

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The end of the journey marks new beginnings (Drake, 1993:52).

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of applied research is to solve problems in practice, and therefore most applied research findings have implications for knowledge development (Fouché, 2002a:109). In the field of Communication Pathology, research findings can support the implementation of specific intervention approaches and can be used to motivate changes in service delivery models. Such evidence-based approaches to clinical services involve the conscious use of current theory and research to frame the services provided (Apel, 2001a: 196). An important part of research is therefore to contribute to the knowledge on the expanding role of the dynamic profession of the speech-language therapist and, in addition, to create opportunities for progress within the discipline of Communication Pathology.

The changes in the population demographics of urban South Africa, resulting in an ever-increasing number of multilingual preschool learners attending preschools (Wolhuter, 2000:156), have implications for South African speech-language therapists. Speech-language therapists have to prepare to serve this multilingual population and make a meaningful contribution to support the learners' education. However, in order to be relevant, a service delivery model that facilitates the acquisition of English as Language of Learning and Teaching (ELoLT) and involves speech-language therapists has to be context specific, based on contextually determined goals and desired outcomes (Harber, 1999:8). The current research aims to provide a research base for a proposed service delivery model for the acquisition of ELoLT in the specific

research context where language needs were identified in the multilingual preschool learners acting as participants.

The specific educational context of multilingual preschools in the Pretoria Central Business District (CBD) and Sunnyside was investigated to provide research-based recommendations for clinical practice. This exploratory study can guide the clinical implementation of collaborative consultation between speech-language therapists and the preschool teachers sharing the responsibility for the multilingual preschool learners' success with the acquisition of ELoLT, and serve to generate further research.

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the conclusions drawn from the theoretical and empirical research study as described in the previous chapters, to critically evaluate the research, to propose a service delivery model for the acquisition of ELoLT, and to recommend initial stage ELoLT intervention guidelines for the multilingual preschool learners in the research context.

7.2 CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE RESEARCH

The current study explored the existing situation in multilingual preschools in the Pretoria CBD and Sunnyside area, and interpreted the current opinions and perceptions of the preschool teachers in order to guide speech-language therapists towards the fulfilment of their role in the specific context. The empirical research consisted of three research phases, which resulted in the following research conclusions:

- The results of *Phase One* revealed the teacher participants' perceptions of the impact of certain personal challenges while supporting the preschool learners acquiring ELoLT. Most of the challenges in the research context were in the form of needs, but strengths were identified as well. The teacher participants acknowledged, *first*, the need for knowledge about additional language acquisition and cultural issues and, *second*, the need for support. The results indicated that the teacher participants were willing

to consult and collaborate with other professionals, including speech-language therapists, in support of the multilingual preschool learners. The teacher participants were therefore prepared to form partnerships in dealing with multilingual challenges.

- The results of *Phase One* further indicated that the teacher participants perceived certain needs and strengths in the multilingual preschool learners. The multilingual preschool learners in the research context had to communicate in ELoLT despite it being an unfamiliar language. Some of the multilingual preschool learners displayed negative social and emotional behaviours, such as withdrawal, frustration, and discipline problems, that could be interpreted as indicators of negative influences on their self-esteem. The results added to the growing awareness that a holistic approach to intervention needs to be the basis of the multilingual learners' education, and that interdisciplinary partnerships need to be established to bring together diverse perspectives and expertise for collaborative intervention. In collaborative partnerships between the preschool teachers and educational support staff, knowledge related to the multilingual preschool learners' strengths and barriers to education could be shared to enhance the learning process.
- The results of *Phase Two* indicated that many of the learner participants' comprehension of and expression in ELoLT were insufficient for learning and that they required support for academic success. The types of expressive ELoLT errors made by the learner participants were similar to errors identified in other South African research contexts (Van der Walt, 2001; Nxumalo, 1997; Jordaan, 1993) and could therefore be described as typical in the acquisition of English as Additional Language (EAL). The results indicated that the learner participants displayed good development in a range of communicational intentions and conversational devices, such as turn taking which is generally regarded as one of the basic principles of dialogue. The multilingual learners' typical development of pragmatic

behaviours compensated to a degree for insufficient receptive and expressive ELoLT skills in conversations.

- The results of *Phase Two* furthermore indicated that the teacher participants' subjective perceptions of the multilingual preschool learners' ELoLT proficiency were not always congruent with the objective communication assessments of the learner participants. These results support the claim that an integrated view of the multilingual learners' communication abilities needs to be established across contexts, by combining assessment strategies, such as naturalistic and structural assessment, as well as interdisciplinary perspectives.
- In *Phase Three* the results of Phase One and Phase Two were interpreted to explore the role of speech-language therapists in the acquisition of ELoLT by the multilingual preschool learners. The results indicated that the principal role of speech-language therapists in the acquisition of ELoLT needs to be indirect, providing mainly consultative, but also collaborative support to the preschool teachers with the acquisition of ELoLT by the multilingual preschool learners.

The exploration of the role of the speech-language therapist in Phase Three served as a guide to the formulation of a service delivery model for the acquisition of ELoLT in the research context, which is presented forthwith.

7.3 A SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL TO FACILITATE THE ACQUISITION OF ENGLISH AS LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

The researcher used the results of the empirical research to propose a service delivery model for the acquisition of ELoLT in the research context, as recommended by De Vos (2002b:43). A service delivery model was generated in the research context, where no model of service delivery had previously existed. Such a theoretical model may guide the development of

hypotheses, suggest new areas of research, and provide a basis for the planning of intervention guidelines (De Vos, 2002b:38; Fouché, 2002b:97). Over the past two decades, collaborative service delivery models have been proposed in other contexts, but have never been widely applied in South Africa. Some speech-language therapists appreciated the apparent advantages of collaboration, but experienced many barriers, such as scheduling, planning and training, to establishing collaborative service delivery models (Elksnin & Capilouto, 1994:263). It appears that speech-language therapists tend to prefer the traditional intervention approach where they work independently and pull learners from the classrooms for individual sessions (ASHA, 1991:44). However, the current emphasis in South African education on eco-systemic perspectives, inclusion, collaborative partnerships, Whole Language approaches to instruction, and the generalisation of intervention results demands the consideration of alternative service delivery options by speech-language therapists. A graphic representation of the proposed model, based on the research results, is provided in Figure 7.1.

The proposed service delivery model for the acquisition of ELoLT in Figure 7.1 has three components, namely consultation, collaboration, and collaborative intervention. In *consultation* the preschool teachers and the speech-language therapists need 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 in the multilingual learners (Morsink, 1991:6). In *collaborative intervention* the preschool teachers and the speech-language therapists share responsibilities for the direct instruction of the multilingual learners (Prelock, 2000:213). The following discussion of the three components of a service delivery model for the acquisition of ELoLT is based on the current research results, but includes recommendations from the literature of the past two decades.

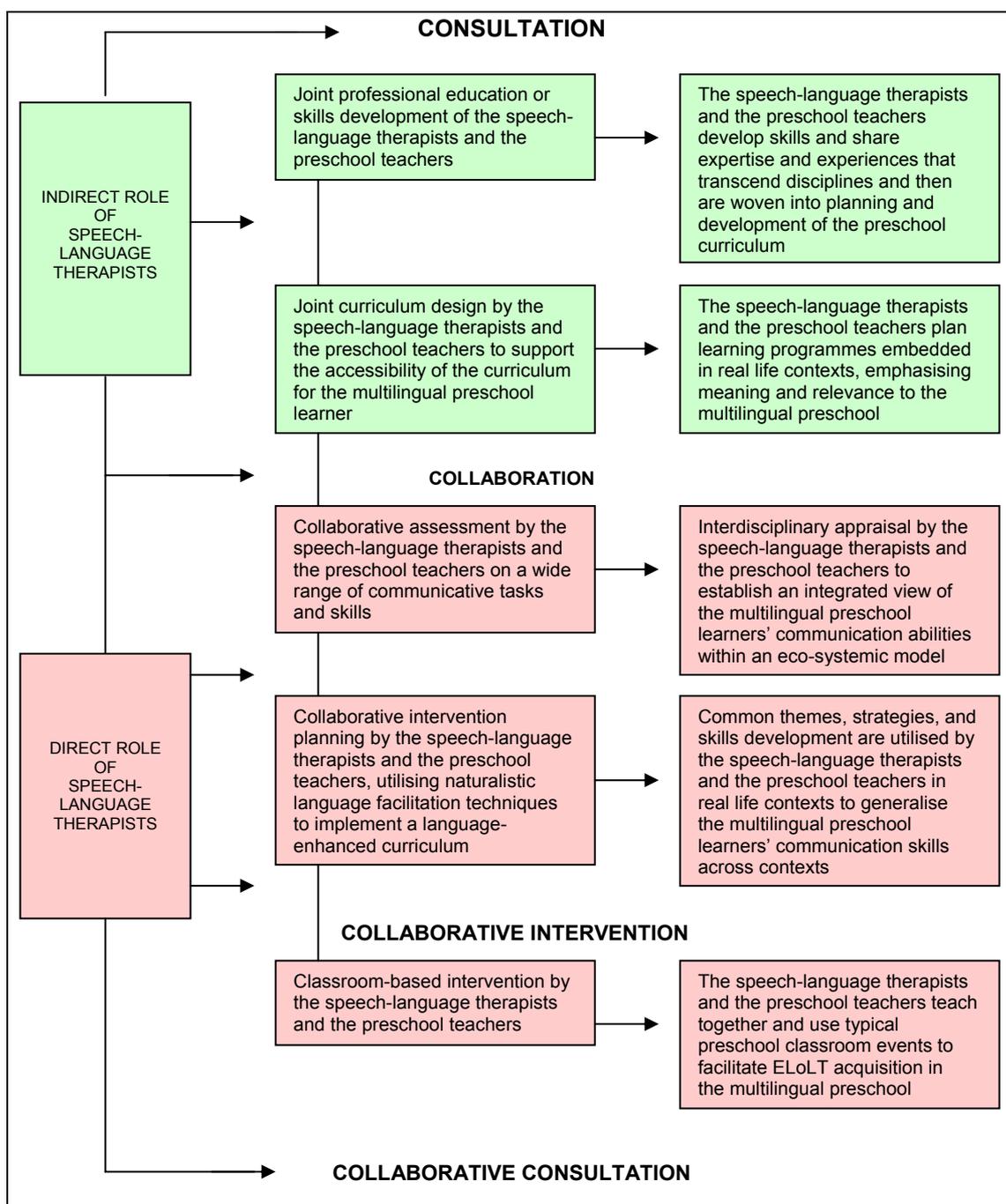


FIGURE 7.1: A SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL FOR THE ACQUISITION OF ELoLT TO FACILITATE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION WITHIN THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

- The *first consultative role* for both the speech-language therapists and the preschool teachers identified from the results of Phase One is *professional education or skills development*. The preschool teachers may need instruction in the nature of language and communication, whereas the

speech-language therapists may need information on the nature of the curriculum and its associated language demands (Brice & Perkins, 1997:20). It may therefore be necessary for the preschool teachers to familiarise the speech-language therapists with the learning areas of the curriculum, enabling them to understand their role within the curriculum and develop appropriate skills and knowledge to work within the curriculum (Struthers & Lewis, 2004:27). It implies that both professionals need to become ongoing learners themselves, sharing knowledge and information and drawing on the strength of the other in order to gain competencies and provide services responsive to the unique needs of the multilingual preschool learner.

- The *second consultative role* identified from the research results involves the *designing of learning programmes* and the *planning of structured language support* in the context of classroom activities. The results of Phase One clearly indicated that the teacher participants recognised the importance of language to the multilingual learners' academic success and socialisation, but did not feel competent to address the learners' linguistic needs in class. In consultation, the preschool teachers and the speech-language therapists need to plan a language-focused curriculum, using the natural contexts of the classroom as point of departure and the classroom format and curriculum as sources of programme content (Giangreco, as cited by Prelock, 2000:215). The speech-language therapists and the preschool teachers may thus create a plan of action for addressing the multilingual learners' particular language needs, based on what could practically be implemented in the classroom. Such a collaborative approach allows the synthesising and generalisation of communication skills across contexts and also supports accessibility to the curriculum. The preschool teachers need to play a leading role in any modifications to the curriculum to facilitate comprehension, ensuring that the conceptual requirements of the learning area are met. The speech-language therapists in collaborative curriculum design need to analyse the curriculum to identify important concepts and associated language

components (Lazar, 1994:10), and suggest modifications to the important ELoLT input of the preschool teachers (Nelson, 1989:182).

- The research results of Phase One indicated a perceived need of the teacher participants for knowledge about verbal strategies to support the acquisition of ELoLT. Drawing on the preschool teachers' knowledge of whole group instruction, speech-language therapists need to provide information on naturalistic language facilitation techniques to make instructional input comprehensible to learners with diverse levels of English proficiency. As the goal of language acquisition should be communication competence, the classroom focus needs to be on interactive communication without expecting correct usage of English from the outset (Viljoen & Molefe, 2001:124), nor the memorisation of grammatical rules. The quality and quantity of input need to be considered (Dawber & Jordaan, 1999:13-14), and the learning environment needs to provide comprehensible input, good language models, and an effective climate to comprehend and communicate meaning (Renton, 1998:32).
- As part of their consultative role, speech-language therapists may be required to provide instructional support, for example illustrative learning programmes, equipment, assessment instruments, and learner support material to teachers, as envisaged in White Paper 6 (RSA, 2001b:49) and indicated in the results of Phase One. Speech-language therapists need to explain to the preschool teachers how to incorporate activities in their lessons, based on the vocabulary requirements of the curriculum *and* the needs and interests of their learners. It may be essential for the preschool teachers to have a range of material available that could assist ELoLT learners to move along a developmental continuum in their comprehension of new English words. This implies moving from the real object, to the pictorial, to the symbolic or abstract representation as in the written word (Meyers, 1993:37). As there is currently a lack of appropriate teaching and learning materials (Mafisa, 2001:35), speech-language therapists and preschool teachers need to develop materials together to facilitate the

learning and development of learners with language barriers to learning. The challenge presented to these two professionals is to cross disciplinary borders and reach agreement without experiencing domain conflicts.

- The first *collaborative* role of the speech-language therapists, identified from the results of Phase One and Phase Two, is to assume primary responsibility in the team for coordinating the *communication assessment* of multilingual preschool learners, as they are trained in the assessment of communication abilities of preschool learners (Jordaan, 1993:2). The preschool teachers may take secondary responsibility for the communication assessment, thereby establishing an integrated view of the learners' language abilities in the context of a larger social system (Laing & Kamhi, 2003:46-48). In such interdisciplinary appraisals of the learners' language proficiency, the speech-language therapists need to assume responsibility for collecting, analysing, and synthesising the language assessment information, as well as presenting the results to the team (ASHA, 1991:46). This is generally acknowledged as one of the roles of the speech-language therapists and they are trained on tertiary level to perform such functions. Owing to the preschool teachers' involvement and support in assessing the learners, their confidence, skills, and knowledge about communication assessment will increase, while the speech-language therapists will acquire knowledge about the nature of the language demands of the curriculum and the multilingual preschool learners' ability to handle those demands. From the outcome of curriculum-based language assessment, functional goals and objectives for intervention need to be identified (Wilcox & Shannon, 1996:233; Nelson, 1989:180) and a service delivery model need to be selected.
- Lesson planning or *intervention planning* in collaboration with the preschool teachers is one of the most critical procedures to successful communication intervention (Wilcox & Shannon, 1996:234), and was identified as the second *collaborative* role of speech-language therapists from the results of Phase One. At the basic level, the preschool teachers

and the speech-language therapists need to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) in which speech and language goals become part of the academic IEP goals. The preschool teachers need to assume overall responsibility for the development of IEPs, while the speech-language therapists may contribute to IEP development in areas related to their expertise in speech, language, and communication (Wren, Roulstone, Parkhouse & Hall, 2001:109; 116). Intervention planning in inclusive education need to be guided, not only by a normal language developmental continuum, but also by the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS). The primary focus of intervention planning needs to meet the social *and* academic needs of ELoLT learners (Prelock, 2000:213). The integrated curriculum-based intervention aims may be planned as depicted in Table 7.1.

TABLE 7.1: CURRICULUM-BASED PLANNING FORM

LESSON PLAN			
CLASS: Grade R			
LEARNING AREA: Language: Thinking and reasoning			
CURRICULUM AIMS: Use language to develop concepts: shapes			
LANGUAGE AIMS: To expand receptive and expressive vocabulary and improve verbal expression			
CURRICULUM AIMS	SPEECH AND LANGUAGE AIMS	HOW: TECHNIQUES OR ACTIVITIES	MATERIAL
To identify shapes: circle, square, triangle, rectangle	To improve vocabulary skills To practise the use of comparative words To practise the use of one/more than one pronoun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce shapes by means of a story. Discuss target words/ repeat words • Learners identify shapes. Repeat, expand, extend • Match objects with similar shapes. Target words same, alike, like a • Describe similarities and differences. Target pronouns describing size and colour, e.g. big red circle • Identify different shaped objects in the classroom, and draw pictures. Questioning to elicit comparison of shapes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Story book • Plastic or wooden shapes • Objects pulled from a grab bag • Objects • Paper and crayons. Different size templates for circle, square, rectangle, triangle
To relate shapes to objects in the environment	To improve verbal expressions through descriptions, comparisons and contrasts		

Based on: RSA, 2002:45; Du Plessis, 1998b: 138; Farber, Denenberg, Klyman and Lachman, 1992:297.

Table 7.1 suggests that the preschool teachers need to assume primary responsibility for planning the curriculum goals and the speech-language therapists for planning the communication goals. In this manner their mutual

perspectives on desired outcomes may be combined in intervention planning (Hadley, Simmerman, Long & Luna, 2000:285).

- The results of Phase One indicated a perceived need of the teacher participants to utilise verbal strategies effectively in ELoLT acquisition. *Verbal strategies* to support ELoLT acquisition that need to be planned collaboratively, include the following: providing two or more options for objects or activities (forced alternatives); sabotage strategies; models of targeted communication behaviour (focused stimulation); maintaining or adding to the semantic content while highlighting structured aspects of language (e.g. expansions and recasts); sentence completion, and vertical structuring (Tabors, 1997:98; Wilcox & Shannon, 1996:227; Jordaan, 1993:57-61; Lemmer & Squelch, 1993:45). In addition, the learners' discourse techniques need to be improved with the emphasis on social, conversational, and narrative language (Farber et al., 1992:295). Although all of these strategies may be effective, some may be more appropriate than others, depending on the situation. In collaboration with the preschool teachers, the speech-language therapists may play a role in deciding which verbal strategy to employ in the classroom. The preschool teacher and the speech-language therapist need to continually evaluate and plan strategies in a flexible, cooperative process that allows for the changing needs of the learners.
- *Collaborative intervention* is the third *collaborative* role of the speech-language therapists and the preschool teachers, identified from the research results in Phase One. The role of the speech-language therapists in collaborative intervention needs to be a direct role, which implies direct contact with the multilingual preschool learners, as well as shared responsibilities with the preschool teachers for direct instruction of the preschool learners. As stated earlier, a service delivery model needs to be negotiated between the speech-language therapists and the preschool teachers (Nelson, 1989:180), and the level of role release between these professionals needs to be determined (Prelock, 2000:214).

Recognising that there is no perfect service delivery model (Farber & Klein, 1999:84), the speech-language therapists and the preschool teachers need to negotiate the *nature* of the services, the *location* of services, the *frequency* of services, the *mode* of services, the educational *relevance*, and the *necessity* of those services and their *functions* (Prelock, 2000:214).

- *Classroom-based* intervention (Wilcox & Shannon, 1996:222), which is regarded as the anchor for most collaborative intervention services, *may* be chosen as service delivery model. Successful classroom-based intervention facilitates communication behaviour essential to participation in classroom activities; is designed to take into account the communication opportunities in typical classroom events; includes therapeutic techniques integrated into classroom activities with respect to curriculum contexts; and is based on collaboration with teachers and families (Wilcox & Shannon, 1996:222). In Table 7.2 an example is presented of how the preschool teachers and the speech-language therapists may integrate their services in classroom-based intervention.

TABLE 7.2: INSTRUCTIONAL SCHEDULE FOR VOCABULARY ENHANCEMENT IN THE PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM

ACTIVITY	INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES	INTEGRATION OF VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION
Circle time	The preschool teacher takes attendance, facilitates calendar and weather discussion, and counting. The speech-language therapist may ask questions or make comments to enhance or expand the teacher's instruction.	The preschool teacher may incorporate target vocabulary.
Story time	The preschool teacher <i>or</i> the speech-language therapist may lead this activity. The teachers learn to incorporate songs, gestures, and drama into stories	Pre-teaching, discussion of target words, dramatisation of target words in story.
Small group activities	The preschool teacher and the speech-language therapist may lead small group discussions <i>respectively</i> . The learners rotate between two activities.	Focused stimulation of target words.
Free play	The speech-language therapist may model the use of indirect language facilitation techniques; the preschool teacher may observe and may gradually become independent.	Dramatic play facilitated by the speech-language therapist incorporating the week's theme.
Snack time	The preschool teacher and the speech-language therapist may <i>both</i> sit with the learners and facilitate interaction.	Follow the learners' lead and take advantage of opportunities to facilitate social interaction.
Language lesson	Whole group activity typically led by the preschool teacher, coaching the speech-language therapist in group-handling techniques. The speech-language therapist may use indirect language facilitation techniques and visual support to supplement the teacher's instruction.	Target vocabulary specifically incorporated into this instruction.

Source: Hadley et al., 2000:284.

As illustrated in Table 7.2, the speech-language therapists need to teach *with* the preschool teachers and not *for* them, assuming the role of co-teacher in classroom-based intervention (Farber & Klein, 1999:87). In such collaborative intervention, relationships need to be built on a strong network of trust and be framed within the context of natural settings, in which communication among the professionals is nurtured. The challenges that collaborative intervention presents to some speech-language therapists are to overcome their own traditional training influenced by a medical model, as opposed to an educational model, and to foster the teachers' receptiveness to have the speech-language therapists in their classrooms, sharing educational goals.

Collaborative intervention bridges the gap between traditional speech-language therapy and the ongoing communication demands of the ELoLT classroom. The results of Phase One and Phase Two indicated that many of the multilingual preschool learners have needs in the language domain. The preschool classroom is regarded as a fertile background for the generalisation of emerging language skills and provides learners with ample opportunities to practise newly acquired skills. The preschool teachers and the speech-language therapists need to utilise the classroom as natural context for ELoLT acquisition together. Such collaborative intervention honours the expertise of each collaborative partner, and efforts and responsibilities may be shared throughout the design (Simon, 1994:129).

It is suggested that the proposed service delivery model to facilitate the acquisition of ELoLT in the research context may be an effective approach to provide supportive intervention to the multilingual preschool learners with linguistic barriers to learning. The *first* benefit to the learners may be the integration of education and support services so that, through the sharing of information among the preschool teachers and the speech-language therapists, learners with linguistic barriers to learning may be accommodated in inclusive classrooms (Lewis, 2004:37). *Second*, through joint curriculum planning and intervention, the multilingual learners may benefit in all the learning areas, as aspects such as vocabulary, which could prove difficult, may be revealed and functional instructions planned to facilitate

comprehension (Lewis, 2004:37; Lyon & Lyon, 1980:262). *Third*, the multilingual learners may benefit from integrated language instruction as opportunities to expand their language skills may be utilised across the curriculum, providing increased opportunities for ELoLT stimulation and acquisition (Lewis, 2004:37; Genesee & Cloud, 1998:63; 64). The *fourth* benefit to the multilingual learners may be that ELoLT skills could be facilitated outside the therapeutic situation and generalised to natural communication settings such as the classroom and home setting (Hadley et al., 2000:291; Tiegerman-Farber, 1995:157; 194; Hixson, 1993:45).

In conclusion, it is suggested that the speech-language therapists have a consultative *and* collaborative role in the multilingual learners' acquisition of ELoLT. However, the role of the speech-language therapists needs to be primarily an indirect role that extends to resource sharing and support of the preschool teachers. In the proposed service delivery model to facilitate the acquisition of ELoLT in the research context, the preschool teacher and the speech-language therapist need to support the educational context for instruction together.

7.4 CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE STUDY

It is important to acknowledge the strengths as well as limitations of the study in order to gain perspective regarding the implications of the research results. The current investigation was conducted in the relatively unexplored research context of multilingual urban preschools, where the preschool teachers requested support and guidelines for service delivery from the speech-language therapists. A critical evaluation of this empirical research endeavour is important to guide judgement of the interpretation of the results and to preclude similar limitations in future studies (Strydom, 2002:255).

The current research was initiated as part of a larger institutional research project for the development of communication skills in young children. A research plan and design was drafted, compiled, and approved by the researcher's faculty advisors. After informed consent was granted by all

participants, the data were collected. The researcher's academic advisors only took over as supervisors of the research project from the faculty advisors after the data were collected. The main limitation of this study is that the formal research proposal was only submitted and approved after the research project had already been initiated. The researcher's academic advisors could therefore not provide their input before data collection to eliminate possible limitations in the questionnaire and research procedure. As proposals are currently mandatory for academic research projects, they should always be the point of departure for formal research to aid the researcher to organise the research endeavour, and to allow the researcher's academic advisors to provide guidance and monitor the progress of the research project (Leedy & Ormrod, 2004:115; 129).

Another limitation of the study is that the question evaluation by participants during the pretest did not reveal all the limitations of the questionnaire. Although the researcher was careful not to reveal the existing knowledge in the wording of the questions, the questions in Section Eight of the questionnaire may be regarded as leading questions. It is further recognised that in Section Four (Part One) and in Section Five of the questionnaire the rating scales selected by the participants may not have been appropriate for the type of question asked. As Fowler (1995:115) pointed out that non-representative pretests are a general problem associated with pretests, one could argue that a pretest with a larger and more representative sample of pretest participants potentially could provide more opportunities to identify difficulties in the question formation of the questionnaire (Fowler, 1995:115). It is acknowledged that reversals in question phrasing ensuring reliable answers from the participants were not included and that open-ended questions at the end of more questionnaire sections may have provided more qualitative data.

A limitation of the research was that informed consent was not explicitly obtained from the teacher participants, but only from the schools' principals. While completion of the questionnaire may be seen as agreement to participate, they needed to have been informed that participation was

voluntary, that they had the right to withdraw and that the following procedure, to obtain the questionnaires, were in no way coercive.

Although the questionnaire was rather lengthy, most of the questions were close-ended which shortened the duration for completion. A strength of the questionnaire was the relevant information the teacher participants' responses yielded regarding their opinions and suggestions for the acquisition of ELoLT by the multilingual preschool learners.

Another strength of the larger institutional research project is that the data collected during the research yielded enough information, not only for this study, but also for a DPhil dissertation submitted in November 2005, on *Profiling Language in Young Urban English Additional Language (EAL) Learners* (Naudé, 2005). A language profile for preschool EAL learners in the research context will provide a tool for the speech-language therapists and the preschool teachers in collaborative practice to identify those multilingual learners who are at risk of language learning disabilities, and a means of obtaining guidelines for the development of an appropriate intervention programme.

A strength of the research method was the use of triangulation. *Data triangulation* was implemented where a variety of sample strategies was used (De Vos, 2002a:365) to reduce observer bias and enhance the accuracy of the information (Balagopalan, 2003:27). The data were collected from two different sources in an attempt to cross-validate the results, for example the questionnaire was completed by the preschool teachers and the multilingual preschool learners were assessed. To provide a detailed description of the learners' communicative abilities, *interdisciplinary triangulation* was employed (Janesick, 1998:47) where assessment information was obtained from multiple perspectives (the preschool teachers and a speech-language therapist) to broaden the understanding of the context and reduce the limitations of single-discipline perspectives (Mouton & Marais, 1990:42).

Although one of the strengths of the research was that care was taken to assess the multilingual preschool learners in an unbiased manner, without the application of normative data, the dynamic assessment approach could have minimised any inherent bias in the measuring instruments even further. By focusing on how learners learn, as well as on appropriate learning strategies for individual learners (Laing & Kamhi, 2003:48), the dynamic assessment model offers the potential for a fair and meaningful assessment of learners from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

A limitation of this study was that classroom observations of the multilingual learners were not included in the language and communication assessment process. To obtain a fully contextualised view of the linguistic demands in naturalistic contexts and the manner in which multilingual preschool learners use language, *onlooker observation* in the classroom may have been conducted to supplement the individual structured assessments and to obtain more comprehensive language samples (Nelson, 1998:206). In addition, an account by parents or caregivers on the learners' L1 development may have provided a more detailed picture of the multilingual preschool learners' language proficiencies, as assessment of the learners needs to take into account the entire context in which the learner is learning and developing (Tabors, 1997:159).

A further limitation of the study is that focus group discussions and interviews with the teacher participants were not included as this may have provided more qualitative data. As too much time has elapsed since the completion of the questionnaires, the participants as well as the context-specific characteristics may have changed, and data therefore may not be comparable.

Another limitation of the study was that phonological awareness in the multilingual preschool learners was not assessed. It was excluded because the communication assessment in Phase Two was based on research by Jordaan (1993) (as stated previously), who assessed receptive, expressive, and pragmatic skills in learners. In the initial discussions with the preschool

teachers, before the research was initiated, phonological awareness was also not identified by the teachers as an area of concern. However, the assessment of phonological awareness is of central importance when considering the relationship between the learners' oral language and literacy (Hoff, 2004:130). An important facet of language development was therefore not included in the research. As the preschool teachers in the research context could benefit from research information on phonological awareness, further research on this aspect of the multilingual preschool learners' language development is implicated.

Although the study involved a single context and the results could not be generalised, the significance of the study is that it added to the knowledge of language variation and language use in the specific context. The analyses of the learner participants' language and communication assessment provided valuable information on the learners' specific language needs and the characteristics of ELoLT errors displayed by the multilingual preschool learners. This study provides information on the essence of ELoLT trends in the context and based on the results, recommendations for a service delivery model for the acquisition of ELoLT could be proposed and initial stage intervention guidelines will be recommended. These recommendations and guidelines may provide suggestions for the manner in which the language learning process for the multilingual learners could be facilitated. The study therefore contributed to existing knowledge that could ultimately improve practice and make a useful contribution towards ELoLT acquisition in the research context.

7.5 CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The empirical results of the research have the following important implications:

- The urban environment of the research context presents education with specific problems, challenges, and opportunities, for example the enrolment of the multilingual preschool learners with no prior knowledge of

English in preschools with English as Medium of Instruction (Mol). These multilingual preschool learners need to be supported in their adaptation, not only to the unfamiliar language and learning environment, but often also to a different culture. The home and school environments may have diverse sets of rules, values, expectations, and behaviours, requiring an adaptation between these settings from the preschooler in order to function optimally.

The multilingual preschool learners require supportive intervention *in the preschool classroom* where they need to have adequate opportunities to use English. Activities in the preschool classrooms need to be planned to create abundant and diverse opportunities for talking and listening. The preschool classrooms need to provide a stimulating language-rich environment for language use in meaningful social interactions, with good models of English language use. Whenever possible, the multilingual preschool learner with no prior knowledge of English needs to be placed in a class with other learners speaking the same L1, in order to allow peer-tutoring (Meyers, 1993:86). As peer interaction may take a variety of forms, depending on the cultural background of the learners, such interactions may vary from highly verbal to a great deal of non-verbal physical contact (Viljoen & Molefe: 2001:123) which may present a challenge in terms of the teachers' tolerance of such behaviour.

- The preschool teachers in the research context regarded the support of parents or caregivers important in the learners' acquisition of ELoLT. White Paper 5 (RSA, 2001a:4) also encouraged the involvement of parents or caregivers with preschool learners' education. Co-operation, communication, and understanding between the parents or caregivers and the preschool teachers need to be encouraged to ensure the successful education of the multilingual preschool learners. Meaningful parental or caregiver participation in the acquisition of ELoLT therefore needs to be planned and managed by the preschool teachers, and parents or caregivers need to be included in the service delivery team of the learner acquiring ELoLT. There are, however, challenges to the process, and

barriers to successful parental or caregiver involvement may exist from the teachers' perspective or from the parents' or caregivers' perspective (Lemmer & Squelch, 1993:89).

Personal contact with parents or caregivers needs to occur on a regular basis in order to share information and ideas, with the aim of improving the multilingual learners' learning experience and empowering parents or caregivers with some form of educational confidence to enable them to support the learners and reach well-informed decisions (Bosman, 2000:226). The parents or caregivers may also act as cultural resources to the preschool teachers, which may provide rich opportunities for parental or caregiver involvement and may be an effective way in which to achieve authentic cultural representation in the classroom.

- The preschool teachers need to incorporate cultural responsive experiences into the curriculum that value the multilingual learners' L1 and culture, as that will enhance interpersonal communication among learners and contribute to the learners' social and academic success. Through the identification and recording of, and reference to the multilingual preschool learners' cultural background, the preschool teachers may provide an accepting, secure classroom climate, sensitive to cultural and linguistic diversity (Viljoen & Molefe, 2001:121).
- The changing and challenging multilingual school environment in South Africa demands a curriculum reform regarding multicultural and multilingual education in teacher training programmes, and the programmes need to be extended to in-service training for the existing teaching corps. Linguistic and cultural diversity therefore has implications for curriculum transformation (Louw, 2004:262). Teacher training programmes need to address both theory and practice in multicultural education in a comprehensive manner to allow pre-service teachers to become knowledgeable and confident about multicultural and multilingual issues in

education (Barry & Lechner, 1995:149). Heugh, Siegrühn and Plüddemann (1995:109) suggested a multilingually focused core curriculum for teachers' language education programmes, comprising four interrelated components, namely scholastic literacy and language proficiency endorsement, language awareness, language across the curriculum, and language as subject methodology.

- Although preschool education currently varies significantly in terms of quality (RSA, 2001a:14), the government recognises that independent preschools are here to stay (RSA, 2001a:19, 23, 37). However, independent preschool programmes need to be regulated and the quality of some independent preschool programmes needs to be controlled. To achieve this, preschools need to be registered with provincial departments of education and monitored through the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS), which include Developmental Appraisal, Performance Measurement and Whole School Evaluation (RSA, 2003:3). In addition, Grade R teachers need to be registered with the South African Council of Educators, and, where necessary, preschool teachers need to undergo approved in-service training programmes. Such regulations will ensure quality education to preschool learners.
- To overcome the historical division between education support services and main stream education, where support has been directed at a limited number of learners in predominantly urban areas (RSA, 1997:3), more interdisciplinary research projects need to be conducted within the South African context of educational change and inclusive education. To meet the needs of all multilingual learners, interdisciplinary research needs to provide evidence-based guidelines to educational professionals on their changing role within education. Interdisciplinary research should seek solutions and solve problems to address local needs for the benefit of multilingual preschool learners.

- Tertiary institutions have a major responsibility to develop speech-language therapy students' knowledge of and exposure to the multicultural and multilingual population in the South African context. The Health Professional Council of South Africa currently demands this as prerequisite in the training curriculum of tertiary institutions (Singh, 2005:13). Training programmes need to include an increased amount of coursework, as well as clinical practicum where students have direct experiences with multicultural and multilingual clients across a variety of settings (Roseberry-McKibbin & Eicholtz, 1994:161). Training needs to focus on the provision of relevant support to multilingual clients with communication disorders. In addition, tertiary institutions need to actively recruit speech-language therapy students proficient in African languages to serve South Africa's multilingual population (Singh, 2005:13).
- Tertiary institutions need to develop collaborative interdisciplinary workshops on multilingualism as part of the Continuing Professional Development programmes for in-service speech-language therapists and preschool teachers (NAEYC, 1996:12; Roseberry-McKibbin & Eicholtz, 1994:156). Workshop topics derived from the research results need to include, among others, Foundation Phase curriculum analyses, L2 acquisition theory, L2 assessment strategies, service delivery models for the acquisition of ELoLT, the respective professional roles within the curriculum, activities and strategies for use in classrooms with linguistically and culturally diverse learners, cultural competence, as well as teamwork and consultation skills.
- Speech-language therapists need to identify barriers to their expanded roles in multilingual preschools and try to overcome these obstacles. This may involve, among others, improving interpersonal communication with preschool teachers, as well as the marketing of their services (Ehren & Ehren, 2001:237). Speech-language therapists need to create an expectation that their services will add value to the curriculum activities and goals of the multilingual preschool classroom. Initially, they may have

to involve the preschool teachers in participatory action research to gain evidence that the collaborative consultation process is effective and indeed improves the multilingual learners' access to the curriculum (Struthers & Lewis, 2004:26).

- Speech-language therapists need to consider and negotiate service delivery models other than the traditional models with the preschool teachers. While initial trial-and-error experiences may be unavoidable, members of these two professions are encouraged to adopt the basic principles of collaborative consultation, and develop their own strategies to suit their unique situation (Drake, 1993:53). If both parties view this approach as an ongoing education process, it may enhance the probability of successful outcomes. Preschool teachers who volunteer - often those who are willing to innovate and take risks – need to be involved in collaborative consultation. Once the collaborative support team is established, they need to meet regularly and frequently to create linguistically, culturally, and developmentally appropriate programmes in collaboration. Apart from these meeting times, the speech-language therapist needs to be available for consultation on a daily base (Du Plessis, 1998b: 155; 156), and may have to support the preschool teacher in the implementation of the offered intervention guidelines, which are presented forthwith.

7.6 INTERVENTION GUIDELINES

The current research was initiated in response to the needs of a specific community, as discussed in Chapter One, Section 1.4. The preschool teachers specifically requested intervention guidelines for the basic level ELoLT learner. Based on the research results and a literature review, the following intervention guidelines for the initial stage of the acquisition of ELoLT are offered in Figure 7.2 for the basic level multilingual preschool learners in the research context.

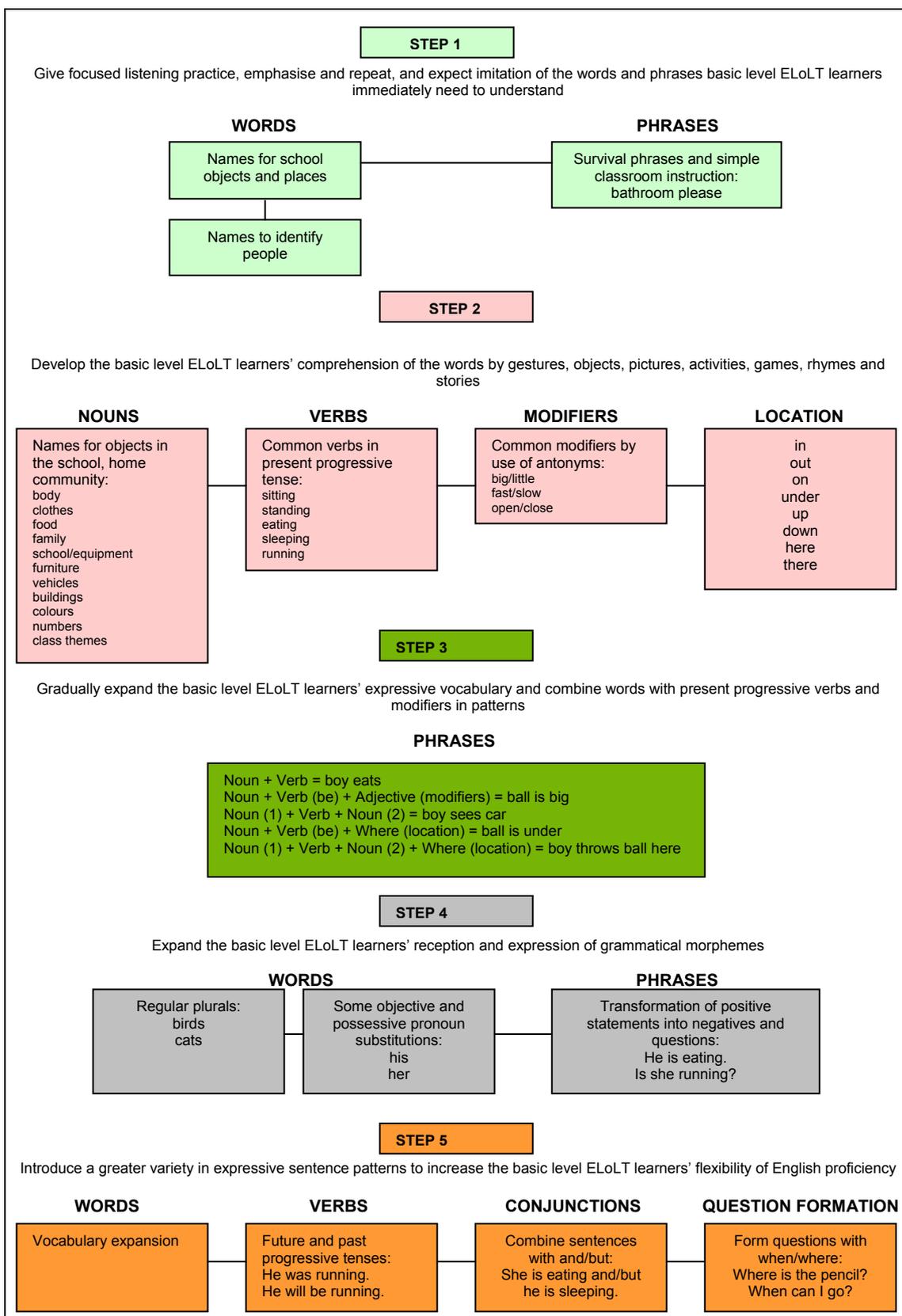


FIGURE 7.2: INTERVENTION GUIDELINES FOR THE INITIAL STAGE OF THE ACQUISITION OF ELolT IN THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

Sources: Hoff (2004:4); Owens (2001:208-211); Dawber and Jordaan (1999:36); Meyers (1993:87); Manolson (1992:64); Gillchrist (1981:148-152).

Figure 7.2 illustrates the intervention guidelines for the initial stage of the acquisition of ELoLT, and may assist the preschool teachers in planning the essential words the learners require to initiate their acquisition of ELoLT. The exact manner in which the preschool teachers structure their daily programmes to allow optimal opportunities for the acquisition of ELoLT needs also to be planned and may be discussed during consultations between the preschool teachers and the speech-language therapists.

The classroom as learning environment provides a framework for the acquisition of ELoLT and the preschool teachers and speech-language therapists need to plan together how to *structure classroom activities* to achieve ELoLT goals. Techniques to allow the multilingual learners discover communication functions may be planned (Norris & Damico, 1990:215), and the levels of cues and prompts, in particular, need to be determined to ensure that the multilingual learners participate in communication activities (Wilcox & Shannon, 1996:226). There are numerous strategies, such as the manipulation of the physical environment, that facilitate the acquisition of language skills. The three structures in the classroom that may be changed are the *environmental structure* (toys not too easily accessible, group size, routines, follow the learners' initiatives, incidental learning), the *learning structure* (questions, models, less information in model, prompts, time-delay), and the *teaching structure* (modify teachers' sentence length, facilitate language form, content, use) (Tiegerman-Farber, 1995:187).

Furthermore, a *structured learning environment* needs to be created consisting of routines and daily lessons that are related and meaningful to the learners to support English vocabulary acquisition (Tiegerman-Farber, 1995:195). New vocabulary may therefore be introduced in familiar activities and routines (Meyers, 1993:87). The speech-language therapists and the preschool teachers need to collaborate in planning how to use routine activities to support the multilingual preschool learners' vocabulary, as summarised in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3 illustrates how routinised activities may increase opportunity and motivation to communicate, and allow learners to act as members of the group. Many activities in the preschool classroom occur quite frequently and take on a routine structure. Within a given routine, the same events typically recur in the same order. As the multilingual learners learn what to expect within a specific routine, they pick up cues that support comprehension and the acquisition of ELoLT in time. However, the preschool classroom should not be over-structured, as the spontaneous learner-directed daily routines remain a valuable source of interaction and support the acquisition of ELoLT for the preschool learners (Jordaan, 1993:183).

TABLE 7.3 OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE ACQUISITION OF ELoLT IN THE MULTILINGUAL PRESCHOOL CLASSROOM

HIGHLY STRUCTURED ACTIVITIES (ADULT – DIRECTED)	LESS STRUCTURED ACTIVITIES (LEARNER – DIRECTED)
<p>Circle Time: Calling the learners' names, talking about the calendar, discussing the weather help the multilingual learners to predict the sequence of events and their responses. Repeated songs and movements reinforce learning. Allowing the learners to respond to the teachers' questions in unison may render them with confidence to respond.</p>	<p>Free Play: Make activities available, then encourage choice making, independent interaction with materials, social interactions with peers. The learners may be encouraged to make choices and decisions and act on own decisions. Picture symbols around the classroom for the learners with limited ELoLT proficiency.</p>
<p>Activity Time: While the learners are actively involved in exploring and learning about the environment and engaged in hands-on activities that introduce them to materials, concepts, and vocabulary, the adults may engage in <i>event casting or talking while doing</i>. The adults may rely on naturalistic communication techniques rather than directives.</p>	<p>Snack Time: Can benefit from adult-direction to develop and confirm vocabulary related to food being eaten. Presents opportunities to learn even when listening to interchanges of others. Promotes interaction by placing the proficient and less proficient learners together.</p>
<p>Story Time: To keep the multilingual learners engaged, the adults may employ short stories, small group reading, carefully chosen books, talk rather than read the story, repeat books, learners "read" to others. Create interest, excitement, understanding, and creative thinking.</p>	<p>Outside Time: Can benefit from adult-direction and structuring of environment to allow communication practice. The learners can work co-operatively during a game. Social interaction skills among the learners may be encouraged through group activities and dramatic play.</p>

Sources: Tabors, 1997:116-126; Wilcox and Shannon, 1996:225-226.

In the preschool classroom where ELoLT learners are in the majority, adult-directed activities need to be focused on the acquisition of ELoLT throughout the various daily routines. However, in the preschool classrooms with English L1 and ELoLT learners, these two groups may be separated for adult-directed

activities, but combined for learner-directed activities to allow peer group interaction (Jordaan, 1993:183).

The offered intervention guidelines for the initial stage of the acquisition of ELoLT may provide a basis for the planning of intervention strategies to the preschool teachers who were concerned about the education and future of the multilingual preschool learners. The guidelines may also provide the underpinnings for further research in the specific research context, for further exploration and confirmation of existing trends.

7.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Research is rarely conclusive. In exploratory research, such as the current study, the researcher usually encounters additional problems that need resolving (Leedy & Ormrod, 2004:6). The findings of the current research led to the identification of new questions relating to the education of teachers, speech-language therapists, and parents or caregivers, as well as the provision of the most responsive environment to the multilingual learners. If these questions are to be answered, further research is required. This study may, however, serve as the underpinning for further research, and the following recommendations are made:

- A challenge to researchers is to differentiate between language differences and language disorders in multilingual learners (Roseberry-McKibbin & Eicholtz, 1994:160). Currently various research projects in this field are underway, such as the study by Naudé (2005) profiling language in young urban EAL learners. Large-scale studies are needed to improve the English language proficiency assessment of Black South African multilingual learners, especially to determine the level of English proficiency required to participate in English-only instruction. Such studies may serve to develop psychometrically sound and practical assessments and assessment procedures that could be further developed into measuring instruments appropriate for assessing ELoLT learners in an unbiased manner (August & Hakuta, 1998:51).

- More in-depth studies exploring L2 acquisition by South African learners are required (Jordaan, 1993:186). As there is a considerable variation in the rate of L2 acquisition owing to individual and external influences (Jordaan, 2003), research-based information on external influences on L2 acquisition in the unique South African context is needed. Problems and issues facing some South African learners, such as deprivation and poverty, may differ markedly from those in developed countries (Lemmer, 1995:92). Understanding the external influences on the variability in L2 acquisition would be an important contribution to understanding the interaction between language and other domains of human functioning.
- Another important aspect that requires investigation is how the ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity of the South African population may be successfully incorporated into preschool Learning and Teaching Support Materials (Moodley et al., 2005:40). Pilot studies need to examine the influence of innovative classroom organisations and interventions, such as curriculum content, on multilingual preschool learners' view of themselves and other cultural groups, to promote cross-cultural friendships and positive regard. Such studies may provide guidelines to preschool teachers on how to adapt curriculum content to make it culturally relevant and appropriate (Lemmer & Squelch, 1993:78), and how to embark on culturally sensitive educational practices in South Africa (Louw, 2004:266).
- Hadley et al. (2000:282) reported that bilingual learners in the United States of America (USA) as a group experienced problems in the area of phonological awareness and phonological processing – prerequisite literacy skills (Geva, 2000:15). Research findings also indicated that phonological processing skills in L1 are predictive of word recognition skills in L1 and L2 (Geva, 2000:20). In the South African context, research is needed on language/literacy relationships in the L1 and EAL literacy skills of multilingual learners. An intensive and extensive research effort is required to investigate variables which may clarify the differences in

literacy skills of multilingual learners. Such studies may provide information on the optimal English literacy instruction for multilingual learners of different ages, including learners whose parents are illiterate or not literate in English (August & Hakuta, 1998:31).

- As effective research into language in education requires a data base (Harlech-Jones, 1990:12), extensive research is needed to compile a South African linguistic atlas. The creation of a linguistic atlas is of particular importance because language relations vary from context to context. The classification of these variations may make a substantial contribution to rural decision-making on multilingual education. A linguistic atlas may identify the multilingual learners' L1, facilitating the support of L1 as a learning area or as the Medium of Instruction (Mol) (Harlech-Jones, 1990:13).

The results of the current research have provided guidelines and suggestions for further research with the aim to understand and support multilingual learners in the South African context.

7.8 FINAL COMMENTS

Speech-language therapists in South Africa are increasingly being called on to provide services to multilingual learners – a call for service that is not only legitimate, but also highly appropriate. To accelerate the acquisition of ELoLT in multilingual preschool learners, speech-language therapists need to move beyond the traditional models of service delivery, and expand and release their professional roles across disciplinary lines, as has been recommended in the literature for the past two decades and practised elsewhere in the world. Larger issues need to be considered, such as the comprehension of instructions in the ELoLT classroom without which communication breakdown may occur in many multilingual learners (Prelock, 2000:214). Speech-language therapists need to *communicate* with preschool teachers to identify and accommodate such areas of communication breakdown to the benefit of the multilingual learners. South African speech-language therapists therefore

need to become preventionists, collaborators, and interventionists to optimise their services to multilingual learners and to contribute to multilingual learners' future academic success.

This study adds to the growing body of literature on multilingualism in education and contributes to the debates on language in education practices in South Africa. The researcher personally believes that multilingual learners in South Africa could be empowered to reach functional levels in English and that English needs to be actively promoted, along with L1 development, starting in the preschool years. Ultimately, ELoLT learners need to achieve high standards in both L1 and English proficiency and literacy. While South Africa is in the process of building an inclusive education system, speech-language therapists are urged to work in collaboration with preschool teachers as a team to provide multilingual preschool learners with a solid foundation in L1 *and* English for lifelong learning and development.

With sufficient research evidence to support collaborative intervention, the time has arrived for South African speech-language therapists, working in educational settings, to mobilise and start working collaboratively with preschool teachers. With confidence in their own skills, the speech-language therapists need to expand their role into the preschool classroom and engage in a mutual process of sharing their knowledge and skills with others, and learning from others.

“Challenging SLPs [*speech-language pathologists*] to ‘Make it so’, requires that they take responsibility for their own destiny and not wait for others to make the necessary changes” (Ehren & Ehren, 2001:237).