nxumalo's (1997) research was 5.0 – 6.6 years and all of them had been attending ELoLT preschools for a minimum of two years (Nxumalo, 1997:12), which may account for better English proficiency than that of the learners in the current study. It appears that a category similar to *use of generic term*, was identified by Van der Walt (2001:10), who named the category *use of quantifiers.*

According to Table 6.29, noun errors occurred in the expressive language of all learner participants in all the age groups. These errors were not consistent in each learner participant or in each age group. Although no general pattern in noun errors could be identified from Table 6.29, the *percentage of learners in the Senior Group who made errors* was higher than in the other groups in all but two of the categories. In addition, with the exception of *omission of*

268

nouns in predicate positions, the *frequency of occurrence* of errors in these categories was higher in the Senior Group. This may be explained by the fact that the Senior Group communicated more freely with the researcher, whereas the Junior Group appeared to be more reserved, some of them possibly still in the initial phases of the acquisition of ELoLT with limited vocabulary and non-verbal behaviour, as explained earlier. The increased verbal communication of the Senior Group therefore increased the opportunities for errors.

TABLE 6.29: ANALYSIS OF LEARNER PARTICIPANTS' NOUN ERRORS (N=30)						
TYPE OF ERRORS	**PERCENTAGE OF LEARNERS**			**TOTAL NUMBER OF ERRORS IN SAMPLE**		
	JUNIOR GROUP (N=10)	**MIDDLE GROUP (N=10)**	**SENIOR GROUP (N=10)**	**JUNIOR**	**MIDDLE**	**SENIOR**
Use of noun + pronoun (complement) *The boy, she started pushing me*	20%	50%	**100%**	2	11	39
Idiosyncratic use of pronouns *And him has got a bicycle*	0%	20%	**10%**	0	2	1
*Omission of pronoun/noun in subject position *Is checking me*	80%	90%	**100%**	19	21	24
*Omission of noun in predicate positions *He gave me*	10%	20%	**30%**	2	15	3
Regular and irregular plural errors *Two, there's two waters*	20%	0%	**30%**	3	0	3
*Use of generic terms (this one/that one/others/ another/that thing) *The dog is gonna break that thing, that*	**70%**	**60%**	80%	36	19	43
CONFUSION OF 3RD PERSON FORMS OF PRONOUN: a) **Gender confusion of pronouns (he/she)** *My mommy he wake me late*	**10%**	**20%**	70%	**1**	**5**	**19**
*b) Refers to inanimate object as he/she *The cup she's falling down*	20%	30%	**30%**	2	5	10
Omits possessive inflection of noun *This is the girl umbrella*	10%	0%	**0%**	1	0	0

* New categories of noun errors identified

The results in the gender confusion category for all the groups concur with the results of Nxumalo (1997) and Jordaan (1993), who also investigated the acquisition of ELoLT by multilingual preschool learners in the South African urban preschool context. As discussed earlier, both these authors explained that the particular distinction of gender in the third person does not exist in African languages, such as IsiZulu and SeSotho (Nxumala, 1997:19; Jordaan, 1993:136). The use of pronouns to distinguish gender is therefore often used indiscriminately because of the interference of the multilingual learners' L1.

This phenomenon is also known as a language transfer error (Hoff, 2004:348). Alternatively, the learner participants could not use the gender distinction he/she correctly as they did not comprehend the difference yet, as shown in Table 6.26. Carrow (1985:3) explained that comprehension of vocabulary occur developmentally before or at the same time as production. Another interesting view held by Kaschula and Anthonissen (1995:65) is that the generic use of male pronouns is regarded as a perpetuation of implicit male domination in society.

Table 6.29 indicates that the use of generic terms (this one, that one, others, another, that thing) occurred in high percentages in the utterances of all groups – Junior Group (70%), Middle Group (60%), and Senior Group (80%). It is postulated that the learner participants substituted nouns with these generic terms because of insufficient ELoLT vocabulary. The omission of pronoun/noun in the subject position illustrated the same point and was observed in the Junior Group (80%), Middle Group (90%), and the Senior Group (100%). This finding corresponds with previous research results (Hadley et al., 2000:282), which indicated that expressive vocabulary skills were a major weakness in ELoLT learners and were not sufficiently well developed to serve as a foundation for formal academic learning.

- **Preposition errors**

Table 6.30 contains the results from the analysis of learner participants' prepositional errors. The most important results were that one new category of preposition errors was identified, and that increased frequencies of errors were observed in the Senior Group when compared to the other groups.

The category *overuse of preposition* was added to the categories of preposition errors identified by Nxumalo (1997:20). Although Van der Walt (2001:10) described a similar pattern of error, the error category was refined and named in the current analysis.

TABLE 6.30: ANALYSIS OF LEARNER PARTICIPANTS' PREPOSITION ERRORS (N=30)						
TYPE OF ERRORS	**PERCENTAGE OF LEARNERS**			**TOTAL NUMBER OF ERRORS IN SAMPLE**		
	JUNIOR GROUP (N=10)	**MIDDLE GROUP (N=10)**	**SENIOR GROUP (N=10)**	**JUNIOR**	**MIDDLE**	**SENIOR**
Incorrect choice of preposition *I was playing with my friends on home*	30%	60%	**80%**	4	14	15
Omission of preposition *The dog she look them*	10%	30%	**50%**	4	5	9
*Overuse of preposition *The sister is washing with the baby in the water*	0%	10%	**10%**	0	1	2

* New category of preposition errors identified

Preposition errors were displayed in the expressive language of learner participants from all age groups. Table 6.30 shows a general trend of preposition errors increasing from the Junior Group to the Senior Group.   As discussed earlier, increased verbal communication may have afforded the Senior Group more opportunities to make errors. The most conspicuous error is the incorrect choice of preposition, which occurred in 30% of the Junior Group, 60% of the Middle Group, and 80% of the Senior Group. Similar results were found by Nxumalo (1997) and Jordaan (1993). Nxumalo (1997:20) explained that prepositional errors may again be attributed to L1 interference, as African languages such as IsiZulu, use a general place marker instead of prepositions, for example *in*, *on,* and *under*. The English prepositional system is complex and multilingual learners may need support to acquire this system. With the necessary support in class, ELoLT learners can, however, develop the correct prepositional forms even if in the English spoken at home or in the community contain prepositional errors, as shown by Jordaan (1993:136).

- **Errors of article/determiner**

In Table 6.31 an analysis of the learner participants' errors of article/determiner is presented. The most significant finding is that in one category a decrease in frequency of errors was displayed by the Senior Group.

The three categories of article/determiner errors were all identified by Nxumalo (1997:21), as well as Van der Walt (2001:10), although the latter divided errors into only two categories, namely *use of articles* and *omission of articles.*

TABLE 6.31: ANALYSIS OF LEARNER PARTICIPANTS' ERRORS OF ARTICLE/DETERMINER (N=30)					
TYPE OF ERRORS	**PERCENTAGE OF LEARNERS**			**TOTAL NUMBER OF ERRORS IN SAMPLE**		
	JUNIOR GROUP (N=10)	**MIDDLE GROUP (N=10)**	**SENIOR GROUP (N=10)**	**JUNIOR**	**MIDDLE**	**SENIOR**
Omission of articles *It looks like jeep*	**70%**	**50%**	**50%**	**15**	**14**	**9**
Overuse of articles *The give me a medicine*	10%	30%	50%	1	4	10
Error of determiner *He's blowing a candles*	40%	60%	80%	7	8	14

Table 6.31 reveals that, although errors of article/determiner occurred in the expressive language of learner participants in all the groups, the Middle and Senior Groups *omitted* fewer articles/determiners, which is in contrast to the previously established trend of higher frequencies of errors in the Senior Group. It appears that these two groups were in the process of acquiring the assessed skills, and rather than omitting the article/determiner used an incorrect word. This finding is supported by Hakuta (as cited by Nxumalo, 1997:21), who found that articles/determiners were of low status in the acquisition order and that ELoLT learners often replaced articles/determiners with *this* or *that,* once again indicative of L1 interference.

In addition, research by Van der Walt (2001:4;5) revealed that there may be some confusion and inconsistency about article/determiner use among Black adults with English as additional language (EAL). Van der Walt (2001: 4;5) reported that 75% of assessed Black university students perceived incorrect articles/determiners as correct, which may be indicative of the entrenchment of such grammatical features in their English. If the English article/determiner errors are widely accepted and used in communities, the learner participants would be exposed to incorrect features and would need support in class to reduce errors and acquire the standard form of these features.

- **Verb errors**

In Table 6.32 an analysis of learner participants' verb errors is presented. The most noteworthy results were that four new categories of verb errors were identified, that some verb errors decreased across age groups, and that two prominent categories of verb errors were revealed.

Data analyses indicated that it was necessary to add four categories of verb errors to the categories identified by Nxumalo (1997: 23-29). Two of the additional categories were described but not categorised by Terrell, Battle and Grantham (1998:44), namely *present instead of past tense* and *generic verb to describe action*. No evidence could be found in the literature of the remaining two categories, which may be explained by the young age and poor proficiency of some of the learner participants in the current study.

Two general patterns in verb errors could be identified from Table 6.32. The first trend is that the percentage of some verb errors decreased and/or remained the same across the age groups in the categories *use of compound past tense: did + ed*, *extension of progressive aspect of static verb, omission of copula,* and *omission of verb.* This may be explained by the fact that the Junior Group of learner participants communicated less verbally and had fewer opportunities for errors, or, alternatively, that many learner participants from the Senior Group already acquired these skills in ELoLT. The second trend identified from Table 6.32, is that the results followed the same general pattern shown in Tables 6.28, 6.29, and 6.30, namely an increase in the percentage of errors from the Junior Group to the Senior Group.

TABLE 6.32: ANALYSIS OF LEARNER PARTICIPANTS' VERB ERRORS (N=30)						
TYPE OF ERRORS	**PERCENTAGE OF LEARNERS**			**TOTAL NUMBER OF ERRORS IN SAMPLE**		
	JUNIOR GROUP (N=10)	**MIDDLE GROUP (N=10)**	**SENIOR GROUP (N=10)**	**JUNIOR**	**MIDDLE**	**SENIOR**
Use of compound past tense: did + -ed *We first did played*	**10%**	**20%**	**10%**	1	6	1
Extension of progressive aspect of static verb *Must lying down*	**10%**	**10%**	**10%**	1	2	1
Extension of progressive to habitual actions/past tense *You jump and you bump and somebody is hitting another one*	30%	70%	90%	6	9	11
* Present instead of past tense *and they give me lots of medicine*	**20%**	**80%**	**90%**	**2**	**28**	**58**
Omission and inconsistent marking of 3rd person *The doggie drink milk*	20%	20%	30%	2	5	14
Incorrect sequence of tenses in discourse and complex sentences *I ate and watch TV*	30%	20%	60%	5	4	16
Omission of copula *She my teacher*	**40%**	**20%**	**20%**	6	2	2
Lack of agreement between subjects and 'be' verbs *The cat are running*	20%	70%	70%	4	12	22
Overuse of regular past tenses *They eated*	0%	20%	40%	0	2	6
Overuse/omission of aux. verbs *The dog is want to drink*	50%	40%	30%	7	12	8
* Incorrect choice of verb/generic verb to describe action (e.g. did) *It do a cold*	**60%**	**90%**	**100%**	**8**	**16**	**48**
* Omission of verb *The children at the table*	**20%**	**60%**	**20%**	3	6	2
* Omission of –ing/ "going to" *She said go and give me medicine*	50%	40%	60%	19	6	6

* New categories of verb errors identified

Table 6.32 further reveals two prominent categories of verb errors, the first being the *use of present tense instead of past tense*. The percentage as well as frequency of errors increased progressively across the age groups. The frequent overuse of the present tense indicates the failure of learner participants to distinguish between past and present tense and resembles results presented by Nxumalo (1997:25). Terrell, Battle and Grantham (1998:44) reported this phenomenon as one of the features of the dialect of African American English. The incorrect use of the present tense in discourse identified in Table 6.32, concur with results shown in Table 6.26, which indicated that the learner participants comprehended the present tense better than the past tense and therefore used it more often, although inappropriately.

This may be regarded as a developmental error as the use of present tense instead of past tense is also observed in the speech of English L1 speakers (Nxumalo, 1997:27) and therefore indicative of a typical acquisitional error.

The second prominent category of verb errors identified was the *incorrect choice of verb/generic verb to describe an action (e.g. did).* The percentage as well as frequency of errors again increased progressively across the age groups. It appears that this feature was adopted by the majority of ELoLT learners. Nxumalo (1997:23) found similar results in her analysis, and speculated that this may be indicative of ELoLT exposure that has been directive and limited to question-answer type interactions. This finding implies that stimulation and repetition of correct verb forms in preschool classes may support the acquisition of standard verb forms which are central to grammatical development.

- **Complex sentence errors**

In Table 6.33 an analysis of learner participants' complex sentence errors is presented. The most prominent results were that three new categories of complex sentence errors were identified, that the conjunctions *and*, *then*, *and then* were overused, and that problems to sequence utterances in narratives were evident.

Only one of the categories of complex sentence errors listed in Table 6.33 concurs with the categories identified by Nxumalo (1997:29). The other categories were not included for reasons discussed in Section 5.6.2.6. Evidence supporting the inclusion of the category *compares without comparative "er" or comparative word* was found in the dicussion on dialectal formulation of comparatives in African American English by Terrell, Battle and Grantham (1998:45). No literature support for the other two categories identified in the current study could be found and it is postulated that these two categories may indicate lower levels of English proficiency in this research context.

TABLE 6.33: ANALYSIS OF LEARNER PARTICIPANTS' COMPLEX SENTENCE ERRORS (N=30)						
TYPE OF ERRORS	**PERCENTAGE OF LEARNERS**			**TOTAL NUMBER OF ERRORS IN SAMPLE**		
	JUNIOR GROUP	**MIDDLE GROUP**	**SENIOR GROUP**	**JUNIOR**	**MIDDLE**	**SENIOR**
Overuse of "and", "then", "and then" *Then I cried, then I get blood here, then it got better*	60%	50%	**80%**	18	12	**89**
* Compares without comparative "er" or comparative word *They lift my hands that I'm Superman*	0%	10%	10%	0	1	1
Problems to sequence utterances in personal experience narratives *We played everything and when I sleep they go away when I wake up they come back*	10%	0%	**70%**	1	0	**19**
Omission of connectivity *Eating the drinking*	0%	40%	60%	0	6	14

* New categories of complex sentence errors identified

The results in Table 6.33 indicate a higher percentage of errors in the Senior Group in all categories as their utterances were more complex than those in the other two age groups, with ample opportunities for errors. The most prevalent error in the sample of Senior learner participants, occurring 89 times, was the overuse of *and, then, and then.* Crystal, Fletcher and Garman (1976:76) explained that *and* is the first conjunction used by learners as a way of maintaining narrative flow, and is often attached to the end of a phrase indicating to the listener not to interrupt. The results of the current research concur with the findings by Nxumalo (1997:29) and indicate a need in ELoLT learners to acquire connective words in their expressive vocabulary so that they can join complex sentences in narratives more creatively.

The results emphasized that learner participants experienced problems to convey meaning in narrative and conversation tasks. According to Hoff (2004:385), producing a narrative and participating in conversation place content and processing demands on the speaker. The learner participants were in the process of narrative development where cognitive demands may interfere with the narrative task, as suggested by Hoff (2004:385). Although the researcher followed the learner participants' narratives and conversations, the results in Table 6.33 revealed that they need to be supported to produce a better narrative. This support could be supplied in the preschool classrooms by the preschool teachers providing scaffolding, asking supportive questions,

and making commands to aid the learner towards improved narrative production.

- **Individual variations (lexical innovations)**

In Table 6.34 an analysis of learner participants' individual variations in expressive language is presented. The most noteworthy result was that one new category of individual variations was identified.

One feature was added to the categories of individual variations as identified by Nxumalo (1997:30), since its frequency of occurrence suggested that it has become part of some of the learner participants' expressive vocabulary. Evidence to support this inclusion was found in the discussion by Terrell, Battle and Grantham (1998:44) who identified 'gonna' as a dialectal feature in African American English.

TABLE 6.34:   ANALYSIS OF LEARNER PARTICIPANTS' INDIVIDUAL VARIATIONS (N=30)

TYPE OF VARIATIONS	PERCENTAGE OF LEARNERS			TOTAL NUMBER OF OCCURRENCE IN SAMPLE		
	JUNIOR GROUP (N=10)	MIDDLE GROUP (N=10)	SENIOR GROUP (N=10)	JUNIOR	MIDDLE	SENIOR
Invent words *There was gunning through his hand*	10%	0%	10%	1	0	2
Indiscriminate use of dialectal terms *We ate Simbas (chips)*	0%	10%	10%	0	3	1
*Use "gonna" instead of "going to" *Your mother is gonna come and fetch you*	40%	20%	20%	4	4	4

* New category of individual variations identified

The most prominent individual variation identified in Table 6.34 was the use of *gonna* instead of *going to.*   Makin et al. (1995:90) described this variation as a form of creating - a stage of L2 acquisition where learners produce variations of previously memorised words and phrases.   The learner participants thus showed signs of understanding the processes of word formation. Terrell, Battle and Grantham (1998:47, 48) explained that the use of such dialectal terms may be influenced by region or generation. Learner participants therefore added new words to their vocabularies that identified

them as part of a peer group or culture and with which they can communicate with peers and show affiliation to the group.

Language variation, in particular the implications of new English forms, is currently being debated in the literature. Van der Walt (2001:1; 7; 8) argues that a common standard in English is required and that mutual international comprehensibility should be taken into account. From an educational perspective, standard British English is to be acquired, which in its written form is regarded as the ideal and goal of the literate (Sarinjeive, 1999:131). As most parents or caregivers would agree that this is the English the learners should acquire, it is implied that learner participants need to be stimulated in class as well as in the communities with good models of English.

- **Interaction patterns**

An analysis of interaction patterns in the learner participants is presented in Table 6.35.

TABLE 6.35: ANALYSIS OF INTERACTION PATTERNS IN LEARNER PARTICIPANTS (N=30)						
TYPE OF OBSERVATIONS	**PERCENTAGE OF LEARNERS**			**FREQUENCY OBSERVED**		
	JUNIOR GROUP (N=10)	**MIDDLE GROUP (N=10)**	**SENIOR GROUP (N=10)**	**JUNIOR**	**MIDDLE**	**SENIOR**
No response	100%	60%	50%	41	24	22
Non-verbal response	80%	100%	70%	35	26	23
Answers restricted to yes/no	0%	10%	10%	0	6	15
Answers in single words	20%	40%	60%	4	26	10
Gestures	20%	40%	90%	3	5	27
False starts	20%	50%	90%	3	8	26
Incomplete sentences	20%	20%	90%	2	5	33
Code-switching	10%	30%	50%	2	3	22
Answers inappropriately	60%	30%	100%	8	9	29
Many prompts necessary	40%	20%	10%	4	2	2
Meaningful sounds	0%	10%	40%	0	4	6
Repetition of words	70%	20%	90%	18	7	51
Repetition of phrases	10%	20%	80%	6	7	33
Repetition of sentences	30%	10%	50%	3	1	11
Answers "I don't know"	40%	30%	40%	8	5	5
Problems with word order	10%	30%	100%	1	3	30

The category *interaction patterns* was added to the error analysis form as similar language characteristics emerged during the analysis of the expressive

language of learner participants. The results displayed in Table 6.35 provide information on the learner participants' verbal patterns while learning to communicate in ELoLT with a limited English vocabulary. The results reflect stages of the acquisition of ELoLT as described in the literature (Tabors, 1997: 60-69). The non-verbal phase, which has been discussed earlier and is characterised by rehearsal and sound experimentation in ELoLT, is evident from the results in Table 6.35. According to ASHA (1985:30), hesitations, false starts, filled and silent pauses, and other dysfluent behaviours may be exhibited by multilingual learners because of a lack of knowledge of English (ASHA, 1985:30). When multilingual learners have collected enough language data on ELoLT and feel competent, they attempt expressing themselves in additional languages, using individual words and phrases.

Table 6.35 further illustrates how learner participants repeated words, phrases, and sentences, when they started to build their own sentences indicating the beginning of the productive use of language (Hoff, 2004:192). The phase of productive language use is a cumulative process where learners maintain techniques from previous phases and use all the skills at their disposal to convey meaning (Tabors, 1977:69). The language system obviously provides a mechanism for learners to learn language by using language. The more the language system is used, the better the learners' proficiency become, and the more effective meaning is conveyed (Tiegerman-Farber, 1995:21).

The results in Table 6.35 also show the learner participants' use of *code-switching* during interaction. Interesting findings that emerged upon analysis of the data were, *first,* that the learners employed *code-mixing* – the borrowing of single words from an additional language, according to Kaschula and Anthonissen (1995:73), and s*econd,* that all the learner participants code-switched to Afrikaans and not to their L1. This may be attributed to various factors, namely that they could not recall the specific words in their L1, their teachers may have code-switched to Afrikaans in the classes as discussed in Section 6.2.1.3, or learner participants may have been sensitive towards the researcher, being White, who would not comprehend code-switching to

African languages. Dawber and Jordaan (1999:14) pointed out that learners are unlikely to code-switch to a language the listener will not understand. The code-switching to Afrikaans was not mentioned in any of the teacher participants' responses to the questionnaire (discussed in the first part of Chapter Six). They did, however, indicate that learners code-switched to their L1 (Tables 6.4 and 6.15).

When the above results are considered with the results of Table 6.4 and 6.15, it becomes apparent that code-switching was not restricted to one language. Heugh (2002:188) pointed out that multilingual children of Africa have a remarkable ability to draw on their language resources in multilingual situations and code-switch or code-mix to many languages to accommodate communication partners. It appears that the learner participants were using code-switching in a contextually sensitive way.

According to Table 6.35, the whole Senior Group of learner participants displayed *problems with word order*. Indications are once again that the more verbal learner participants became, the more problems they experienced with assessed language features. The Senior Group could formulate simple sentences correctly, but experienced difficulties with word order in complex sentences. Owens (2001:211) stated that word order is one of the earliest principles learned in language acquisition and explained that learners initially rely on a few rigid formulas to form sentences, but later learn other forms and develop a flexible system for sentence formulation, adaptable to different discourse situations. The learner participants were therefore in the process of acquiring a flexible system of word order.

From the above findings, the following observation is made, conclusion is drawn and corresponding need is identified.

OBSERVATION
The use of directive methods to elicit language samples was considered an appropriate method to obtain representative samples of learner participants' continuous speech.

CONCLUSION
The learner participants' expressive ELoLT skills reveal various errors which may be ascribed to L1 interference, but were similar to errors identified in multilingual learners in other contexts and, therefore, can be described as typical in English Additional Language (EAL) acquisition.

CORRESPONDING NEED
A need was identified to support the learner participants' expressive language skills across a developmental continuum.

6.3.1.3   Learner participants' pragmatic skills

The pragmatic behaviours of learner participants were assessed with the *Creaghead Checklist of Pragmatic Behaviors - Format 2* (Creaghead, 1982), and the descriptive statistics are presented in Table 6.36.

TABLE 6.36: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR PRAGMATIC BEHAVIOURS					
GROUP	MEAN	SD	MIN/25	MAX/25	N
JUNIOR	9	5.59	3	23	10
MIDDLE	13.7	4.66	8	22	10
SENIOR	20.7	4.44	13	25	10

Table 6.36 provides an indication of the range of learner participants' responses to the Creaghead Checklist of Pragmatic Behaviors – Format 2 (Creaghead, 1982).

The results obtained from the checklist are presented in Table 6.37.The most significant result that emerged was that the learner participants on the whole displayed a variety of pragmatic behaviours.

According to Table 6.37, two of the assessed pragmatic behaviours were observed in learner participants of all age groups in similar proportions. The communicative intent of *greeting* was observed in all learner participants (100%) across all age groups. On the other hand, only a limited number of learner participants across all age groups (Junior group - 20%, Middle group - 30%, Senior group - 20%) displayed the communicative intent of *denial.* It is postulated that the latter result may have been influenced by the elicitation context, or by habits in African cultures where children, out of respect for adults, will not question them even when they make mistakes, as was expected in this item. Kaschula and Anthonissen (1995:78) explained that *respectful reserve* in learners is often misunderstood in cross-cultural communication and that failure of multilingual learners to respond may be explained by their obedient waiting for a signal to communicate.

TABLE 6.37: LEARNER PARTICIPANTS' PRAGMATIC BEHAVIOURS (N=30)			
ASSESSED ITEMS	**PERCENTAGE OBSERVED IN SAMPLE**		
	JUNIOR GROUP (N=10)	**MIDDLE GROUP (N=10)**	**SENIOR GROUP (N=10)**
COMMUNICATIVE INTENTS			
Greeting	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
Request for object	10%	50%	70%
Request for action	20%	40%	70%
Request for information	10%	70%	70%
Comment on object	40%	60%	70%
Comment on action	50%	60%	80%
Describing an event	40%	30%	100%
Predicting	**30%**	**80%**	**100%**
Hypothesising	**50%**	**30%**	**70%**
Denial	**20**%	**30%**	**20%**
Making choices	90%	100%	100%
Giving reasons	**10%**	**30%**	**100%**
Closing	90%	90%	100%
CONVERSATIONAL DEVICES			
Answering	70%	100%	100%
Volunteering to communicate	20%	50%	80%
Attending to the speaker	90%	100%	100%
Taking turns	**20%**	**70%**	**90%**
Acknowledging	40%	60%	90%
Specifying a topic	10%	30%	80%
Changing topic	10%	0%	60%
Maintaining a topic	40%	80%	90%
Asking conversational questions	10%	10%	70%
Giving expanded answers	0%	20%	90%
Requesting clarification	10%	60%	90%
Clarifying	10%	20%	90%

From Table 6.37 it is clear that good development across the age groups were displayed for *taking turns,* which is regarded as one of the basic principles of dialogue. Kaschula and Anthonissen (1995:78) pointed out that there are often different conventions guiding different cultures in the aspect of turn

taking. They explained that it is less acceptable for a child to interrupt an adult speaker in the Xhosa community than in the English-speaking community (Kaschula & Anthonissen, 1995:78). Despite the cultural differences between the researcher and the learner participants, the learner participants appeared to be in the process of acquiring appropriate skills in turn taking.

Table 6.37 further indicates that the pragmatic behaviours of the Senior Group on the whole were well developed and with the exception of *denial*, all the assessed skills were observed in 60% or more of the senior learners. *Giving reasons (100%), predicting (100%),* and *hypothesising (70%)*, regarded as difficult and dependent on language for their manifestation, were observed in 70% to 100% of the senior learners.   Creaghead (1984:242) presented evidence that these behaviours develop later in the preschool years than the other skills assessed, which suggests adequate pragmatic development in the senior learner participants.

The results shown in Table 6.37 indicate overall typical pragmatic development in the learner participants. These findings are supported by the research of Jordaan (1993:86), who identified a range of communication functions and conversational management strategies in multilingual preschool learners. However, pragmatic behaviours may be viewed differently across cultures (Kaschula & Antonissen, 1995:78; Mattes & Omark, 1984:81), as not all cultures place the same emphasis on verbal communication. In addition, Battle (1998:26) observed how conversation in Western cultures tends to be horizontal, whereas conversation in non-Western cultures may be vertical, flowing from persons with higher to lower prestige.   As individuals from different cultures have distinct communication standards, awareness of cultural differences is crucial before any disorder may be identified in multilingual learners.

From the above findings, the following observation is made, conclusion is reached and corresponding strength is identified.

OBSERVATION
The Creaghead Checklist of Pragmatic Behaviors – Format 2 (Creaghead, 1982), was considered an appropriate assessment tool and the communication-demand situation which was created provided opportunities to observe elicited pragmatic behaviours.

CONCLUSION
The learner participants displayed typical development of pragmatic behaviours.

CORRESPONDING STRENGTH
The typical development of pragmatic behaviours was identified as a strength of the learner participants. They had a range of communicational intentions and conversational devices that compensated to a degree for insufficient receptive and expressive ELoLT skills in conversations.

6.3.2   Summary of learner participants' needs and strengths

Table 6.38 provides a summary of the needs and strengths of learner participants identified during Phase Two.

TABLE 6.38: THE NEEDS AND STRENGTHS OF LEARNER PARTICIPANTS IDENTIFIED IN PHASE TWO	
NEEDS	**STENGTHS**
• To improve receptive English skills • To support the development of expressive English skills	• Show typical development of pragmatic behaviours

The language and communication assessment of learner participants provided valuable information on the learners' specific language needs and characteristics of ELoLT errors displayed by the multilingual preschool learners. Although the current trend is towards an asset-based approach which recognises that every learner has competencies and that these provide a positive base from which to start intervention (Nelson, 1998:297), the error analysis allowed the researcher to compare, contrast, and develop insight and understanding from the patterns of language behaviour (Fetterman, 1998:96; Johnson, 1992:148). A need analysis further provided insight into the typical

L2 acquisition process and revealed the processes underlying that development.   According to Huebner (as cited by Nxumalo, 1997:1), knowledge of how additional languages are learned, may provide pointers to the manner in which the learning process needs to be facilitated.

6.3.3 Comparison of teacher participants' perceptions with results of ELoLT proficiency assessment of learner participants

To compare the teacher participants' perceptions regarding the language skills in English of the multilingual preschool learners with the language assessment data of learner participants acquiring ELoLT, data from the questionnaire were compared with data from the language and communication assessment. Twenty-seven language skills   from Phase One could be paired with 27 language skills from Phase Two (where there were exact matches between variables in the questionnaire and items tested with the test battery /checklist). The data were compared with the non-parametric Wilcoxin matched-pair signed rank test and the comparison is presented in Table 6.39.

Significant differences were found on 15 skills out of the 27 skills tested, which gave an indication of which ratings obtained from the teacher participants' perceptions differed from those obtained from the communication assessment.

TABLE 6.39: COMPARISON OF TEACHER PARTICIPANTS` PERCEPTIONS AND ASSESSMENT DATA OF LEARNER PARTICIPANTS' LANGUAGE SKILLS			
	LANGUAGE SKILLS	**MEAN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TWO RATINGS**	**P-VALUES ON WILCOXIN MATCHED – PAIR SIGNED RANK TEST**
PRAGMATIC SKILLS	Comment on action	-0.1889	0.1661
	Describe an event	-0.0667	0.4652
	Attend to speaker	-0.4667	**0.0000***
	Volunteer to communicate	-0.0556	0.1819
	Topic maintenance	-0.2556	**0.0024***
	Answer questions	-0.3444	**0.0002***
	Request for information	-0.0556	0.1681
	Request for clarification	-0.0889	0.0979
	Request for action/object	0.2333	**0.0187***
	Hypothesise	-0.1333	0.1664
	Give reasons	-0.1889	**0.0020***
	Greet	-0.3889	**0.0000***
EXPRESSIVE LANGAUGE SKILS	Code-switch	-0.0222	0.3181
	Follow 1- and 2-step commands	-0.4111	**0.0000***
	Preposition – through	0.3444	**0.0005***
	Gestures	0.3333	**0.0004***
	Name common objects	-0.1852	**0.0000***
	Use common verbs	-0.2937	**0.0000***
	Comparison	-0.0630	0.4745
	Name colours	-0.4731	**0.0000***
	Interrogatives	0.2822	**0.0000***
	Correct word order	-0.1500	0.3971
	Gender confusion	0.0500	0.6087
	Correct determiners	-0.2000	0.0758
	Correct prepositions	-0.2000	0.0758
	Verb errors	-0.1244	**0.0005***
	Degrees of comparison	0.3083	**0.0000***

* Significant p-values

The results in Table 6.9 show a significant difference for the pragmatic skill *request for actionlobject,* which has a positive difference, indicating that the teacher participants ranked this skill higher than the rating given in the communication assessment. The five pragmatic skills (*attend to speaker, topic maintenance, answer questions, give reasons, greet*) with a negative significant difference were rated lower by the teacher participants than the ratings given in the communication assessment.
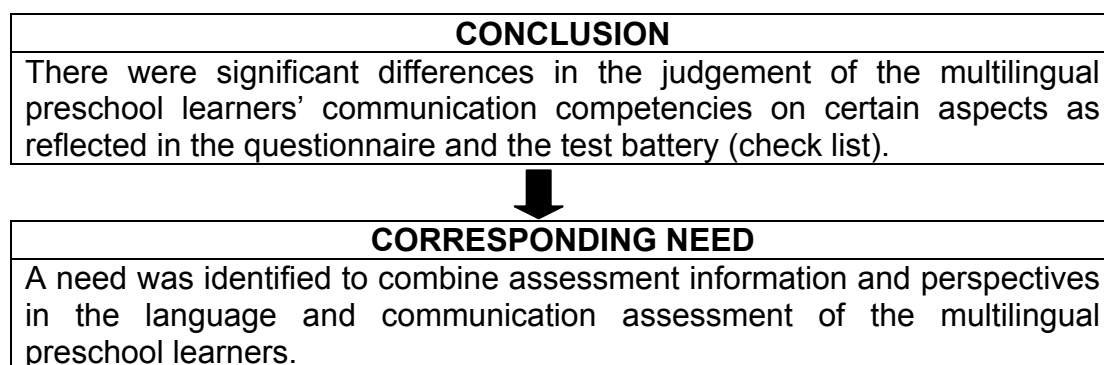
For the following four expressive language skills (*preposition-through, gestures, interrogatives, degrees of comparison) positive* significant differences indicate that the teacher participants rated these skills higher than the rating given in the communication assessment. The five expressive language skills with negative significant differences (*follow 1- and 2-step commands, name common objects, use common verbs, name colours, verb*

errors) were rated lower by the teacher participants than the ratings given in the communication assessment.

These findings indicate that there were significant differences in the judgement of some of the learner participants' English language skills by the teacher participants and the researcher. This may be attributed to the different environments in which the learner participants' English skills were assessed, namely the more natural communication setting of the classroom versus the more therapeutic situation of the formal assessment.

The teacher participants provided valuable information on the ELoLT needs and strengths of multilingual preschool learners, and Wyatt (1998:395) strongly valued teachers' clinical intuition of language barriers. However, the language and communication assessment in Phase Two provided more detailed information on ELoLT proficiency than Phase One, which is attributed to the use of a structured, detailed assessment. The significant differences between the teacher participants' perceptions and the researcher's assessment data displayed in Table 6.39 support the claim that an integrated view of the multilingual learners' communication abilities needs to be established across contexts, that assessment strategies such as naturalistic and structural assessments need to be combined, and that interdisciplinary perspectives need to be established.

From the above findings, the following conclusion is drawn and a corresponding need is identified.

CONCLUSION
There were significant differences in the judgement of the multilingual preschool learners' communication competencies on certain aspects as reflected in the questionnaire and the test battery (check list).

⬇

CORRESPONDING NEED
A need was identified to combine assessment information and perspectives in the language and communication assessment of the multilingual preschool learners.

This need of the teacher participants identified in Phase Two should be considered with the needs and strengths identified in Phase One (and summarised in Section 6.2.3) to constitute all the needs and strengths identified in the current research.

6.4 THE ROLE OF THE SPEECH-LANGUAGE THERAPIST IN THE ACQUISITION OF ELoLT BY THE MULTILINGUAL PRESCHOOL LEARNERS

The overall objective of Phase Three was *to explore the role of the speech-language therapist in the acquisition of ELoLT by multilingual preschool learners,* based on the results of Phase One and Phase Two of the research. The outcome of Phase Three is presented according to the objective presented in Figure 6.1. The role of the speech-language therapists is explored by interpreting both the subjective perceptions of the teacher participants and the objective communication assessment of the learner participants. This discussion will guide the formulation of a service delivery model in Chapter Seven.

The results of Phase One and Phase Two indicated an overlap in the language needs identified in learner participants, as insufficient receptive and expressive skills were identified in both phases. The implications of these results were that learner participants should have the benefit of supportive intervention and that it was the educational responsibility of the teacher participants to facilitate the acquisition of ELoLT by learner participants in the classrooms. The teacher participants also indicated in Phase One that they were willing to consult and collaborate with other educational support professionals, including speech-language therapists, to guide them in the multilingual classes through this period of educational change in South Africa.

The involvement of speech-language therapists in the acquisition of ELoLT is highly appropriate as they have been trained in the sequential nature of language development, as well as in the assessment and facilitation of language functioning (Jordaan, 1993:2). Although both the preschool

288

teachers and the speech-language therapists have the language needs of the learner acquiring ELoLT as primary focus, the respective roles of these professionals may contribute a unique knowledge base and expertise to the process.   Prelock (2000:214) proposes that the specific expertise of speech-language therapists in language development and language disorders set their role apart from that of teachers who may provide a less language-focused teaching curriculum. However, to prevent service gaps, unnecessary duplication, and contradictory service delivery, the language intervention practices of the teachers and the speech-language therapists need to converge to the advantage of the multilingual preschool learners (Ukrainetz & Fresquez, 2003:284; 285; 295).

According to ASHA (1991:49), collaborative service delivery models can augment traditional methods of serving multilingual learners. This implies that speech-language therapists have to think in broader terms about their roles and responsibilities in multilingual preschools. In contrast to the narrow focus of traditional service delivery models, including pull-out methods, the teacher participants' support needs (discussed in Section 6.2.2.4) clearly indicated that the principal role of the speech-language therapists need to be indirect, providing mainly consultative, but also collaborative support.   The terms *consultation* and *collaboration* are not synonymous, but instead must be viewed as independent concepts.   Whereas *collaboration* defines *how* individuals interact, *consultation* defines the *process* (Coufal, 1993:4). Morsink (1991:6) points out that both consultation and collaboration are features of interactive teamwork, as illustrated in Figure 6.3.
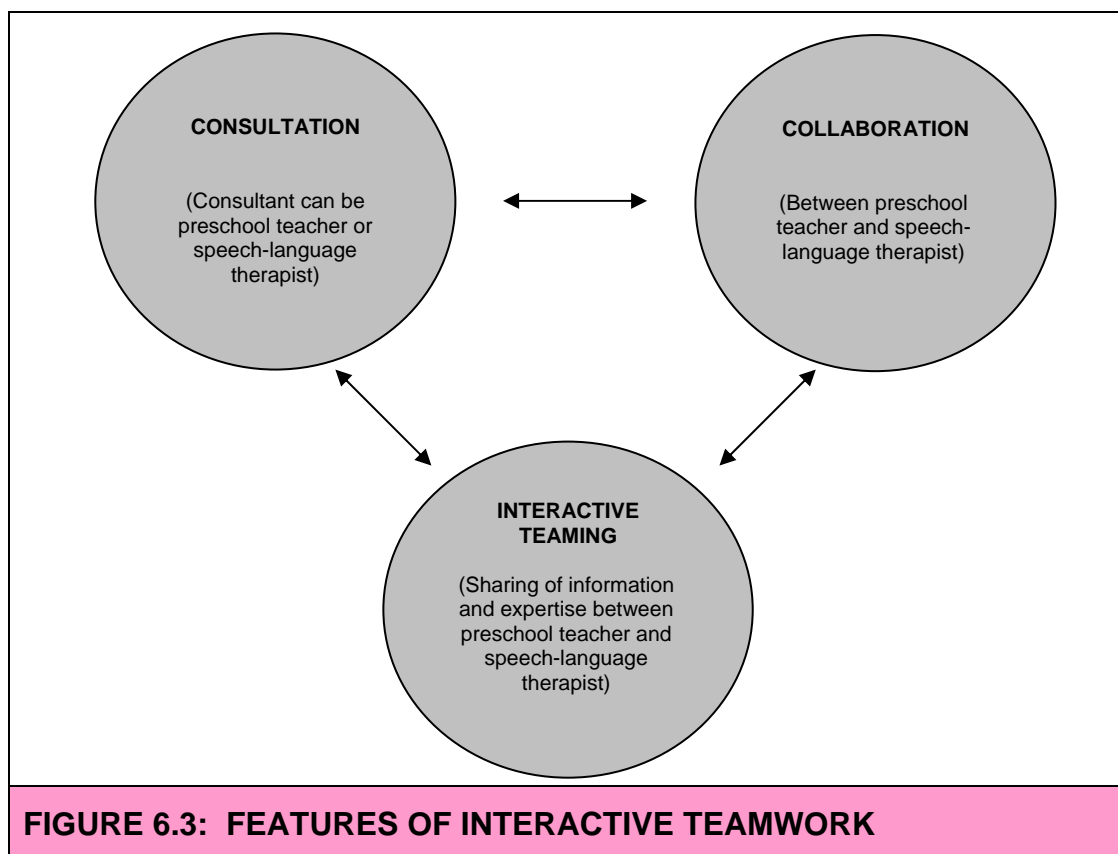
FIGURE 6.3: FEATURES OF INTERACTIVE TEAMWORK

Source: Morsink (1991:6).

According to Figure 6.3, the consultant constantly changes in interactive teamwork, being the person who possesses the necessary information on a given topic at a particular time. In *consultation,* the preschool teacher or the speech-language therapist needs to share knowledge in a reciprocal, rather than an authoritarian manner (Morsink, 1991:5). In *collaboration,* the preschool teachers' and the speech-language therapists' actions need to be coordinated to reach their common goal, which is to facilitate the acquisition of ELoLT by the multilingual learners. Collaboration between the two professionals therefore needs to be cooperative rather than competitive (Morsink, 1991:6).

When considering the research results, it becomes clear that the role of the speech-language therapist in the acquisition of ELoLT by the multilingual preschool learners needs to incorporate not only the components of consultation and collaboration, but also collaborative intervention, as will be described forthwith.

Consultation is the act of communicative interaction that provides a shared view for the consultant and consultee of social and biological conditions contributing to the present problem (Coufal, 1993:3). Scarce human and material resources and a need for assistance to resolve problems may be the motivation to enter into the consultation process.

Consultation explicitly calls for *voluntary participation* (Coufal, 1993:8). As the results in Phase One indicated that not all the teacher participants required support, the preschool teachers' participation in consultation with speech-language therapists needs to be based on a demonstration of interest in collaboration. Voluntary participation may contribute to the success of consultation, as no administrative mandate can coerce the preschool teacher and the speech-language therapist to form the interdependent relationship necessary for successful consultation (Drake, 1993:10). Such a working relationship needs to evolve out of respect between the two professionals, the need to share information, skills and resources, and the need for mutual support on behalf of the multilingual learners (Coufal, 1993:8).

Collaboration includes working together in a supportive and mutually beneficial way to develop intervention plans deriving from joint problem definition and provision of services, with shared responsibility for all outcomes. Collaboration involves more than cooperation, in that coequality and co-participation are essential to the process (Coufal, 1993:4-5). By adopting the collaborative ethic, the speech-language therapist promotes shared responsibility and understanding with the preschool teacher.

It was suggested in the results of Phase One that education support professionals, including speech-language therapists, may have to take the lead in initiating collaboration with the teacher participants. Such collaboration may, however, depend largely on the competencies of the preschool teachers and the speech-language therapists in clarifying and redefining their roles to form a team that provides services to the multilingual preschool learners.

Collaborative intervention is regarded as a systematic process of planning, problem solving, and sharing of resources and responsibilities in intervention that involves team members from diverse professional backgrounds (Coufal, 1993:1-12).   Although collaborative intervention was identified from the research results of Phase One as one of the roles of speech-language therapists, they need to become advocates for collaborative consultation and demonstrate how their expertise, coupled with the expertise of the preschool teachers, may provide relevant support that could lead to meaningful outcomes for the needs identified in the multilingual preschool learners.

Although many speech-language therapists and preschool teachers may want to adopt the collaborative consultation approach, they need to realise that this approach involves more than simply talking to each other and randomly sharing their expertise.   Collaborative consultation is a systematic process that depends on the adoption of a collaborative ethic and knowledge of the process (Coufal, 1993:12).

The results obtained in the empirical study indicated that the teacher participants were positive about support from speech-language therapists, which is in line with current government policy of teacher support by educational support professionals.   Although no single person or profession has sufficient knowledge and experience to provide all the supporting functions associated with the needs of multilingual preschool learners and preschool teachers, the results of this study indicated that the speech-language therapist is one of the professionals that may be employed as consultant and resource person.   Through a jointly developed partnership, preschool teachers and speech-language therapists could facilitate ELoLT development in the multilingual preschool learners with limited communication skills, and enable the inclusion of these learners in the learning environment where they may have experienced linguistic barriers to learning.   This exploration of the role of the speech-language therapist served as a guide to the formulation of a service delivery model for the acquisition of ELoLT in Chapter Seven.

6.5   CONCLUSION

The current study investigated the specific educational context of multilingual preschools in the Pretoria CBD and Sunnyside area in order to understand the local context, describe the language needs of multilingual learners acquiring ELoLT, and explore the role of speech-language therapists in support of preschool teachers and multilingual preschool learners. Although this study was initiated in response to the needs of this specific community, it is also in line with the call by the Department of Education (DoE) in White Paper 5 (RSA, 2001a:18) for all professionals involved in ECE to respond passionately and work together in fulfilling the educational needs of young learners. The current research was conducted to construct meaning from the teacher and learner participants' needs and strengths, and to reinterpret this knowledge by providing guidelines to speech-language therapists and preschool teachers on the model of service delivery, as well as initial stage intervention guidelines to facilitate the acquisition of ELoLT by the multilingual preschool learners.

While extensive research on multicultural education is currently underway (Heugh, 2005; Harmse, 2005; Naudé, 2005; Viljoen & Molefe, 2001:121), the results obtained from the empirical study supplied contextual information and contributed to the search for solutions to local problems. The observations and conclusions resulting from the research findings have generated a number of contextual recommendations towards addressing the language teaching needs of the preschool teachers, as well as the linguistic needs of the multilingual preschool learners. In the specific research context, the findings provided empirical support for the theoretical claims that speech-language therapists can play a role in the acquisition of ELoLT by urban multilingual preschool learners. This clearly indicates that South African speech-language therapists need to be included as team members when addressing the language needs of young learners acquiring ELoLT.

6.6   SUMMARY

This chapter presented the results of the empirical study, which included the questionnaire survey and the communication assessment. The results were organised into three sections according to the three phases of the study, namely the needs and strengths of preschool teachers and ELoLT learners, the language and communication proficiency of multilingual preschool learners, and the role of the speech-language therapist. These results form the basis upon which a service delivery model and initial stage intervention guidelines for the acquisition of ELoLT by the multilingual preschool learners will be proposed in Chapter Seven.