

# **The Linguistic profile of multilingual learners in English Home Language Classrooms**

by

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## Abstract

In a democratic South Africa, English has, especially in suburban schools, come to be the preferred medium of instruction despite the majority of South African learners being mother tongue speakers of other languages. As a consequence, South African teachers are preparing lesson content according to a national curriculum which assumes native-like proficiency in English yet many of the learners do not have full mastery of this language. This mismatch between official documentation and actual learner proficiency is problematic for both teacher and learner.

This study seeks to describe the actual target audience seated in the so-called English Home Language class and explores the profile of junior secondary school learners whose mother tongue is not English yet they take English Home Language as a school subject. Quantitative data were collected through a survey questionnaire completed by 642 grade 8 and 9 respondents at three suburban schools in Gauteng. Cross tabulations were then used to compare different variables investigated in the questionnaire. Key findings based on the data indicate that respondents – although multilingual - are often more proficient in English than their mother tongue and that the role of the caregiver as initial source of learning English has been underestimated.

The significance of the study lies in providing a guideline for language teachers on how to ascertain the linguistic profile of their learners and thus reflectively adapt their teaching to their particular classroom context. The implications for policy may be heeded by the national education authorities as there is a mismatch between the skills of learners and what the policy documents expect learners are capable of doing. Further research could be conducted by drafting a standardised test which determines the linguistic profile in order to align policy documents with classroom reality, and to encourage language teachers to focus on the linguistic strengths and weaknesses of the learners enrolled at schools where English is the medium of instruction.

Dedicated to my childhood hero – Allan Whiteford.

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## List of abbreviations and acronyms used

CAPS	-	Curriculum and Assessment Protocol Standard
DoBE	-	Department of Basic Education
FAL	-	First Additional Language
FET	-	Further Education and Training
GET	-	General Education and Training
HL	-	Home Language
LiEP	-	Language in Education Policy
LOLT	-	Language of Learning and Teaching
NCS	-	National Curriculum Statement
SAL	-	Second Additional Language
SASA	-	South African Schools Act

## Chapter 1: A preview of the inquiry

### 1.1 Introduction

*Our quest for understanding could be equated to the journey of a novice English teacher in the suburban South African classroom. The classroom context of the teacher in suburban South Africa is much different from the context of classrooms in the rural areas as the suburban classroom is, generally, according to South African standards, equipped with all tools required to teach. The class is equipped with a blackboard, a data projector is available, all learners have textbooks, desks and chairs and the class is not overcrowded. The aforementioned is due to the fact that caregivers are charged school fees and teachers generally have more resources available to them where schools in rural areas have to function, often, with severe budgetary constraints and overcrowded classrooms.*

*With regards to the actual teacher, the teacher could be male or female, but for ease of reference, let us say she is female. She is newly graduated and about to embark on the career-journey of a lifetime. Her journey will play out as a series of events which can be divided into five chapters. In chapter one she meets her charges and she tests the water. On the first day of the new academic year she has the learners prepare a one-minute speech in which they tell her a little more about themselves. The novice teacher discovers she is in a classroom with learners from a variety of backgrounds. There are White, Black, Coloured, Indian and even a Chinese learner. For the majority of them, English is not the home language. Many of the learners speak several languages. One learner even says that she can understand seven languages! Several religions – amongst others Christian, Hindu and Muslim – are represented in the classroom. Glancing quickly over the class, the novice teacher notices that the majority are aged between 13 and 14, although there are some older learners too. The novice teacher tries to digest the implication of the diversity of the learners in front of her, and manages to learn a few names.*

*On the second day, she decides to give her class of eager grade 8's a comprehension passage. The novice teacher goes home to mark with a red pen, a packet of gold stars and much excitement. She is confronted by work of a standard she had not expected. The quality of the responses is as diverse as her learners. The proficiencies of the learners range from an immigrant with little knowledge of English to a gifted candidate who should be enrolled elsewhere. "To the good [sic] teacher ever," is jotted in the margin of one of the comprehension passages. This is*

*the defining moment when the novice teacher decides to investigate who exactly constitutes the typical learner in her classroom. In Chapter 4 of our journey, we will learn exactly who they are.*

## 1.2 Rationale and problem statement

In 2009, at age 24, I was that novice teacher. I had been appointed to my first teaching post in an urban school in South Africa and I had been presented with a classroom key, a textbook and a firm good luck from my colleagues. I was exactly what one of my lecturers had predicted I would be: *“bright eyed with a fresh coat of lipstick and full of hope”*. My hope, however, began to diminish when I realised there were no resources or official files with pre-planned lessons or assessment rubrics, let alone material developed for the diverse group of learners I was teaching, and barely any evidence that a teacher before me had occupied the post. In other words, like many novice teachers, I was thrown into the deep end. What was I letting myself in for? My experience can only be described by the following quote: *“So now, Bill looked out on his new fourth-grade classroom, and he had no idea how to manage them.”* (Faber, 2010, p. 121).

I became even more distraught after receiving documents from the Department of Basic Education (DoBE), describing what grade 8 learners taking English Home Language (HL) should be able to do. This dilemma led me to ask why the abilities of the general education and training (GET) learners in my care were not on par with the desired outcomes of the English HL curriculum. Some incidents in my classroom which concerned me can be illustrated by a simple example where a grade 8 learner spelled ‘aeroplane’ as ‘eloplane’ (See picture 1).

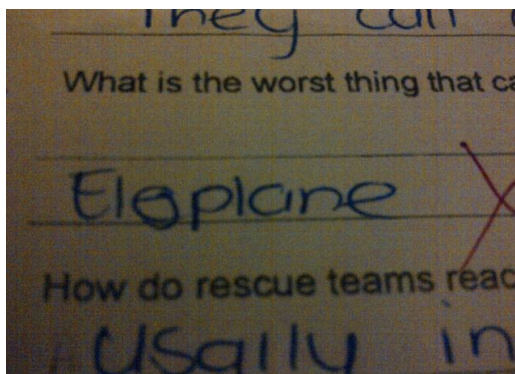


Figure 1: Misspelling of aeroplane.

As per the guidelines I had received from the Department of Basic Education (DoE 2003), I was under the misconception that everyone would display the same set of skills that the DoBE expected them to have. This was however not the case, as I had a group of learners in front of me who displayed various degrees of proficiency in English. In one class I had an immigrant who could barely speak English seated beside a learner who was in the process of applying for a scholarship to a private school. I did not really know what to expect from the group as a whole. The teacher before me must have made the same assumption regarding the prior acquisition of a set of specified skills by the learners. The rough guideline of what she had done in the past indicated that the learners had written two formal essays, which some of my learners were capable of, whereas a large number of my learners still struggled with writing consistently for more than a few lines.

The aforementioned situation frequently arises when learners take English as a HL at school when their actual home language has not been fully developed (October, 2002, p. 16), they do not have enough daily exposure to English (Lanza & Svendsen, 2007, p. 276-277) or they have been introduced to English as a HL at too late a stage. As I needed a guideline on how to structure the work for the general group of learners I was teaching, I was prompted to wonder whether there was a group of general characteristics which could describe the GET English HL learners I was dealing with. I felt that investigating this would allow me to understand the challenges better and to improve my own practice.

The first step of formulating a proposition was therefore made long before my decision to enrol for an MEd. Ultimately, I wanted to know what the linguistic profile of the average English HL GET learner was. I was interested in the aforementioned as I desired to discover the characteristics of the target group where I teach in order to improve my own classroom practice. My study would specifically refer to GET learners whose language of learning and teaching (LOLT) is English, as that was the group of learners I had the most experience with at the time. Based on the proposition I had started to formulate when I realised the problem, I already had a general idea of what to include in my questionnaire when I enrolled for my MEd (See Addendum D).

I realised that completing an MEd on the topic would be sensible, as the research would provide a basis for future investigation. An analysis of the profile of the GET English HL learner could open discussion on what constitutes the linguistic profile of

learners in other areas. Hopefully the research would also lead to discussion on how the teaching of English HL should be adjusted to accommodate the different linguistic abilities of learners taking the subject, especially when the LOLT is English.

The importance of this study was therefore provided by a year's firsthand experience of what the learners in my classroom could and could not cope with, and the level of frustration which was shared by my colleagues and myself.

The disparity between the skills of the learners in front of me and what the curriculum expected from those learners, led me to ask: Who are the learners that I have to teach? Who is my target group? This led to the formulation of my research question: What is the linguistic profile of the typical learner that I teach in my English HL classroom?

### **1.3 Contextualising this study**

When attempting to contextualise the study, I struggled to find literature related to creating a language profile of a group of individuals. I decided to focus instead on how language is used in some international situations as well as locally.

Internationally, when we look at the linguistic background of learners, the situation differs based on location. In the United States the norm is that learners tend to speak one language. When it comes to the promotion of languages not spoken at home, Cutshall (2005, p. 20) refers to the American standard of monolingualism as xenoglossophobia – the fear of foreign languages. At one point in time, 22 states even forbade the teaching of foreign languages. Those laws were abolished during the 50's, but it was still the minority of schools that offered foreign languages. Despite monolingualism being the standard, certain facets of the United States, such as the social security website which is now presented in nine different languages, is beginning to change (US English, 2012, para. 3.).

In other parts of the world, the situation is completely different. In Misi3n La Paz, Argentina, children in the same family speak different languages (Campbell & Grondona, 2010, p. 617). What learners need in order to excel in the classroom would therefore differ from one community to the other, and be based on the unique linguistic profile of the individual group. Another example can be found in Hong Kong, where there are cases where students speak either Mandarin or Cantonese

but communicate with each other in English (Lee & Marshall, 2012, p. 70). This makes learners bilingual or multilingual and creates another unique linguistic profile with unique requirements for the classroom.

Locally, in South Africa, in the past, black South Africans had to learn both Afrikaans and English as their main languages, and an African language additionally for the purpose of religious instruction (Barkhuizen & Gough, 1996, p. 465). Now, in the post-apartheid era, the education system, especially in suburban areas, still favours Afrikaans and English as the medium of instruction (October, 2002, p. 6). Black South Africans who live in suburban areas are therefore often multilingual. However, this situation does not have favourable consequences. The result of Afrikaans and English being favoured in suburban areas is that often learners' home languages are neglected when their home languages should be nurtured alongside English for improved proficiency (Cummins, 2001, p. 18; Yazici, Ilter & Glover, 2010, p. 259).

As aforementioned, in suburban areas English is mostly used as an LOLT, which means learners take English HL as a subject. Regarding guidelines on what is to be expected of learners, the DoBE (DoBE, 2003, p. 20) assumes that learners have developed the ability to speak, read and write in English up to a certain level, appropriate for the grade, when taking English HL. The expectation leans towards a traditional definition of literacy: "various kinds of behaviour at higher and lower levels, including reading, writing, speaking, listening, thinking, counting and coping with the demands of the state of employment and social life" (McArthur, 1998, p. 358). As the learners who take English HL are often not home language speakers of English, their ability to function in English needs to be developed to an extent that allows them to cope with not only taking English HL as a subject but also receiving instruction in other subjects where the LOLT is English (Barry, 2002, p. 107).

To return to the interpretation of literacy, it is considered to include how a learner interprets situations through a language, because social, cultural and family values are learnt through language (Yazici et al., 2010, p. 259). For example, when learners read literature in the English HL they interpret it according to the schemata that they have. The schemata whereby a learner interprets situations will be different for a home language English speaker with access to multiple TV channels from a learner with access to fewer resources. The varying schemata learners bring to the classroom are therefore another part of the linguistic profile of learners that teachers need to be aware of when looking at what constitutes the linguistic profile of learners.

Taking a closer look at what the CAPS describes when outlining the skills of learners, during the GET phase for the subject English HL, learners require skills that are used in social situations as well as cognitive skills that are used in a system where English is the LOLT (DoBE, 2011, p. 4,8). English HL further aims to equip learners with literary, aesthetic and imaginative ability in order to understand the world they live in (DoBE, 2011, p. 4,8). Although teachers are presented with guidelines on what the skills of their learners would constitute, the reality is that the teachers have to come up with supporting strategies, as the guidelines describe capabilities that the DoBE assumes learners to have when the reality is completely different.

Coetzee-van Rooy (2010, p. 26-27) highlights two dominant fields of research which could emerge from the aforementioned situation, which stems from a situation where a group of learners are not competent in their own home language but take English as an LOLT (Cummins, 2001, p. 18), (Yazici et al., 2010, p.259). The first looks at how local languages survive in multilingual situations, and the second looks at English in multilingual situations as a destroyer of local languages. I have noted that many of my learners tend to not be able to read or write in their own home language, making them a part of the second group. I would like to explore the profile of this second group of learners.

#### **1.4 Explanation of key terms**

The following terms, as defined by the literature, will be used quite frequently during the study and are clarified so that the reader's understanding of them can be similar to my own.

##### **Bilingualism**

The ability to use two languages separately or as a mixture (McArthur, 1998, p. 78). Perfect bilingualism is when the individual is as competent in the first language as in the second (Kaschula & Anthonissen, 2001, p. 71). Perfect bilingualism is extremely rare and one language is normally subordinate to the other (Kaschula & Anthonissen, 2001, p. 71).

##### **Caregiver**

Throughout the course of the study, both parents and those individuals fulfilling the role of the learners' parents have been referred to as caregivers. According to the



Department of Social Development (2014, p.5), the aforementioned is any person who generally cares for the child and can include, amongst others, foster parents, family members, the head of a shelter, individuals who have been granted permission by the parents to look after the child and even the head of a child-headed household.

### **First Additional Language**

The first language a learner learns in addition to their home language (DoE, 2002, p. 134). The curriculum for the subject assumes that learners do not necessarily have knowledge about the language when enrolling for it as a First Additional Language subject (DoE, 2002, p. 4).

### **Former Model-C Schools**

Schools which were reserved under the Apartheid regime for white learners. These schools were better resourced than those attended by African learners. (Roodt, 2011, para. 2).

### **Home language**

The language a learner acquires first while being surrounded by the members of his community. A learner can be fluent in more than one home language (DoE, 2002, p. 138). A learner's home language is also called the "mother tongue" as it is considered the language "learnt at the mother's knee". It is considered to be the language learnt at home or used during childhood. However, there is no actual connection to the mother, as a child's preferred language or the language that he learns first can come from a variety of sources. Native tongue and first language are used as synonyms (McArthur, 1998, p. 386). With regard to Home Language as a subject, it is assumed that a learner can speak and understand the language well when enrolling for the subject during the GET phase (DoE, 2002, p. 4). Home Language, capitalised, refers to the subject and home language, without the capitalisation, refers to what was formerly known as mother tongue.

### **Literacy**

Reading, writing, listening and speaking fluently enough in a specific language in order to cope with daily demands encountered by an individual in both social and work settings. (McArthur, 1998, p. 358).

## **Multilingualism**

The frequent usage of more than two languages, in a variety of ways, such as in the home environment or the community or while at work or school (McArthur, 1998, p. 387).

### **1.5 Scope of inquiry**

Although data were primarily collected during 2011, the study, focusing on the linguistic profile of learners in a suburban area of the Tshwane metropolitan area, spans from January 2010 to August 2014.

One of the first steps of my study included conducting an initial literature review for information related to language and literacy in South Africa and compiling a linguistic profile. I struggled to find literature relating to the process of compiling a linguistic profile of a group of learners and instead focused on studying what literacy constitutes, how language is used by South Africans, what the picture of language is at schools in a suburban area of the Tshwane metropolitan area and what the consequences thereof are.

After conducting an initial literature review, I focused on compiling a preliminary questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured based on my own experiences as a teacher and discussion with various individuals in the profession. The questionnaire focused on age, languages learners felt they knew best, which they had learned first, where they had learned English, how they used English in the home, scholastic and social environment and the proficiency of parents in English. Which language a learner had learned first was relevant, as I was basing my studies on the work of Cummins and various other authors who support the theory that home language learning is a prerequisite for learning an additional language (in the case of my learners, for the majority of them English is an additional language). Where learners had learned English and where they used English was relevant as it indicated which aspects of a learner's daily life can be considered crucial to the learning process. As all teachers know, the role of the parent in a learner's educational journey is a crucial aspect and it was explored via learners' perceptions of whether their parents have a high level of proficiency in English. Aspects which were not explored through the questionnaire included race and sex.

Furthermore, the research does not look at the influence of individual teachers' interaction with the curriculum on a learner's development in English. Based on my own classroom experiences and through interactions with other teachers I have learned that this element does indeed play a significant role but is not accounted for in the scope of this study.

## **1.6 Research design and methodology**

In this section, I will briefly discuss my research design and methodology and refer to the process of receiving ethical clearance, which had to be obtained before commencing data collection. This topic is dealt with more intensively in chapter 3 of the study.

With regard to the process that was employed when selecting participating schools, three suburban former model-C government high schools in Gauteng were chosen for the study. Former model-C schools are schools which were reserved for white learners during apartheid (Roodt, 2011, para. 1). Considering anticipated constraints on the researcher, such as full-time employment, the schools were chosen through convenience sampling. Another challenge was the fact that schools, due to being pressured for class time, were often not willing to participate in the study.

Selection criteria included whether schools offer English HL as a subject and whether the LOLT is English. Therefore e.g. a school that has English HL and Afrikaans HL but offers tuition in their other subjects in Afrikaans only was not chosen. Three schools participated in the research although several more had been approached.

Before the study could formally start, ethical clearance had to be obtained from the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Education, the Department of Education and the schools chosen for the sample. Consent also had to be obtained from learners and parents of the learners who participated in the study (See Addendum A-C,E,F). In accordance with the key values of the University of Pretoria, I undertook to act in a professional manner where I would treat all individuals involved in the research process equally and respectfully to ensure that they would not be harmed through the process in any way, and to make sure that they were aware that they had a choice whether they wanted to participate or not (University of Pretoria, 2007a, p .2).

While waiting for ethical clearance, a literature review was conducted in order to understand clearly what the role of English in South Africa currently is, what was expected by the DoBE of learners when they take English as a HL and whether there are any obstacles to mastering the language. During my literature review I discovered that a possible obstacle towards success is the fact that learners' home languages are often neglected when they go to schools where the LOLT is English (Cummins, 2001, p. 17).

After obtaining ethical clearance, the linguistic profiles of learners were then examined at the three participating schools. The respondents, who completed the questionnaire during the study, were 642 learners in the GET phase taking English HL in schools where the LOLT is English. They came from various cultures, races and linguistic backgrounds. The ages ranged between 13 to 16 years. My study is cross-sectional, as it examined the linguistic profile of 642 learners at only one point in time (Creswell, 2009, p. 389) through a survey questionnaire.

During the data analysis phase I approached the Department of Statistics on the Hatfield Campus of the University of Pretoria, who assisted me in compiling my data. After a document analysis of existing literature regarding factors that influence the use of English as an LOLT (see Chapter 2), the data collected from the questionnaire was used to create a profile of learners who take English HL in the GET phase in urban Gauteng, and a comparison was made between that profile and what is expected of learners.

## **1.7 Research constraints and limitations**

With regard to research sites, many schools were unwilling to participate in the study, mostly due to the fact that schools were pressured to complete their curriculum. The result was that the options for research sites were very limited.

Limitations regarding the actual data include the fact that the research focused on three suburban schools in Gauteng. As will be discussed more fully in Chapter 3, due to the fact that South Africa has 11 official languages and people often migrate, the linguistic profile will not necessarily be the same in other provinces, communities or perhaps even schools. The implication of the aforementioned is that the linguistic profile of the average HL GET learner could differ dramatically in other areas where

the linguistic and racial demographics differ, and therefore cannot be generalised to fit home language speakers of other languages.

Another factor that might be taken into account when constructing a linguistic profile of learners in the same province is that learners in rural areas might have differing degrees of exposure to English as opposed to learners in the suburban areas, as learners in suburban areas might have more opportunities to go to malls and engage with e-media and television.

Lastly, due to impracticalities related to the number of respondents who participated in the study, it was decided to exclude open-ended responses in the survey questionnaire. The data therefore does not include an extensive qualitative component, which researchers in the field should attempt to include if they tried to replicate the study.

## **1.8 Outline and organisation of the inquiry**

In Chapter 1, I present a preview of my inquiry and my research methodology, while in Chapter 2 I examine what the literature has to say about English as an LOLT with its associated implications, multilingualism and what the typical profile of the English HL GET learner should be. In Chapter 3 I describe my research design and methodology in detail in order to create a picture of how the data were collected. In chapter four I analyse and examine the data sets that were collected, as a picture of the average English HL GET learner emerges with regard to languages the learners know, where they learned them, how they use the languages and what role their parents play. To conclude the study, in Chapter 5 I present an overview of the study and describe the significance and implications of the study.

*To conclude the initial phase of our journey, our novice teacher has now devised a plan of action and it is time to see what the experts have to say on the matter of English as an LOLT and the language profile of English HL GET learners.*

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

*Our novice teacher is ready for phase two of her inquiry. After approaching her colleagues and discussing the matter with them, a consensus was reached that a discrepancy does exist between the abilities of the grade 8 and 9 learners and what the DoBE expects from them. Evidence of the situation can be seen in the results of the Annual National Assessment written by all learners taking a Home Language (both Afrikaans and English) where the average achievement on the test for the Gauteng province is 50.3 percent (DoBE, 2012, p. 38). In order to improve her own classroom practice and hopefully the literacy of her learners, the novice teacher decides to embark on a study where she would compile a profile of the learners in the target group that she has to deal with every day.*

The importance of the study is clear, as, by providing an example of how teachers can go about describing the linguistic profile of a specific target group, teachers can do so in their own classroom and better adjust curriculum content in order to suite the profile of their own learners. As an example, by describing the linguistic profile of my own target group, I show how I have identified in my own target group the need to adjust curriculum content in order to promote proficiency in English where learners are not performing optimally in English as a subject. Improved proficiency will lead to improved performance in all academic subjects. To build on how revelations made through identifying the linguistic profile can have a significant impact, the aforementioned will improve the lives of the target group, as, in South Africa, English is necessary for the work environment (Manyike & Lemmer, 2010, p. 29). This is especially true in South Africa where there are 11 official languages and English is generally used as the lingua franca in the economic sector and English proficiency is necessary. However, when baring the aforementioned in mind, it is important to note that literacy in English, which is first the goal before a learner can become fully fluent in English, extends further than simply being able to use English adequately.

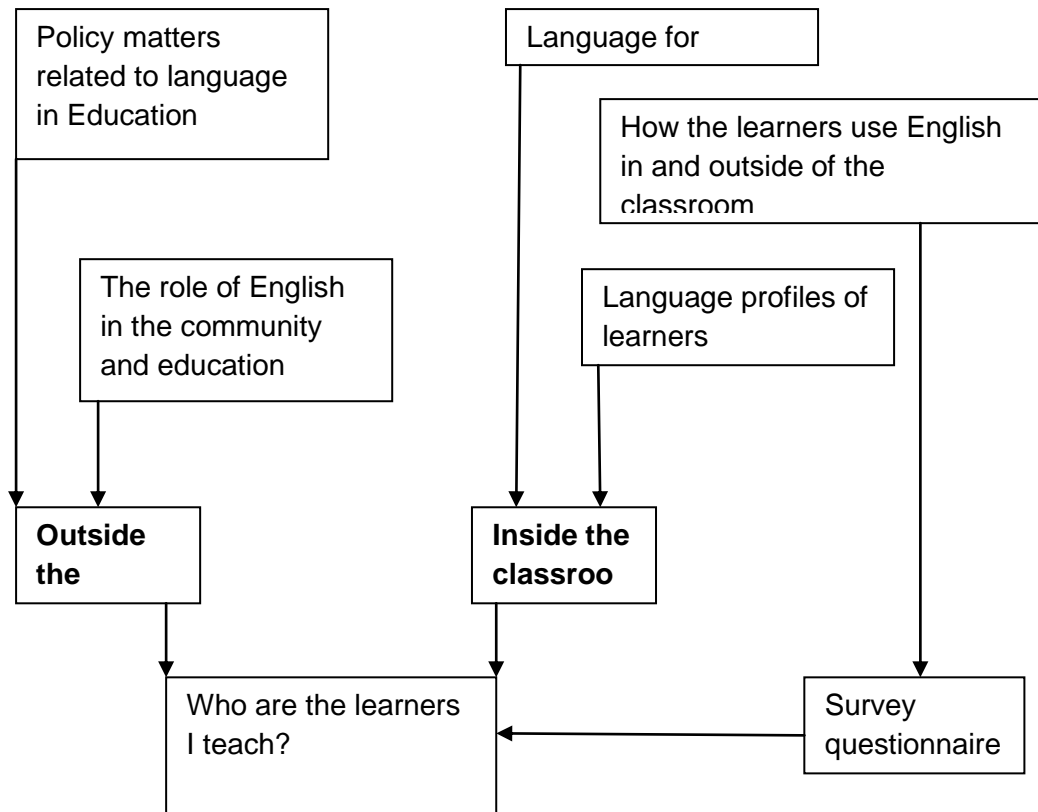
Literacy also refers to historical literacy, media literacy, cultural literacy (the ways in which language defines culture) (Baker & Hornberger, 2001, p. 367; Conteh, 2003, p. 7), computer literacy, symbolic literacy and mathematical literacy (McArthur, 1999, p. 358). The aforementioned literacies, which should all be dealt with across the curriculum, including the English HL classroom, provide an individual with the background to function in a specific language context.

When it came to planning the parameters of the study, my assumption was, based on personal experiences, that the majority of learners in the English HL GET classroom are multilingual and in fact not English home language speakers. The fact that learners tend to be multilingual is significant, as such a characteristic holds great implications for the syllabus. Learners who have not fully developed Cognitive and Academic Language Proficiency in one language will not only underperform in English HL but in other subjects as well (Manyike & Lemmer, 2010, p. 32) in a school where English is the LOLT.

The challenge that we are faced with is that many schools in suburban areas use English as LOLT and offer English as HL when learners in fact come from diverse linguistic backgrounds with differing levels of competencies in English (Manyike & Lemmer, 2010, p. 29). Some learners are often unable to perform in not only the English class, but also other subjects, as they are linguistically ill-equipped. This often leads to learners feeling frustrated and causing disciplinary challenges for the teacher. The aforementioned can be illustrated with a scenario mentioned by Fine (2009, p. 6) for the Washington Post: "...a 10th-grader who could barely read and had resolved that the best way to deal with me was to curse me out under her breath."

Challenges related to developing English literacy differ from school to school and community to community. One of the many reasons include the fact that one of the ways teachers traditionally encouraged literacy entailed using the school's library (Sifontes, 2002, p. 3). However, some schools in suburban areas have closed their libraries to create space for more classrooms.

As mentioned in Chapter 1 when I discussed the rationale for why I conducted my research, my personal experiences in the classroom prompted my desire to investigate the linguistic profile of learners in my area in order to improve my own classroom practice. My hope is that this study will open the door for future researchers to refine investigating the linguistic profile of learners in a specific community or school and will ultimately, hopefully, lead to tangible changes in order to accommodate the variety in learners' linguistic abilities in suburban schools. In this chapter, I will present the literature which provided the basis for my attempt to identify the linguistic profile I hoped to discover. Chapter 2 investigates literature, related to the research question, according to the following sections:



**Diagram 1: Conceptual Framework**

The diagram above not only indicates the categories of academic literature which were investigated, but also how the literature guided the conceptual framework of my study. Policy matters and the role of English in the community cannot be controlled by the teacher. Academic literature, however, providing a guideline on how instruction in the classroom should be formulated, can be applied by the teacher in the classroom. The teacher can also make himself/herself aware of any existing data on how learners are faring in the English classroom, and use this data as a guideline. The literature review, in terms of the diagram, along with my survey questionnaire, therefore plays a pivotal role in answering the question of who the learners in the classroom are.

## 2.2 National policy matters

All policy matters related to schooling in South Africa have their foundation in the South African Constitution. The Constitution is the country's judicial foundation, which aims to redress the injustices of the past and aims to ensure equality for all. The South African School's Act (SASA) was formulated based on the Constitution



and the country's Language in Education Policy (LiEP) was formulated with both the Constitution and the SASA in mind.

To name but a few of the inequalities related to education in South Africa in the past, before the advent of South Africa's first democratic government, English and Afrikaans were the compulsory LOLT in schools and funding for schools where black learners were segregated from other races was much lower (Ocamp, 2004, para. 3). The advent of South Africa's first democratically elected government brought many changes to education in the country, including the law relating to the language schools would use as an LOLT and languages the school would choose to offer as formal subjects.

On page 1257 of the Constitution, under point 29, which relates to education, it states that all persons have the right to receive tuition in their language of choice if practically possible (e.g. there is a teacher available) as all South Africans are equal and discriminatory practices related to choice of LOLT during the Apartheid era should be addressed (SouthAfrica.info, 2003, online). The reality of the matter is that more often than not, it is not reasonably practicable to accommodate all learners when it comes to language choice and English becomes the simple answer for many communities.

Based on the Constitution, the South African School's Act (SASA) was developed. The SASA, implemented in 1996, places the power of choice for LOLT, HL and FAL in the hands of the school governing body, while being subject to the Constitution (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2001, p. 234).

As mentioned, the foundation for issues relating to LOLT and choice of languages as subjects originated in the Constitution, which was used as the foundation for the SASA. The LiEP was then determined with both the Constitution and the SASA in mind. The LiEP indicates that the aim for education should be that learners engage in structured education through an LOLT which would also be learned as the HL, while taking another language as an FAL (Department of Education, 1997, para. 8). This approach is referred to as additive bilingualism (Braam, 2004, p. 15). Ideally the LOLT and the HL would be the home language (formerly known as 'mother tongue') of the learner.

With the Constitution, the SASA and the LiEP in mind it was decided that literacy is one of the main goals which would be supported by education in our country (Potter & Naidoo, 2006, p.64). It is therefore the aim that the citizens of South Africa, by being linguistically literate, acquire historical literacy, media literacy, cultural literacy, computer literacy, symbolic literacy and mathematical literacy in order to be able to cope with the demands of employment (McArthur, 1999, p. 358; Wickens & Sandlin, 2007, p. 281).

In order to achieve the aforementioned aims, a curriculum is distributed to all teachers. One of the aims of the English HL curriculum is vaguely described as an attempt to “recreate, imagine and empower” learners’ understanding of the world (DoBE, 2012, p. 8). The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), the replacement of the old National Curriculum Statement (NCS), was published in 2011 for the Senior Phase and training was provided by the DoBE during 2013 to teachers. The CAPS notes that, as many learners go to a school where the LOLT is not their home language, ‘English Home Language’ should be interpreted as a proficiency level and not the language that the learners speak at home (DoBE, 2012, p. 8). This indicates that it is now acknowledged that learners taking English HL are not necessarily home language speakers.

More recently, the DoBE has expressed the need to address multilingualism, and it has been reported in the media that the need to do so is “desperate” and that a policy to implement a compulsory third language was in the pipeline for 2014 (Davies, 2013, para. 1,4). The DoBE describes the policy as long overdue, as multilingualism has been “policy on paper” since 1996 (Davies, 2013, para. 6).

Regarding the aforementioned need, the ideal would be schools that cater for more of the official languages. Schools should ideally be equipped to perform a quick assessment of the languages that learners speak and based on the assessment advise parents on the ideal LOLT (Plüddemann, 2002, p. 52). The reality, however, is that, as with all things, policy changes will take time to be implemented everywhere and might even take several years to be perfected. One reason which has been cited as to why it would be problematic to implement a third language, is the problem of finding the budget to appoint the extra teachers required to teach the language (Davies, 2013, para. 10). It might therefore still be up to the teacher herself, for the time being, to find ways of dealing with multilingualism in the classroom.

## 2.3 The role of English in the community and education

English, despite its colonial history in South Africa, is seen as a language with a positive identity that unites a formerly divided country (Kamwangamalu, 2007, p. 267). English is now no longer exclusively the home language of white people. In Gauteng, 77.9% of the speakers are Black Africans (Statistics South Africa, 2012, p. 10) and of the 4.9 million people who speak English as a home language, only 1.6 million are of European descent (MoneyWeb, 2013, para. 1). English is used by South Africans of different ethnic groups and races (Kamwangamalu, 2007, p. 267) and is the language most used in higher education, the work place, parliament, hospitals, etc. (Mncwango, 2009, p. 51-52) (Manyike & Lemmer, 2010, p. 29) (Chimbganda, 2005, p. 29) (De Wet, 2002, p. 123). The aforementioned leads to parents choosing to send their children to schools where the LOLT is English in order to prepare them for using the language as a lingua franca (Kamwangamalu, 2000, p. 35).

Often in suburban areas, learners come from backgrounds where they speak a variety of home languages and while interacting with others in the community, but go to schools where the LOLT is English. How languages manifest in the lives of the learners can be illustrated through the editorial policy of the SABC (South African Broadcasting Corporation) (Webb & du Plessis, 2006, p. 97). Time is scheduled to use various languages as the delivery mode and English is seen as the “anchor language” between all the other languages (Webb & du Plessis, 2006, p. 97). Many learners are therefore often multilingual, which is favourable, as literature on the topic predicts that a multilingual adult will be an asset to the country (Cummins, 2001, p. 16).

Many South Africans are therefore generally capable of communicating in a variety of languages, but in spite thereof often prefer to receive school tuition in English (de Wet, 2002, p. 119). As a consequence one or more languages are often neglected or might even die off completely. The reality is that, despite knowing several languages, learners often have a really poor command of English when entering school (Hugo & Nieman, 2010, p. 60). The implication of the situation was noted by Smith (1999, p. 2), who interviewed a number of headmasters. They pointed to a lack of English comprehension as the reason for high failures in matric exams.

Despite the variety of languages spoken by learners throughout the country, the reality remains that English presents more opportunities (Lessing & Mahabeer, 2007, p. 139). As one of my own learners pointed out, “English will help me get a job.” There does, however, exist an awareness of the value of home language educational activities amongst parents and learners (De Wet, 2002, p. 123), and literature in the field discusses the fact that home languages are essential for literacy and lay the foundation for learning other languages (Plüddemann, 2002, p. 7). Despite an awareness of the value of home languages, English remains the preferred LOLT (De Wet, 2002, p. 123) when parents choose schools for their children. Sometimes the preference for English as an LOLT might be for other reasons. For example, parents might feel that schools where the LOLT is English, offer better education (Ambert & Melendez, 1985, p. 54; Brisk & Harrington, 2007, p. 11; Conteh, 2003, p. 18 ).

The role of English in the country has led to occurrences such as parents encouraging children to communicate in English (Kamwangamalu, 2002, p. 270) instead of their home language. I have seen for myself at parents’ evenings how learners bring younger siblings along and communicate with them in English. The general feeling amongst parents is that the earlier learners start with English the better the opportunity is to master the language, and this leads to many learners being sent to English LOLT schools as early as possible (Kamwangamalu, 2002, p. 271). Currently, poor performance of learners at primary, high school and tertiary level is a cause for concern (Cekiso, 2012, p. 1) as the ideal would be for learners to perform better in a language which is attributed so much status in the country.

Unlike in countries where the additional language is from the same language family as the home language, learners in South Africa need more assistance (Royds & Dale-Jones, 2012, para. 9). Many of them speak an African language as a home language but are required to excel in English, which comes from a completely different language family. Learners in other countries, due to the two languages being from the same language family, can fall back on the home language when required to excel in the additional language, whereas our learners spend a great deal of time on catching up (Royds & Dale-Jones, 2012, para. 10).

## **2.4 Language for learning**

When it comes to learners in the GET phase, the general goal of English HL is achieving literacy. In its most simplistic sense, the traditional definition of literacy is

the ability to read and write, decode and form letters (Ryan, 2000, p. 5) and the ability to express oneself coherently in a particular code (DoBE, 2003, p. 20). “Coping with the demands of state” or coping with what is required from an individual when he/she is employed can be added to the aforementioned definition (McArthur, 1998, p. 358; Wickens & Sandlin, 2007, p. 281).

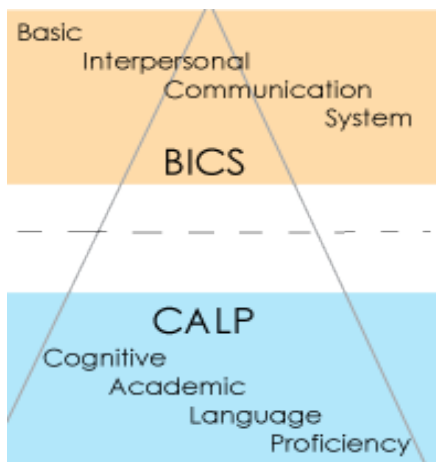
Literacy also implies a willingness to read – something which should be taught and requires the resources to be taught, as simply teaching learners the ability to read is not enough (Royds & Dale-Jones, 2012, para. 3, 5). Literacy is however currently a problem in South Africa, as research has shown that 80% of grade 5’s are incapable of reading (Royds & Dale-Jones, 2012, para. 22).

When fostering literacy through traditional methods such as encouraging reading, teachers have to start brainstorming solutions when there are no libraries, or libraries have been closed and the books sent away because the school needed to utilise the space for extra classrooms. A lack of libraries was pointed out as a reality by Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe in 2010, who addressed the South African business fraternity at a meeting in Sandton (The Skills Portal, 2010, online). In a study which aimed to compare the skills of South African grade 5’s to those of international learners, research showed that the reading skills of South African grade 5’s lagged several years behind international learners (Royds & Dale-Jones, 2012, para. 20). There are larger linguistic problems causing the situation, but something as simple as access to books in a school library can be seen as a barrier. When budgets are tight, books are not a high priority for caregivers.

Further, traditionally, parents play a role in developing the literacy of learners. According to Brisk & Harrington (2007, p. 12), literacy encouraged at home is one of the predictors for success. Parents’ involvement in reading (Ryan, 2000, p. 5) and other homework activities is therefore very important, as they are the learners’ most immediate role models when it comes to such activities (Yazici et al., 2010, p. 259). However, it is often the case in South Africa that parents cannot become involved in the child’s reading and other homework activities, as their own grasp of English is relatively poor (Barry, 2002, p. 107; O’Connor & Geiger, 2009, p. 260).

Literature in the field of language learning highlights several ways how literacy can be achieved. One theory regarding attaining literacy in the desired language is that learners first develop a Basic Interpersonal Communication System (BICS) before

they develop Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). BICS refers to tasks where learners can rely on visual clues such as pictures, gestures or facial expressions and highlights the importance of contextualised activities for learners in the GET phase. Learners who are still in the process of attaining BICS denote relative beginners (Bilash, 2009).



**Figure 2: BICS & CALP**

As tasks have less visual and other clues available to assist learners, learners have to rely on CALP to succeed in the task. It takes learners up to 7 years before they can deal with more advanced tasks that require CALP (Bilash, 2009). Many learners only make the change to schools where the LOLT is English when they go to grade 8 and teachers need to be mindful that those learners have not yet developed the required CALP.

Learners need at least six to eight years formal instruction in their home language before developing the necessary CALP required for engaging with English as a LOLT (Baker & Hornberger, 2001, p. 263; Barry, 2002, p. 107; Brock-Utne & Hopson 2005, p. 27). An example of the concept of time illustrates how important a home language is when learning a new language (in our case English) (Cummins, 2001, p. 18). If learners know how to tell the time in their home language, they simply learn how to retell it in English, they do not need to relearn the whole concept of time. Therefore, if a learner who is taking English HL in a school where the LOLT is English, is competent in their own language, it can assist their development of English (Yazicia et al., 2010, p. 259) or even help them excel in their home language.

Another reason why a learner's home language should not be disregarded is the fact that our current situation, where many learners' home languages are neglected for earlier transition to English, ultimately affects other skills such as mathematics (Royds & Dale-Jones, 2012, para. 2). A language policy to bring in a third compulsory language to schools is in the pipeline for 2014. It will take a while to be implemented properly, but it is described as being done with the aim to improve the level of English in matric (The Times Editorial, 2013, para. 6), which supports the theory that a learner needs a solid foundation in their home language in order to become proficient in English.

My own classroom observations suggest that such a foundation in a learner's real home language happens very infrequently, as learners are often only able to speak their own language. The result is generally that learners battle with both languages, as the home language is simply replaced by broken English (Heugh, 2002, p. 174). That is why, where possible, a school should attempt to develop the child's own language alongside English HL, since the learner's own language and English will depend on each other for development (Cummins, 2001, p. 17).

As mentioned, many learners in South Africa are multilingual and the following story is not uncommon in South Africa:

*My father's home language was Swazi, and my mother's home language was Tswana. But as I grew up in a Zulu-speaking area we mainly used Zulu and Swazi at home. But from my mother's side I also learnt Tswana as well. In my high school I came into contact with lots of Sotho Tswana students, so I can speak these two languages well. And of course I know English and Afrikaans. With my friends I also use Tsotsitaal (Twenty-three-year-old male student from Germiston) (Mesthrie, 2002, p. 12).*

Multilingualism is a positive characteristic, as it can lead to a learner becoming, overall, more linguistically adept. Multilingualism is when you use more than one language in several facets of life, be it family life, the scholastic environment or the work environment (Beacco, et. al., 2009, p.13). Apart from the social and economic benefit, a multilingual individual, as was highlighted with the example of telling time, has a deeper understanding of language and how to use it (Cummins, 2001, p. 17) and will have a cognitive lead on monolingual or bilingual individuals. The aforementioned will occur as language is used to construct knowledge about the



world and your understanding is enhanced if you understand something in more than one language (Baker & Hornberger, 2001, p. 26; Conteh, 2003, p. 15)

Furthermore, knowing more languages makes you more sensitive to how language is used, increases flexibility in language usage and gives you the ability to contrast and compare language (Cummins, 2001, p. 17; Gravelle, 2000, p. 54). In addition, multilingualism improves 'cultural literacy' (Baker & Hornberger, 2001, p. 259; Manyike & Lemmer, 2010, p. 32) by assisting individuals in understanding more than just their own cultural norms.

Despite the aforementioned social and cognitive advantages of multilingualism, multilingualism also comes with a challenge. If multilingual learners are attempting to attain literacy in English and English is not their home language, they will require a solid foundation in their actual home language in order to become literate in English (Cummins, 2001, p. 17). Ideally, regardless of a school's LOLT and the abilities of learners, the value and impact of home languages should not be disregarded (De Wet, 2002, p. 123). It is very true that those learners who are exposed to English more frequently than others are more successful than others (Coetzee-van Rooy, 2002, p. 63). Some believe that the extreme is the solution and that learners should be immersed in English at an even younger age (Fromkin & Rodman, 1993, p. 422; Gabryś-Barkera & Otwinowska, 2012, p. 382; Royds & Dale-Jones, 2012, para. 11), but that is not the ideal as the abandonment of home languages and a country's heritage is not necessarily the most desirable option.

Many suggestions are available in academic literature on how to assist learners, based on their individual needs and requirements, on attaining literacy in English (Conteh, 2003, p. 16-17; Cushner, McClelland & Safford, 2006, p. 235; Heugh, 2002, p.175 ). However, it is first up to a teacher to determine the linguistic profile of the learners in his/her class, as I have attempted to do through this study. A discussion follows on current available data which provide hints on the linguistic profile of learners in the GET phase.

## **2.5 Linguistic profile of learners**

Very little data exists on what the language profile of learners in the GET phase is. According to the 2011 census (See Figure 3), the three most widely spoken



languages in Gauteng are isiZulu, English and Afrikaans respectively (Statistics SA, 2012, p. 25).

First Language	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	SA
Afrikaans	2 820 643	683 410	606 225	340 490	161 876	309 867	1 502 940	289 446	140 185	6 855 082
English	1 149 049	362 502	37 842	78 782	1 337 606	120 041	1 603 464	124 646	78 692	4 892 623
IsiNdebele	15 238	14 854	6 023	10 008	111 657	43 988	380 494	403 678	104 283	1 090 223
IsiXhosa	1 403 233	5 092 152	60 187	201 145	340 832	190 601	796 841	48 993	20 275	8 154 258
IsiZulu	24 634	31 634	8 501	118 126	7 901 932	84 835	2 390 036	965 253	62 424	11 587 374
Sepedi	8 144	14 299	2 431	7 395	20 555	83 999	1 282 896	372 392	2 826 464	4 618 576
Sesotho	64 066	158 964	14 136	1 717 881	79 416	201 153	1 395 089	138 559	80 299	3 849 563
Setswana	24 534	12 607	373 086	140 228	52 229	2 191 230	1 094 599	71 713	107 021	4 067 248
Sign language	22 172	42 235	3 933	32 910	48 575	14 924	52 744	8 932	8 230	234 655
SiSwati	3 208	2 020	648	2 246	8 347	12 091	136 550	1 106 588	25 346	1 297 046
Tshivenda	4 415	3 663	1 083	2 592	4 309	16 255	272 122	12 140	892 809	1 209 388
Xitsonga	9 152	3 092	1 201	8 039	8 936	127 146	796 511	416 746	906 325	2 277 148
Other	127 117	36 893	12 385	15 935	77 519	60 872	371 575	39 639	86 322	828 258
Total	5 675 604	6 458 325	1 127 683	2 675 777	10 153 789	3 457 004	12 075 861	3 998 726	5 338 675	50 961 443

**Figure 3: Population by first language and province, (Statistics SA, 2012, p. 25)**

**Key:** WC = Western Cape, EC = Eastern Cape, NC = Northern Cape, FS = Free State, KZN = Kwazulu-Natal, NW = North West, GP = Gauteng Province, MP = Mpumalanga Province, LP = Limpopo Province, SA = South Africa)

One of the few sources relating to statistics about the actual learners in the GET phase is *The Report on the Annual National Assessments* (DoBE, 2012) which is published on an annual basis.

The Annual National Assessments are standardised tests conducted yearly from grade 1 to 6 and in grade 9 to determine the level that learners are at in order to guide development of the curriculum (DoBE, 2012, p. 4). Most of the data of the report is not relevant to this study, as a distinction is often made simply between 'home language' and 'first additional language' which could include, below grade 9, a variety of languages and in grade 9 could be either Afrikaans or English. However, the results do indicate that a national average for grade 9, where the HL is English, is 41.5% (DoBE, 2012, p. 55), which is just barely a passing grade.

The very limited picture that we therefore have, based on existing data, of English HL GET learners is that they do not necessarily speak the language at home and that they are just barely passing the language as a subject.

## 2.6 Conclusion

*Our novice teacher has now carefully considered the literature. This is a delicate situation, as learners require a solid foundation in their own home language in order to excel in English as an LOLT. Learners however tend to not have that foundation, since they often do not learn to read and write in their own language.*

*The literature has provided some ideas of what the data could yield. It is now time to move on to Chapter 3 in the novice teacher's journey, where she can carefully consider the most suitable methods to employ when setting out to investigate who the learners in her classroom are. Thereafter the ideas from this chapter can be amalgamated with the data results in Chapter 4.*

## Chapter 3: Research design methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

*Every journey has a part that a traveller finds the most difficult, and for the novice teacher it was grasping the many concepts related to research methodology. This required many hours of study and dialogue. We will now see how the novice teacher documented this part of her journey.*

In Chapter 3, I firstly discuss my research philosophy, as it underpins the foundation of my research. I then proceed to chronicle my research process which started long before I initially enrolled for my MEd degree. My research process started on my first day as a grade 8 and 9 English teacher when I realised that the abilities of my learners did not match those that the DoBE assumes them to bring to the classroom as they start their secondary school phase.

Along with the research sites and the participants I interacted with during the course of my study, I also describe how the survey questionnaire used during the course of the study was compiled, piloted, administered and the data analysed. I conclude this chapter with a discussion on the university's policy on data storage and a thorough overview of the methodological constraints I experienced throughout the course of my studies.

### 3.2 Research philosophy

The first step researchers take in their quest toward knowledge is to determine a research philosophy, based on what they believe about the world and the topic the researcher aims to investigate. The research philosophy also depends on their belief on how knowledge is constructed (Saunders, 2009, p. 108) and will determine what methods researchers will employ when answering questions and collecting data (Hopkins, 2002, para. 18). Early on in my research I decided, due to the number of participants I wished to use in my study, that I would merely aim to describe the group in question and not to change any of the aspects which I would be investigating. I wanted to describe the linguistic profile of the GET English HL learners in the area where I teach. This led to the following decisions before the commencement of my study:

I decided to base my research on positivism. According to the positivist approach, the goal of research is simply to measure and describe (Trochim, 2006, para. 3), which was what I was aiming to do. I was not planning to intervene with the sample group nor attempting to change the situation which I was investigating. I wanted to study the attributes of my sample group and report them as I recorded them. This also implies that the researcher has to remain emotionally detached from what is being studied (Saunders, 2009, p. 114). The aforementioned characteristic of positivism is often criticised, since some scholars feel that research should include a subjective aspect, as it otherwise would lead to the dehumanisation of the subject (Dash, 2005, para. 5).

The research philosophy ultimately decides whether the researcher will do quantitative, qualitative or mixed-methods research – all with their own strategies for collecting and analysing data (Maree, 2011, p. 257). Regardless of the criticisms of the approach, the choice of positivism as a research philosophy made it clear that my research would be quantitative. Quantitative research is a characteristic of positivism (Dash, 2005, para. 3-5) and I decided this would be the best approach if I was merely attempting to identify certain variables and how they manifest and correlate in the sample group (Berry, 2005, para. 14). Although it is harder to prepare initially, quantitative research can easily be presented in statistical format (Neville, 2007, p. 3).

The different research methods associated with a positivist research philosophy and hence quantitative research include surveys, experimental studies, cross-sectional studies and longitudinal studies (Neville, 2007, p. 7). All of the various methods had limitations, but I decided that a survey questionnaire would be the best approach. A survey questionnaire would allow me to investigate, on a large scale, the variables that I wished to explore in my target group. A challenge associated with using a survey questionnaire would be to “keep the respondent’s perspective in mind” (Neuman, 2004, p. 164). It was essential to bear in mind that the respondents would be grade 8 and 9 learners who were not home language speakers of English and to formulate the questionnaire accordingly. A survey questionnaire would also be a good way to approach a group representative of the target group I was aiming to investigate with as little bias as possible (Neville, 2007, p. 7). Using a survey questionnaire to describe the attributes of my sample group would highlight another key aspect of positivism: human behaviour is controlled by the external environment (Crossan, 2003, p. 50), (Dash, 2005, para 5). Therefore, according to positivism, the

key aim of data collection is to collect and quantify data which can then be generalized (O'Donogue, 2007, p. 9). The aforementioned is my key aim during Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

In the questionnaire itself it was important to pay attention to several aspects such as avoiding ambiguity and being clear (Neuman, 2004, p. 165). I decided to focus on all areas where learners use language – in the home, school and social environment. Several questions were asked which can fall into one of the aforementioned categories (See Addendum D). An example is question 3.4, which asks which language is mostly used by the learners during break. The questionnaire also investigates which language the learners feel they know best, second best and third best, which language they learned first and where they learned the languages. Finally, the questionnaire examines the role of the parent by asking learners what they feel the proficiency of their parents in English is. I decided that it was best to approach the questionnaire through closed-ended questions, as the data would be easier to analyse (Maree, 2011, p. 161).

Based on the abovementioned categories and areas which were investigated through the survey questionnaire, I attempt in Chapter 4 to create a profile of what the typical learner, in my target group, in a suburban area of the Tshwane metropolitan area, South Africa is. The profile is discussed at the end of Chapter 4.

### **3.3 Instrumentation**

With the help of the Department of Statistics, I compiled my questionnaire (See Addendum D). While compiling the initial questionnaire, the key concepts I had in mind included multilingualism, when learners learned English, how they viewed both their own and their caregivers' proficiency in the language and what aspects of the English class they found the most problematic.

With the aforementioned questions in mind, the pilot study was conducted and the questionnaire then refined. I was able to see for myself whether there were any issues related to completing the questionnaire as, unlike the data collection at the schools who participated in the study, I administered the questionnaire myself.

Some of the concerns discussed with the Department of Statistics, before finalising the questionnaire, included the fact that completing the questionnaire took the

learners who participated in the pilot study more than 45 minutes. This was an issue as the average period during a normal school day ranges from 40 – 45 minutes and teachers would need time to discuss and hand out the questionnaires.

Coding and recording responses to open-ended questions were another concern due to the high number of learners who would be participating in the study. In order to avoid the problematic issue of coding and recording such a large number of open-ended responses and to cut down on the length of time it would take the learners to complete the questionnaire, the decision was made to include 12 closed-ended questions in the final questionnaire (See Addendum D).

When compiling and refining the questions that would be included in the final questionnaire, the decision was taken to focus on the following aspects of the linguistic profile of the learners:

- Age and choice of school
- Language usage at school, in the social environment and in the respondent's community
- Other languages the respondents desire to receive tuition in and why
- Various languages spoken by the respondent (multilingualism), attitude towards multilingualism and source and age of acquisition
- Respondent's opinion of own competencies in English and additional languages indicated as spoken by the respondent
- Respondent's opinion of the caregiver(s) competency in English

### **3.4 Description of research process**

I had entered the profession with documents from the DoBE which gave me guidelines on what learners should be able to cope with in the classroom, in other words, what their characteristics should be, but this did not match the reality of the situation (see Chapter 1.2, 2.2). Learners were required to write essays of 250 words while many of them still struggled to formulate a paragraph. This led me to ask who the learners in my classroom were. Could I alter my own practice in such a manner that it could accommodate their characteristics? For the scope of an MEd study I would however merely focus on investigating their profile before perhaps making decisions in my own classroom on how to accommodate their linguistic profile.

After compiling my research proposal I conducted a pilot study. A pilot study is conducted in order to improve reliability and revise instrumentation (Neuman, 2004, p. 114) before conducting research. The pilot study was conducted at a school in suburban Gauteng where there is a group of learners who take Afrikaans HL and the LOLT is Afrikaans and a group of learners who take English HL and the LOLT is English. 182 grade 9 learners from the second group participated in the study. The school describes itself as diverse, with learners from various linguistic and racial backgrounds in one classroom, and the backgrounds of the learners range from those who come from the suburbs to learners who live in nearby townships. The school is well-resourced with overhead projectors, textbooks and photocopy facilities at their disposal. Albeit not all, many of the learners are in a position to pay their school fees. The school was chosen as the characteristics of this school matched the characteristics of the schools who later participated in the study.

Despite some responses from the open questions on where learners learned English being included in Chapter 4.3, the majority of the data from the pilot questionnaire was not used, as enough data was collected during the actual study.

In this instance, I conducted the study myself and it allowed me great insight into what alterations were required to the questionnaire in order to conduct the actual study. One of the main concerns was that learners battled to answer the whole questionnaire, which consisted mainly of open-ended questions.

Some of the decisions that were made after the pilot study include the following:

- The length of the questionnaire should be revised as learners struggled to complete the questionnaire during a 45-minute lesson.
- Open-ended questions should be avoided, as the large number of questionnaires collected during the study would be too difficult to code, analyse and present statistically if open-ended questions were used.
- Some of the questions should be collated into a tabular form in order to make it easier for the learners to respond to the questionnaire and in order to reduce the amount of paper required.

As mentioned before, having decided to base my research on positivism, I decided that a survey, specifically a questionnaire, would be the best option. It would give me

the opportunity to specify attributes such as 'age' in order to categorise and describe my sample group. Furthermore, questionnaires are frequently used because they are inexpensive and can be administered very quickly (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998, p. 170). In my case the number of locations, three schools, were not that many, but the number of respondents at the locations totalled 642 and gathering information through a questionnaire would be the quickest and most efficient way. The questionnaire, once revised after the pilot study, consisted of 12 closed-ended questions in total. No questions were asked about racial demographics in the questionnaire, but a broad observation at the schools by the participating teachers indicated that the majority of learners were African learners.

During 2011, I presented my research proposal to members of my faculty and was then granted permission to continue with my study. After receiving permission to continue with my study and while waiting for ethical clearance from the university's ethics committee, I approached the Department of Statistics (particularly Ms Jaqui Somerville, Ms Loina Bodenstein and Ms Michelle Botes, who supported me through several steps of collecting and compiling my data), who assisted me in refining my questionnaire in such a way that the data could be easily compiled after the questionnaires were completed. After ethical clearance was received the pilot study was conducted and the questionnaire further reworked. The questionnaire (See Addendum D) consisted of 12 closed questions as it was determined with the pilot study that an excessive volume of questionnaires with open questions would be too difficult to code.

After my questionnaire had been finalised, the schools who agreed to assist me with my research arranged a meeting for me with either the principal or the deputy principal. After my initial meeting with these individuals, receiving consent from the school and having given teachers time to send consent letters home to the parents, I delivered my questionnaires to the schools. The questionnaires were provided in packets of 40 to the English Head of Department at the school who handed them to the teachers who administered the questionnaire to the learners. Approximately three classes of grade 8 learners and four classes of grade 9 learners participated in the study at each of the three schools.

As the schools were in suburban areas, even if the participants did not live in the suburban area, they still had some degree of exposure to suburban life such as using public transport, visiting shops and using radios, television, e-media – all sources of



English. Many of them had cell phones and several learners from the target schools could be seen walking down the street with headphones listening to music. The respondents were all grade 8 – 9 learners

### **3.5 Research sites**

For this part of my journey I find myself in suburban Gauteng – in a suburban area of the Tshwane metropolitan area. The schools in the area charge a significant amount of school fees per year (higher than R12 000 (approximately \$1140 during 2014) per year) and most children come from families who can afford the fees.

As for the schools themselves, the schools are all well resourced. Learners have desks and chairs, school books, classes with data projectors and in some instances even smartboards. All the schools employ teachers who have some form of tertiary education and who, if they aren't English home language speakers, have a good command of English.

At the schools, learners can engage in a variety of activities ranging from drama classes to athletics to public speaking to art competitions. The majority of parents regularly attend parents' evenings and show support when teachers contact them regarding daily matters. The setting is similar when going to most public schools in the suburban context.

I approached several schools to assist me with my research by either e-mailing the principal/deputy principal or asking to see the principal/deputy principal. It was decided, due to the fact that there are a limited number of schools in the area, to use those schools that would be willing to participate. Unfortunately only three of the schools were willing to participate. I learned that it is not an easy task approaching schools for assistance with research, as at some schools I was denied permission by an appointment staff member who was sent to the office to simply decline before allowing me an opportunity to discuss my intended study. The schools that declined to participate did not provide reasons for their decision. Regarding the schools that chose to participate, based on the fact that I had been a teacher in the area, I had knowledge of all three the schools.

The three schools are located in the Tshwane metropolitan area in specifically suburban Pretoria or Centurion (See Picture 4. At all three the schools English is the

LOLT and English is offered as a HL and Afrikaans as a FAL. Being a teacher from a school in the area, I was familiar with the schools and based on broad observations I can say that the schools do have white learners but the majority are black learners who come from higher income groups, as most parents pay school fees.



**Figure 4: Map of Gauteng  
(Rooms for Africa, 2012 – 2014, online).**

All three of the schools are resourced adequately in the sense that they have textbooks, employ overhead projectors and data projectors and have the facilities to make photocopies for the learners. Their classes range in size from 28 to 35 and they have dedicated staff who do not take leave on such a frequent basis that it inconveniences the school, as is often reported in the media about some schools in the country. The schools all offer a range of subjects and extracurricular activities and the community also speaks about the schools in such a way that they could be considered functional schools.

Since most parents pay school fees, the schools can afford to employ extra teaching staff, beyond those allocated by the DoBE. They also offer a variety of subjects and extracurricular activities, such as Visual Arts, which are provided for in the school's budget. They have textbooks, data projectors, overhead projectors and sound systems in the school halls. The teachers all have access, either in the classroom or an allocated work area, to computers and printing facilities. While waiting in the schools' foyers and being taken through areas such as the staffroom, it was clear that not all three of the schools' staff was completely multicultural.

### 3.6 Respondents

Before conducting my research, I had to make sure that I would prescribe to the ethics and principles stipulated by the University of Pretoria (2007a), as the researcher has an increased responsibility when working with human subjects. While conducting my research I was expected to be intellectually honest, to conduct myself professionally and to prescribe to any legal requirements expected of the situation.

A part of using minors while conducting research is making sure that permission is obtained from all parties who see to the safety and rights of the learners. I was required to obtain consent from the Department of Basic Education (See Addendum E), consent from the principal of the school (See Addendum A), consent from the parents of the learners who would be involved (See Addendum B) and consent from the learners themselves (See Addendum C). Moreover, any of the parties were allowed to withdraw their consent at any time during the research process and I made myself available for any questions regarding the research process.

Lastly, I was also required to apply for an ethical clearance certificate from the Faculty of Education (See Addendum F) before conducting my research, as I act as a representative of the university while conducting research for an MEd study, and a committee has to ensure that I conform to all the requirements and guidelines set by the university for ethical research.

After permission was granted by all the relevant parties, the research was conducted in a suburban area of the Tshwane metropolitan area. Only grade 8 and 9 learners at the schools who consented to participate in the study completed the questionnaire. 642 unspoilt questionnaires were completed by learners at the participating schools. 92.8% of the questionnaires were completed by respondents who were between the ages of 13 – 15 and 9.78% were completed by learners who were older than 16 years of age. It is compulsory in South Africa for a 7 year old child to be enrolled in grade 1 (SouthAfrica.info, n.d., online) which means the average grade 8 – 9 learners will be aged, based on the month they were born in, from 13 – 15.

As mentioned, the participating schools all offer English as an LOLT. Based on my own experience as a teacher at schools where English is the LOLT and from speaking with the head of department (HOD) of English, learners are predominantly

African with some Indian, Coloured and White learners. Learners come from a range of religious backgrounds. As will be discussed in chapter 4, learners also come from diverse linguistic backgrounds and are often multilingual.

Although there are learners from all walks of life, the majority of the learners come from the suburban areas and have parents who are employed in the suburban areas. Most learners can be seen at the schools with some form of technology such as a cell phone and they can often be found frequenting the malls and the shops. Learners talk about music, television programmes and other forms of media that they enjoy. Both the grade 8's and the grade 9's at the sample schools participated in the survey.

### **3.7 Main study**

Unlike during the pilot study, I unfortunately never had any contact with the learners or the teachers before or during data collection. After obtaining consent from all parties associated with ensuring the safety and the rights of the learners (the DoBE, the university's ethics committee and parents), I discussed the process with the head of department (HOD) for English at the various schools. In order to make the process as easy as possible, I provided the HOD with folders containing 40 learner consent forms and 40 questionnaires.

It would have been ideal if I had administered the questionnaire myself, but all three schools indicated that they were pressed for time and would allow the individual teachers to decide when the best time would be to administer the questionnaire. A problem that resulted from not being able to administer the questionnaire myself was that many teachers did not understand the use of the "office column" which resulted in many spoilt questionnaires, an aspect which I have noted and would take care to explain more clearly if I ever conducted a survey questionnaire again.

After all teachers at the various schools had completed the questionnaires, the schools contacted me and arranged a time for me to collect the questionnaires. Once I had collected all the questionnaires, I removed the spoilt questionnaires and completed the office column before handing over the questionnaires to the Department of Statistics, who captured the data on their system. Both the staff at the Department of Statistics who were assigned to assist me and I examined the data to ensure that it was captured correctly.

### 3.8 Data analysis

Before the data was analysed, the Department of Statistics met with me to discuss how data could be tabulated and cross tabulations that could be made between various variables represented by different sets of data. In a subsequent meeting the Department of Statistics discussed the results of the data with me.

The results were both descriptive and interpretive, as in some instances the results merely focused on the frequency of answers whereas in other instances the results focused on the relationship between different variables (Neville, 2007, p. 7) as can be seen in Chapter 4. Data is studied interpretively when examining how various variables represented by different data sets influence each other. In order to study how these variables affected each other, cross-tabulation was used (CustomInsight, 2013, online, para.1).

Several variables were cross-tabulated during the data analysis phase in order to interpret the data. A discussion follows in Chapter 4. The variables that were cross-tabulated include the following:

- Language learners feel most competent in and which language the learner learned first
- Languages learners feel most competent in and the age at which they learned the language
- Language learners feel most competent in and where they acquired the language
- Language learners know best and the language they wish they received tuition in
- Language learners know best and how they perceive their caregivers' competency in English.
- Language learners know best and where they use the language (home, school, social environment).

### 3.9 Validity and reliability measures

A first measure of validity includes content validity and entails asking other individuals in the field or experts to examine the tool that will be used in order to conduct

research (Twycross, 2004, p. 28). Both my supervisor and the Department of Statistics assisted me in formulating and refining my questionnaire before and after the pilot study.

A second measure of validity that was employed was convergent validity. Convergent validity (Oluwatayo, 2012, p. 394) refers to ensuring that variables correlate with each other. This was taken into account while refining the questionnaire and conducting the pilot study. In the questionnaire (See Addendum D) an example of ensuring that variables correlate was questioning what languages the learners know first, second and third best, where they learned them and the age at which they learned them.

The MEANS procedure was conducted by the Department of Statistics for question 9 of the questionnaire (See Addendum D and chapter 4).

### **3.10 Methodological constraints**

The reader should bear the following limitations of this study in mind:

Responses to a questionnaire are often unexpected (Verma & Mallick, 1999, p. 120). Unlike with interviews, you are not present to explain everything to respondents (Grix, 2005, p. 129) and in the case of one school I neglected to explain to the contact teacher the use of the “office use” column, resulting in many spoilt questionnaires. The ideal would have been if all questions had been answered by all respondents, which was not the case. It was clear that in quite a few instances the respondents did not understand some of the questions. This could be improved upon in future studies by either explaining the process clearly to the teachers, verbally or in written form, or by the researcher himself/herself administering the questionnaires.

With regard to the research itself, the study was conducted at suburban Gauteng schools and can not necessarily be generalised to a rural context or other provinces where the linguistic profile might differ.

The research did not investigate age and sex as variables. The research did also not, in the broader scope, take into account the role of the teacher in the development of the linguistic profile of learners, and these aforementioned aspects should be taken into account by other researchers attempting to duplicate the study.

### 3.11 Data storage

During the research process all completed questionnaires, signed consent forms and statistical print outs from the Department of Statistics were kept in a locked cupboard in the researcher's study and kept for the duration of the study. After the study it was then decided that the data be presented to the University for preservation.

The University of Pretoria (2007b) requires that all data collected during research projects, which then becomes the intellectual property of the university, be stored for a minimum of 10 years in order to counter any disputes that might arise regarding data authenticity, intellectual property and data ownership. The task of storing the data falls to the faculty in which the research was conducted and in my case, where the data was collected in hard copy form, it must be secured in such a manner that ensures its safety from fires or any other kinds of emergencies.

### 3.12 Conclusion

In this chapter I examined the whole process I went through in order to complete my research. The process started with choosing positivism as a research philosophy, which led me to the decision to employ a survey questionnaire. We have seen that the process started while I was a beginner teacher, which was long before I enrolled for an MEd study. A research proposal had to be compiled, consent had to be obtained from all relevant parties and my questionnaire refined after a pilot study had been conducted. The chapter concludes with methodological constraints and steps that were taken in order to ensure reliability and validity.

*Now that data has been collected, it is time to join the novice teacher in Chapter 4 in order to find out what the responses to the questionnaire were and to discuss what they mean.*



## Chapter 4: Data analysis and discussion

### 4.1 Introduction

*We rejoin our novice teacher where she sits down to study the data she has collected in an attempt to get to know her learners a little better. When she entered the profession, she noticed very early in her career that there was a discrepancy between what the DoBE assumes the learners to be capable of and the reality in the classroom. Now, as the novice teacher examines her data sets, she experiences several epiphanies regarding characteristics of her learners.*

Chapter 4 is based on the data which were collected through the process discussed in Chapter 3. As mentioned in Chapter 3, after a discussion with statisticians who were assigned to assist me, results of responses to several questions were cross-tabulated in order to provide a more in-depth view of the data. By analysing the data, I have constructed a linguistic profile of the typical English HL learner, with whom a teacher in a GET classroom in a suburban area of the Tshwane metropolitan area, where English is the LOLT, would engage on a daily basis.

The governing body of a school consists of the school principal, staff members and learners but mostly caregivers who are elected by other caregivers of the learners. The governing body of the school decides what language will be used as an LOLT and which languages will be offered at HL and FAL level (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2001, p. 234). The choice of a school, based on LOLT, is legally in the hands of the caregivers (Department of Education, 1997, para. 22). If no school offers tuition in the desired LOLT, caregivers have to make alternative arrangements or submit a formal request to the DoBE for an opportunity to receive tuition in the chosen LOLT (Department of Education, 1997, para. 22). Caregivers often make the decision to send their children to schools where the LOLT is English, as they would like to prepare them for the world of business. In South Africa, the lingua franca for conducting business is English (Kamwamgamalu 2000, p. 35). The assumption is therefore often that the caregivers consider the learners capable of coping with English as the LOLT where their home language is not offered as either a HL or a FAL.

To continue the discussion on how caregivers choose schools, I refer to question 2 of the questionnaire (See Addendum D), which asked why learners attend their specific school. Refer to Table 1 for a summary of responses to this question.



**Table 1: School choice.**

	Total responses	% of total respondents
Proximity to home	233	36.3%
Academic standard	189	29.4%
Range of sport/cultural activities	59	9.1%
No other schools	31	4.8%
Reasonable fees	25	3.9%
Proximity to caregiver(s) work	23	3.6%
Access to English	22	3.4%
Access to transport	21	3.3%
Good teachers	13	2%

Access to English was not necessarily taken into account when schools were chosen as only 3.4% of respondents indicated English as a reason for attending the target school. In suburban areas (see Table 1), caregivers base choice of school on convenience related to proximity to home (36.3% of respondents) and perceived quality of education (29.4% of respondents).

## 4.2 Biographical data: Respondents

The learners who participated in the study were in grades 8 and 9 and were between the ages of 12 and 16, with 9.78% being older than 16. Education in South Africa is compulsory from the age of 7 (SouthAfrica.info, n.d., online) which means the average grade 8 participating in the study had to be either turning 14 or be 14 already and the average grade 9 had to be turning 15 or be 15 already. The questionnaire was completed by 642 respondents. All respondents completed the question regarding age bracket and according to the results, 596 respondents (92.8% of 642 respondents) fall into the appropriate age bracket (13 – 15 years old) prescribed by the DoBE for grades 8 – 9.

## 4.3 Linguistic profile

Before discussing the linguistic profile of learners in the target group, I would like to mention that, due to the fact that South Africa has 11 official languages, generally geographically specific, but due migration, globalisation and political reasons often diversified and might differ from one community to the other. It is therefore

recommended that the results of the data analysis not be generalised but preferably recreated in the researcher's own unique target group.

I commence discussion of the linguistic profile of the target group with several preliminary characteristics of the group. According to the 2011 national census, isiZulu and English are the two most common languages people perceive as their home language in a suburban area of the Tshwane metropolitan area, which fall in the Gauteng province (Statistics South Africa, 2012, p. 37). The expectation is therefore that learners will be either isiZulu or English home language speakers. The study however yielded different results.

At the three research sites, the four most widely spoken languages were English, Setswana, seSotho and isiZulu (See Table 2). The difference between languages spoken in Gauteng, as indicated by the 2011 census, and data collected about languages spoken at the research sites, supports the fact that linguistic profiles of learners could run counter to geographical expectations. Investigating a linguistic profile might therefore yield different results in various areas inside of a suburban Tshwane metropolitan area or might even differ from school to school.

Another expectation was that learners would perceive themselves as home language speakers of the language which they are exposed to in the environment while, additionally, being proficient enough in English in order to enrol in a school where English is the LOLT. Table 2 however indicates a different situation altogether.

**Table 2: Respondents who feel more confident in English than their home language.**

Languages spoken by South African learners	Language learned first	Most confident in English	Most confident in a language other than English	% most confident in English
English	181	145	36	80.1%
Tshivenda	14	7	7	50.0%
Other	32	15	17	46.9
Afrikaans	37	17	20	46.0%
Setswana	81	30	51	37.0%
isiZulu	58	21	37	36.2%
seSotho	64	22	42	34.4%
seSepedi	51	17	34	33.3%
isiXhosa	33	9	24	27.3%
Siswati	10	2	8	20.0%
isiNdebele	18	3	15	16.7%
Xitsonga	12	1	11	8.3%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>591</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>48.9%</b>

Data in Table 2 consists of a cross tabulation of responses related to Question 7 and question 9. In Question 7 of the questionnaire (See Addendum D), learners had the opportunity to indicate the three languages they feel most confident in and rank them accordingly. There was no guideline included to assist the learners in deciding how the languages should be ranked. Learners who indicated a language as the language they know first, second or third best therefore did so according to their own perceptions of how they understood the language.

In Question 9 (See Addendum D), learners decided at what age they felt that they had learned the language. Once again, no guideline was included. Responses to Questions 7 and 9 were cross-tabulated, in Table 2, in order to compare which languages learners learned first and which of these learners, regardless of the language they learned first, felt more confident in English.

On examination of the data in Table 2, it becomes clear that, although there are households where English is learned first (181 respondents), many learners, based on their personal opinion, consider English to be the language they know best despite not having learned it first. For example, 30 respondents indicated that they learned Setswana first but, according to personal evaluation, felt more confident in English. The language a learner learns first is considered their home language and

generally should be the language that they are most proficient in (Statistics Canada, 2012, para. 1). However, according to the data in Table 2, some learners consider themselves, according to their own observations, to be closer to home language proficiency in English rather than in their actual home language.

The phenomenon of learners who are more proficient in a language other than their home language is a concern, as learners who come to school with a solid foundation in their home language find it easier to learn a new language (Cummins, 2001, p. 17). A fully developed home language is important, because learners require literacies from their home language to support them when learning the new language (Cummins, 2001, p. 17). Another problematic scenario is learners switching to a new language too soon, as their home language might not be fully developed and therefore not able to support them when learning a new language (Ball, 2010, p. 3).

According to the data in Table 2, there are 37 learners who, despite learning English first, indicated that at the time of the study they felt more confident in another language. One of the many possibilities which could account for this is that learners might have initially been in the care of caregiver(s) who exposed them to a higher quality of English than the primary caregiver(s) they spent time with in subsequent years.

Despite having learned English first, 5.6% of the respondents (36 of a total of 642 respondents) indicated that they now feel more competent in another language. Further, 22.4% of the respondents (144 of a total of 642 respondents) indicated that they now feel more competent in English rather than in the language they initially learned. As discussed before, the latter group of respondents may not have developed the necessary literacies in their home language to support attaining literacy in English (Baker & Hornberger, 2001, p. 263; Barry, 2002, p. 107)

I continue the discussion of the linguistic profile of learners who in the target group with an overview of the data collected through the survey questionnaire, categorised according to multilingual ability, language preference, age and place of acquisition, usage, proficiency of caregiver(s) and own proficiency of respondents.

### 4.3.1 Multilingual respondents

*“The person who knows only one language does not truly know that language,” – Goethe (Cummins, 2001, p. 17)*



**Figure 5: Multilingualism in South Africa, (McNulty, 2013, online).**

Learners who speak an African language are often multilingual (Mncwango, 2009, p. 51). One example why would be the fact that isiNdebele and isiZulu come from the same language families and knowing one makes it easier for the learners to communicate in the other. In the case of the learners whom I have taught, many are multilingual as they are in schools where the LOLT is English, they take Afrikaans as an FAL and they speak another language socially.

Suburban schools, where the LOLT is English and many learners are multilingual, have a tendency to not fully acknowledge that learners are multilingual, which is often an indication that schools do not have the resources to promote and encourage multilingualism. A simple example is school application forms, and other documents, which generally have a section where parents indicate their child's single 'home language', whereas learners could come from an environment where they use more than one language on a daily basis in the community or the environment (Mncwango, 2009, p. 51).

A total of 515 out of 642 learners (80% of respondents) who participated in the study (See Table 3) indicated that there is a language that they perceive as knowing third best. It can therefore be concluded that the target group is generally multilingual.

**Table 3: Languages respondents perceive as knowing third best.**

Languages spoken by South African learners	Total responses	% of total respondents
isiZulu	91	14.2%
Afrikaans	90	14%
seSotho	77	12%
Other	75	11.7%
English	59	9.2%
Setswana	52	8.1%
seSepedi	29	4.5%
isiXhosa	15	2.3%
Tshivenda	8	1.3%
Xitsonga	8	1.2%
isiNdebele	6	0.9%
Siswati	5	0.8%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>80%</b>

As was mentioned in Chapter 2, multilingualism holds potential for greater linguistic development as a sufficient level of proficiency in one language encourages metalinguistic awareness of the other and enhances the ability to gain proficiency in the language. A facet related to multilingualism, investigated through the survey questionnaire, which serves as a simple example how investigating the linguistic profile of a specific target group holds implications for classroom practice and curriculum adjustment, is learner perception towards multilingualism. The multilingual individual is best equipped to indicate whether multilingualism is a beneficial attribute. Table 4 reflects responses to Question 5 in the questionnaire (See Addendum D) which asked respondents how they feel about being multilingual.

**Table 4: How respondents viewed being multilingual.**

Respondent perception of multilingualism	Total responses	% of total respondents
Helps me understand more people	508	79%
Makes me feel good about myself	173	27%
Is really easy	90	14%
Often confuses me	45	7%
Is really difficult	25	3.9%
Makes school harder	17	2.6%

Based on the data in Table 4, it is clear that the respondents felt positive about the fact that they are multilingual as 508 respondents (79% of 642 respondents) felt that it helps them communicate with more people and 173 respondents (27% of 642 respondents) felt proud of being multilingual. Considering the fact that learners feel positive about being multilingual and, according to Cummins (2001, p. 17), knowing more than one language can enhance a learner's linguistic ability or metalinguistic awareness, multilingualism should be acknowledged and promoted in order to sufficiently encourage the development of English proficiency. How the aforementioned is approached depends on the resources available to the school.

#### 4.3.2 Language preference

It is unlikely that we will ever have a situation where all the learners in a classroom prefer English to another language, as all learners grow up in different circumstances. An example is a study conducted by Mckinney (2007, p. 11) where learners in township areas indicated ambivalent attitudes towards English.

As mentioned, the most spoken languages in Gauteng include English, Sesotho, Afrikaans and isiZulu (Gauteng Tourism Authority, 2012, para. 4). Below, I indicate the four dominant languages spoken in Gauteng and the number of respondents who indicated the two languages (isiZulu and seSotho) as the languages they would prefer to receive tuition in:

**Table 5: The language learners know best and the language learners would prefer to receive tuition in.**

Language respondents feel most confident in	Prefers isiZulu	Prefers seSotho
English	23	31
seSotho	12	17
Afrikaans	3	5
isiZulu	30	4

The possibilities related to language learning when a learner has a solid basis in a home language is just as powerful as the desire and motivation a learner has to learn a language (Crystal, 2005, p. 434).

Ambivalent attitudes towards English were not accounted for in the scope of this study and the numbers mentioned in Table 5 are very low. However, the study does raise the possibility of learners not being motivated to excel in English because they would prefer to receive tuition in another language, and this should be taken into account by a researcher investigating the linguistic profile of a specified target group.

### 4.3.3 English

- **Age of acquisition**

This section examines the age at which learners felt that they had acquired English. When attempting to structure the classroom setting for a unique set of learners, this facet is important as it can provide the teacher with clues to the development stage in which the learner did not receive enough support in attaining literacy in English.

Many people, places and things influence children at different stages of their development and it is never possible to point to only one aspect, such as pre-school or caregivers, and claim that this was the primary influence which shaped a learner at that time. However, children in suburban areas under the age of seven are often in the care of caregivers or a pre-school during the day. It is therefore possible to determine whether learners in the target group were being exposed to English via caregivers or a pre-school before age 7.

Based on the ages that learners indicated that they felt they had acquired a language, the possible influence of either caregivers or members of the



community and preschool could be determined. Questions 7 and 9 from the questionnaire (See Addendum D) were cross-tabulated in order to examine at what ages learners (who perceived themselves to be on either HL or FAL level) learned English. Responses to how confident they are in English and at what age they learned the language was therefore based on their own perceptions. Refer to Table 6 for a summary of the aforementioned data.

**Table 6: Age at which learners acquired English**

Age learned	Knows English best	Knows English second best	Knows English third best
1	34	4	2
2	46	10	0
3	42	17	4
4	24	24	5
5	37	38	11
6	22	31	6
7	13	17	6
8	4	11	0
9	0	7	3
10	2	7	1
11	0	2	2
12	1	5	0
13	0	2	1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>41</b>

As was mentioned before, there is never a clear cut influence at any stage of a learner's development, but Table 6 raises the possibility that either caregivers or a pre-school played a significant role in the learners' acquisition of English, as age 1 – 5 is generally the age when children are mostly in the care of caregivers or a pre-school during the day. 205 respondents (31.93% of 642 respondents) indicated that they consider having learned English before the age of 6. As with the aforementioned, it can be assumed that from age 6 higher formal schooling influenced the learners' development of English, as from that age learners generally spend most of their day at school.

For learners who felt that they knew English second best, caregivers and pre-school present a dominant influence. Although the learners were possibly exposed to English at home, it might not have been as frequently, which led to learners acquiring the language at a later age.

Based on Table 6, many learners who felt that English was the language they know second best considered that they had learned the language slightly later than those who felt that they knew the language best. 38.77% of the learners who felt that they knew the language second best indicated that they thought ages 5 -6 to be the age when they had learned the language.

The number of learners who indicated that they know English third best (Second Additional Language) are lower, but it still confirms that a number of learners are on an even lower level than FAL. Just as being on FAL level with English indicates a lower proficiency, those who consider themselves on SAL level have an even lower proficiency, as the DoBE has a whole 'Second Additional Language' CAPS document with a different set of required skills and assessments which have been created by the DoBE.

The group of learners who consider themselves to be on SAL level are most likely the learners who are either just passing or are not passing at all, as their level of proficiency in English will impact on all other subjects where English is the LOLT. Based on the fact that we have three groups of learners who learned English at three different stages, we now have three groups of learners with differing degrees of proficiency, which implies that three strategies might be required for the classroom in order to accommodate those learners.

The greater focus on ages 5-6 for less proficient learners indicates a greater influence of pre-school age on learning English as a first additional language. Learners who did not sufficiently develop English through the influence of the caregivers might then develop English when they go to pre-school. The learners who are not performing adequately in English HL will then be the learners who did not have adequate or frequent exposure to English before entering grade 1.

- **Prompt for acquisition**

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the initial version of the questionnaire which was used during the pilot phase contained several open-ended questions. One of the questions asked learners for their opinion on where they felt they had acquired English. It was decided, due to the large number of questionnaires that would be returned, to exclude open-ended questions from the final questionnaire. However, it is helpful to list a few of the responses from the pilot study in order to introduce this facet of the linguistic profile of the learners who participated in the study. Some of the verbatim responses included the following:

- *I learned to speak it when I started going to a crèche at about four years old. My teacher spoke English to me and the other kids.*
- *I learned to speak English in preschool and I had a lot of English speaking friends. So they also helped me.*
- *I was put in an English nursery school.*
- *I learned it in grade 1 because the school I went to was an English school.*
- *I learned from pre-school.*
- *My family friend.*
- *I learned it in preschool when I was five from my preschool teachers and friends.*
- *I learned to speak English when I was in grade 3. I easily learned to speak English because I am a fast learner.*
- *My mom always spoke to other people while I was sitting on her lap.*

The above responses predict conclusions which can be drawn from data collected during the course of the study on where learners acquired English. When examining the selected responses from the pilot study, the scholastic environment, caregiver(s) and the social environment stand out as influences which resulted in learners acquiring the language. A discussion on where the respondents felt that they had acquired English follows.

**Table 7: Where learners acquired English.**

Where learners acquired English	Knows English best	Knows English second best	Knows English third best	Total responses	% of total responses
Caregivers	137	165	59	361	52.2%
Pre-school	129	30	11	170	26.5%
Primary School	52	8	6	66	10.2%
Friends	9	4	0	13	2%
Community	9	16	10	35	0.15%

As mentioned, when examining the data presented in Table 7, it corresponds with and confirms what the limited sample of extracts from the pilot study illustrate.

When studying Table 7 based on the age learners felt that they had learned English, we can determine whether pre-school/caregivers or school played a pivotal role in learners acquiring English. For example, the group of learners who felt that they knew English best indicated pre-school (129 respondents) and caregivers (137 respondents) as the greatest influences on acquiring the language.

A pre-school where the LOLT is English exposes learners to English in a formalised setting. Fewer learners, from the groups who indicated that they felt they knew English second or third best, indicated pre-school as an influential factor in acquiring the language. In total, only 41 learners from those groups indicated pre-school as an influential factor. 224 learners from those groups indicated the influence of being exposed to English by the caregivers.

Based on the aforementioned, the valuable role of pre-schools where English is the LOLT could be concluded. Knowing which learners went to English LOLT pre-schools could serve as a predictor for additional support for the grade 8 teacher.

For learners who felt that they knew English third best, primary school and pre-school played a role, but the major factor continued to be the

caregivers (See Table 7). Although these learners cited the caregiver(s) as an influential factor, it has been mentioned before that the frequency of exposure to English by the aforementioned group might have been lower than the group of learners who consider English the language which they know best. The role of the caregivers is affirmed in Table 6, in the section which dealt with age of acquisition, as two respondents indicated age 2 as the age at which they had learned the language whereas 11 respondents indicated age 5.

Due to the potentially powerful influence caregivers can have on the learners' development of literacy, it is important that those caregivers who are capable of doing so assist learners with e.g. homework and exposing them to situations where English is used. They need to do this consistently throughout the learner's school years.

From the discussion it becomes clear that it is important, where possible, that a teacher/school attempts to construct a linguistic profile of learners, as data on where the majority of learners in the area acquire language can assist teachers and schools with suggestions on how to support learners who are not adequately proficient in English.

- **Caregiver(s)**

Reference has been made to the role of the caregivers in the previous section, which dealt with respondents' responses as to where they acquired English. To continue, the potential role of the caregivers is however not merely limited to modelling reading behaviour and assisting a learner with homework (Lindholt-Leary, 2001, p. 145; Yazıci et al., 2010, p. 259). As learners require a solid foundation in their home language (Baker & Hornberger, 2001, p. 263; Barry, 2002, p.107) in order to excel at another language, it is up to the caregivers, where a learner will not be receiving formal instruction in their home language, to encourage the development of the learner's actual home language.

The fact that caregivers should provide a foundation in the home language is important because, as was seen in Table 2, many learners indicated that they now know English better than the language that they

had initially learned – an indicator that their home language is being marginalised.

Question 11 focused on how the respondents perceive the proficiency of their caregivers (See Addendum D) and asked whether their caregivers' ability to speak English was good, okay or poor. A guideline was not provided in the question on what constitutes a proficient speaker of English. The data therefore refers to those respondents who perceive both their parents as proficient speakers, based on their own beliefs and experiences. The data related to this question was cross-tabulated in order to compare responses from learners who indicated that they know English best and learners who indicated that they know English second best.

**Table 8: Learners who know English best/second best and both parents know English well.**

Perceived level of proficiency in English	Both parents know English well.	% of total respondents
Knows English best	217	33.8%
Knows English second best	131	20.4%
Total	348	54.2%

Table 8 confirms the role of the caregiver(s), as the percentage of total respondents who know English best and consider both their caregivers proficient in English is higher than the number of learners who know English second best and consider both their parents proficient in English.

Before going to pre-school, learners generally spend time with the parents or caregivers fulfilling the role of parents (Gardner, 2007, p. 18). The power of caregivers who are capable of and available to promote development of English proficiency is therefore significant (Lindholm-Leary, 2001, p.145; Yazicia et al., 2010, p. 259).

- **English: Frequency of use**

Questions 3.1 – 3.14 of the questionnaire (See Addendum D) relates to various situations where learners use English, both in the past and the

present. Responses to Questions 3 and 7 were cross-tabulated and categorised in order to examine how learners use English in the home, social and school environment. The data is summarised in Table 9.

**Table 9: English usage in the home, school and social environment.**

Environment where English is used	Most confident in English	% of total responses	Most confident in a different language	% of total responses	Did not select this option	% of total responses
Home Environment	258	40.12%	206	32.04%	179	27.84%
Social Environment	256	39.81%	270	49.99%	117	18.2%
School environment	283	44.01%	277	43.07%	83	12.91%

Questions 3.10–3.13 (Which languages do you speak to your grandparents, mother, father, brothers/sisters?) of the questionnaire (See Addendum D) were cross-tabulated with the 352 learners who feel most confident in English (See Table 5) in order to indicate how many learners use English in the home environment.

A great number of respondents, 27.84% of the total 642 respondents, indicated that they did not use English in the home environment. As discussed above, if caregivers are incapable of assisting learners with the development of English proficiency, a learner will not necessarily perform successfully in higher grades (Raising Bilingual Children, 2013, para. 1). Another possibility why so few learners indicated that they use English in the home environment might be that they simply left out the question as they did not understand it.

Another aspect of language usage which was investigated was whether learners use English in the school environment (See Table 9). At all the research sites, English was offered as an HL. English HL, as a subject,

aims to develop not only interpersonal communication skills required in social settings but also cognitive academic skills required for learning across the curriculum (DoBE, 2011, p. 8) or rather, situations where the LOLT is English. The learner therefore needs to be fluent enough in English to cope with receiving tuition in all of his or her subjects in English.

As mentioned in the literature review, before the first democratic election, schools were segregated and the majority of learners generally were discriminated against by receiving inferior education. Post 1994, there are many mixed or integrated schools with learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Ncoko et al., 2000, p. 226). In suburban areas, many learners find themselves in former model-C schools where English is the LOLT and good English is an expected outcome, but not all learners experience success with the language (McKinney, 2007, p. 10). As was discussed in Chapter 2, one of the reasons might be inadequate development of a learner's home language, which is necessary in order to acquire fluency in an additional language (Visagie, 2010, para. 14).

Questions 3.1–3.5 (See Addendum D) in the questionnaire focused on what languages are used in the school environment – languages teachers mostly spoke in primary school, high school, languages learners speak at break and languages learners take notes in. As mentioned in the discussion on English usage in the home environment, an assumption can be made that the 83 learners who did not respond to any of the questions related to using English in the school environment may not have understood the question. The reason for this is that all of the learners are in a school where the LOLT is English and should have responded positively to at least one of the questions.

In Question 5 of the questionnaire (See Addendum D), learners were given the opportunity to indicate what they struggled with in the English classroom (See Table 10).



**Table 10: What learners struggle with in the English class.**

Aspect of classroom experienced as most problematic	Responses	% of total respondents
The work	252	39.3%
The teacher	140	21.8%
The books	134	20.88%
Their friends	53	8.3%

A significant number of learners, 39% of total respondents, indicated that they wished that they understood the work better. Almost half of the respondents therefore feel that they are not capable of performing to the best of their ability. The implication for the teacher is that he/she should, based on the group of learners he/she has, continuously strive to find ways to make the work more accessible to the learners, as there is a clear need for assistance.

How English is used in the social environment is important, as in South Africa, English grants users social mobility (Granville et al., 1997, p. 10). What this means is that it equips individuals with tools which allow them to communicate with members of other communities in a variety of contexts. In suburban areas, English is the lingua franca in malls, cinemas, churches, etc.

Questions 3.9 and 3.14 (See Addendum D) focused on whether learners use English in the social environment. A learner's social environment does in fact play a role in his/her language development (Crystal, 2005, p. 434; Lanza & Svendsen, 2007, p. 276-277). 18.2% of the learners indicated that they use English in their social environment (see Table 9), e.g. talking to their friends in English. The number of learners who did not indicate that they use English in the social environment might communicate with their friends or members of their community in another language, or might not have understood the question.

With regard to using English in the social environment, the 117 learners (18.2% of 642 respondents) who did not indicate that they use English in the social environment therefore have less exposure to English and could be negatively affected. Other learners might be exposed to more real life

situations where they are able to interact with others in English. Class activities contextualised to reflect real life situations could benefit learners with less exposure to English in social settings (Norton, 1997, p. 42).

Learners need to be prepared for interaction with others in a variety of daily situations through activities which are contextualised and represent real life scenarios. A lesson that provides vocabulary through a comprehension passage on going to the cinema not only relates to the interests of young people, but also prepares them for a real life situation. Such an activity holds more value than a lesson that focuses on drilling uncategorised vocabulary.

- **English: Perceived proficiency**

The last facet of the linguistic profile of the learners who participated in the study that will be discussed focuses on their perceived proficiency in English. In Question 6 (See Addendum D), learners had the opportunity to indicate whether they felt they were able to write, speak, listen to and understand English 'well', 'okay' or 'poor'. The data related to this question is summarised in Table 11.

**Table 11: Perceived proficiency of respondents' English.**

Perceived capability	Total responses	% of total respondents
<b>Reading English:</b>		
Well	202	31.5%
Okay	203	31.5%
Poor	10	1.6%
<b>Writing English:</b>		
Well	373	58.1%
Okay	234	36.45%
Poor	11	1.71%
<b>Speaking English:</b>		
Well	438	68.22%
Okay	165	25.7%
Poor	14	2.1%
<b>Listening to English:</b>		
Well	383	59.7%
Okay	212	33.02%
Poor	21	3.2%
<b>Understanding English:</b>		
Well	387	60.29%
Okay	212	33.02%
Poor	15	2.34%

Only 58.1% of the total respondents indicated that they perceive themselves as being fully competent in listening, reading, speaking and understanding English. The aforementioned numbers are disconcerting, as 41.9% of learners consider themselves not fully equipped to cope with what they encounter in the English class on a daily basis.

Based on Table 11, I can conclude that the target group would require most assistance with reading and writing. When attempting to improve classroom practice, suggestions can be taken from widely available academic literature on assisting learners who are not English home language speakers where English is the LOLT. For example, learners could be encouraged to use code-switching if they needed help from a fellow learner (Ncoko et al, 2000, p. 227).

A learner's LOLT and HL should ideally be his or her home language and not an additional language. Whilst the NCS was in use, the DoBE assumed that learners already had a foundation in the HL appropriate for a variety of situations when starting school (DoBE, 2002, p. 4). 178 learners, 27.73% of the total respondents who participated in the study, indicated that they know English second best. The previous curriculum maintained that when a learner reaches the GET phase and they know a language second best, in other words on FAL level, it means they still cannot "communicate well" enough in the language to be considered on HL level (DoBE, 2011, p. 8) and are therefore not necessarily equipped to take the subject.

The DoBE has, however, revised what should be expected from a learner in the English HL classroom. The CAPS for English HL, which has been implemented since 2011, has a more realistic view of the situation – it encourages a level of language proficiency required by the multitude of learners who have to cope with their FAL as the LOLT, therefore taking into account that the language is perhaps not their home language (DoBE, 2011, p. 6).

The CAPS also makes reference to cognitive academic language skills required for thinking and learning (DoBE, 2011, p. 24), as learners should be taught how to use the language effectively in a range of situations required by them on a daily basis (Brunner, 2009, p. 36) by, for example, making reference to common daily expressions such as different kinds of ways of apologising (DoBE, 2011, p. 24). The revised aim of the English HL curriculum is a step in the right direction, but as of 2011 it is still in the process of being implemented and the success of it still needs to be judged.

#### **4.4 Summary and discussion of data**

Aside from biographical data where learners, as expected generally fell in a age bracket ranging from 13 to 15 years, throughout the course of Chapter 4, it became clear that the linguistic profile of learners in General Education and Training (GET) English Home Language (HL) classrooms in a suburban area of the Tshwane

metropolitan area differs from my initial expectation of what the profile of the typical learner in the aforementioned target group is. An initial expectation was that the dominant home language of learners in a suburban Tshwane metropolitan area would correlate with the results of the 2011 national census (see Chapter 4.3).

As a novice teacher, I assumed that all learners, who take English Home Language (HL) as a subject in a school where the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) is English, would be fluent in both their home language, which, as mentioned, I assumed would correlated with the results of the national census, and proficient enough in English to cope with any task that came from a book marked suitable for grade 8 English Home Language (HL) and based on the prescribed Revised National Curriculum Statements (RNCS). The reality is that learners were not necessarily fluent in their home languages, which in the target group consisted, contrary to the 2011 national census of English, isiZulu, Setswana and seSotho (see Table 5). Not having a solid foundation in their home language, they felt more proficient in English. As was suggested in Chapter 2, a lack of a foundation in the home language is an indicator for difficulty in later school years where English is the LOLT.

Learner proficiency in English and the ideal of developing the home language was not significant for when the caregivers enrolled learners in the target schools, in a suburban area of the Tshwane metropolitan area. Learners were enrolled in the target schools due to either close proximity to home or perceived high academic standards. The aforementioned, despite learners who have not necessarily gained the required proficiency in English or lack a foundation in the home language, is within the legal rights of the caregivers as, according to the South African Schools Act (SASA), schools are not allowed to turn learners away if the caregivers are satisfied with the learners receiving education in the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) offered by the school (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2001, p. 234).

The learner's proficiency in English is influenced early in life by exposure to English from the caregiver(s) and/or a pre-school. A learner's competency in English might fall several years behind that of their peers in the General Education and Training (GET) phase if both early exposure to English and a foundation in a home language is lacking. Examining at what age and where learners acquired English provided clues as to what the quality of the learners' English would be. In the pilot study, where learners responded to an open-ended question related to where they had learned English, many learners referred to pre-school or the initial year of school as a

primary influence. Age one to six is when learners generally spend most of their day in either a pre-school or the company of primary caregiver(s) and determines the frequency a learner is exposed to English in the home environment before entering grade 1.

Learners who perceived English as the language that they know best, indicated that they had learned the language between ages one and six. Learners who perceived themselves as being on First Additional Language (FAL) level indicated ages three – six as the ages at which they had acquired the language. The learners who perceived themselves as being on Second Additional Language (SAL) level generally indicated ages five to seven. The aforementioned emphasises the role of the pre-school and the primary caregiver(s) in assisting learners in developing proficiency in English from an early age as learners who indicated that they perceived themselves as being either First Additional Language (FAL) or Second Additional Language (SAL) speakers of English indicated that they had learned the language at a later stage. Learners who were exposed to English at a later age are therefore catching up with their peers who were exposed to the language at an earlier age.

The role of the primary caregiver(s) was emphasised in questions where learners indicated where they use English on a daily basis. Learners are often exposed to English in their community or while interacting with the social group and not at home but 70% of the learners indicated that they use English in the home environment where 90% indicated that they use English in the social environment. 87% of learners indicated that they use English exclusively in the school environment. The possibility that learners simply might not have understood the question could account for the aforementioned as the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) of all the participating schools was English. Where most learners are exposed to English usage in the social environment, not all learners receive exposure from the caregiver(s) in the home environment.

Learners also generally perceived themselves as being more fluent speakers of English if they perceived the caregiver(s) as being competent speakers of English – once again emphasising the influence of the primary caregiver(s) in the development of a learner's English. The learners will also have access to greater assistance with homework if the primary caregiver(s) are sufficiently proficient speakers of English and therefore an improvement in all subjects and not just English Home Language (HL).

Learners are generally multilingual as 518 learners indicated that they know at least three languages, making the majority of learners multilingual. Aside from learners who considered themselves most proficient in English, 218 learners perceived themselves of being English First Additional Language (FAL) speakers and 59 learners perceived themselves as being English Second Additional Language (SAL) speakers and, therefore, multilingual as English is the language they perceive as the language that they speak third best. Besides the fact that the learners are multilingual, they represent a variety of proficiency levels of English.

Further, with regards to multilingualism, learners perceive being multilingual as positive as it provides social mobility. Multilingual also holds great potential as a learner who is fluent in several languages has the cognitive structures in place to understand how language in general works better.

In the classroom itself, learners struggle with written tasks as 39% of the total respondents felt that written tasks in the English Home Language (HL) class were a problem. This is a problem the teacher might only realise when it is time to mark formal written assessments.

Based on what has been mentioned, a primary reason for learners battling with English and written tasks in the English Home Language (HL) classroom could therefore be due to inadequate early exposure to English in the home environment or the fact that the learners might not have access to caregivers who are sufficiently proficient in English.

## **4.5 Conclusion**

The initial aim with the study was to describe the linguistic profile of learners in a specific target group. Through a closed-ended survey questionnaire, a number of characteristics of the target group in question's linguistic profile was identified. The aim of the study is however not only a personal reflection for myself to improve my classroom practice but serves as an example how, if a similar attempt is made by other teachers in the field, results can lead to findings which can provide suggestions for classroom or curriculum adjustments.

For example, one of the most significant characteristic of the target group was identified as multilingualism. A total of 80% of respondents indicated that they have knowledge of a third language and consider themselves multilingual.

To demonstrate how identifying the linguistic profile of a specific group of learners can lead to constructive curriculum changes, I refer back to Chapter 2. In Chapter 2, it was discussed that multilingual learners, where the home language is not English, if supported adequately, can through sufficient knowledge of additional language, develop metalinguistic awareness (Gabryś-Barkera & Otwinowska, 2012, p. 382).

Considering the characteristics of the target group, supporting the learners, who are predominantly multilingual, through a possible compulsory third official language is the ideal (News24, 2013, para. 3) but this might take many years to be implemented successfully and might extend school days by up to an hour (News24, 2013, para. 1). The aforementioned, as mentioned by News24 (2013), is however a matter which has been identified by the DoBE as requiring attention.

In Chapter 5, I provide an overview of the study and reflect on the results of the research by discussing the significance and implications of the study. I also make suggestions for further research.



## Chapter 5: Significance and implications of the inquiry

### 5.1 Introduction

*The novice teacher has reached her destination. A journey with a difficult beginning, as our novice teacher was in the difficult enough phase of just starting out on her career when she was confronted on her first day by the realisation that her learners were quite different from those she had been briefed to expect. After tears and a resolve to end her career before it had even started, she decided to deal with her situation proactively and to attempt to improve her own classroom practice by embarking on an MEd study in order to investigate the main question she had – what was the profile of the learners that she would be teaching every day.*

In chapter 4, the data collected during the course of the study was summarised and discussed, and a linguistic profile of learners (see chapter 4.5), who attend schools in a suburban area of the Tshwane metropolitan area where the LOLT is English, emerged. Despite the fact that the data collected in the study cannot be generalised to apply to learners in other areas in the country, one significant fact stands out, namely that the majority of people in South Africa speak a variety of languages in a variety of situations, a reality which has been pointed out in the past by PANSALB (1998, para. 33).

Multilingualism is therefore the most significant characteristic of English HL learners in a suburban area of the Tshwane metropolitan area which, if resources and time permit, schools should attempt to encourage. As was mentioned in chapter 4, knowing several languages well improves a learners overall linguistic competency. Aside from cognitive benefits, multilingualism is desirable in the long run, as it allows learners to play an important social and economic role when they enter the job market (Cummins, 2001, p. 16). An example would be a doctor who could assist patients in several languages.

### 5.2 Overview of study

As mentioned in chapter 1, I had the desire to improve my own classroom practice and I decided to formalise my investigation into the linguistic profile of learners in my target group by enrolling for an MEd study at the University of Pretoria. This led me to conduct a survey questionnaire (See Addendum D), refined after an initial pilot study, at three suburban public schools in Gauteng, specifically a suburban area in the

Tshwane metropolitan area, which were chosen through convenience sampling. 642 unspoilt questionnaires were coded by myself and data captured by the statistics department at the University of Pretoria.

In 2013, it was reported in the media that the DoBE was aware of the implications of learners attending schools where the LOLT and HL differ from their home language. One of those implications is that teachers have to support a classroom where individual learners' English proficiency level might differ drastically from each other (Heining-Boynton, 2010, p. 2). According to the works of Cummins (2001), the aforementioned is what often leads to an inadequate development of English proficiency. In order to counteract the problem, a third compulsory language was in the pipeline, to be introduced with 2014's grade 1's as a pilot study (Jones, 2013, para.1; News24, 2013, para. 1) in order to develop home languages other than English and Afrikaans in order to ultimately improve English proficiency. It is therefore still possible that South Africa will achieve the desirable aim of learners who are proficient in their own language and therefore, according to the works of Cummins (2001), will have an internal system in place to support the development of literacy in English. For a full review of the literature, refer to Chapter 2.

In Chapter 3, I discussed the research design and methodology and other aspects related to designing the research study and collecting the data. In this chapter I provide a comprehensive discussion of how the survey questionnaire was designed and, based on the pilot study, refined. Besides finding schools willing to participate in the research, one of the tasks that had to be completed before data collection could commence was obtaining ethical clearance and permission from all parties associated with protecting the rights of the learners who would participate in the study. A significant limitation during the data collection phase was not being allowed to administer the questionnaire myself. The aforementioned led to problems such as spoilt questionnaires, as the office column was filled in by many learners.

In Chapter 4, I discussed the data which was cross-tabulated according to various variables in order to present a more detailed linguistic profile of the learners in question. The linguistic profile of the learners was discussed in terms of the indications by learners regarding their multilingualism, their language preference and their usage of English. English usage was discussed comprehensively according to perceived age and location of acquisition, learners' perceptions of their own proficiency and the proficiency of their caregivers, and how they use English in the

home, school and social environment. A significant finding was that not all learners indicated English as the language which they are most confident in. Learners had the opportunity to rank English, according to their own perceptions, as the language they were most, second most or third most confident in. This was a clear indicator that the teacher has learners with differing levels of competencies in one class.

Many learners also indicated that, according to their own perceptions, they now felt more confident in English than in the language they had initially learned. This phenomenon, despite being outside the scope of this study, could be ascribed to a variety of reasons, such as, as was seen in table 7, being exposed to pre-schools where English was predominantly the language used by the learner.

Being more confident in English and not in the language the learners had initially learned, presents a problem as, according to the works of Cummins (2001), the fact that the learners do not have a solid foundation in their own home language suggests that their proficiency in English might not be ideal. The reason is that literacies in the home language are required for adequate development of the LOLT and the new target language. The learners, despite having developed well in English, will require extra support that the real home language speaker of English will not require. For a full discussion on literature related to the role of the home language, refer to Chapter 2.

Aside from many learners experiencing a language shift, an important theme that emerged during the analysis of the data was the influence of the caregiver(s) as learners had the opportunity to indicate how they perceive the proficiency of their caregiver(s). They also had the opportunity to indicate at what age they felt that they had learned English. The aforementioned could provide, based on the age the learners felt that they had learned the language, whether the caregiver(s) influenced the development of English with the learners as learners, early in life, generally spend a lot of time with caregiver(s). The conclusion could be drawn that learners who have caregivers who are more proficient in English are often more proficient in English themselves. Refer to Chapter 4 for a full discussion related to the caregiver(s) of learners in the English HL classroom.

Teachers can investigate the characteristics of learners in their own classroom, such as the influence of the caregiver(s), by referring to my study as an example of what

the process will entail. Researchers in the field can replicate my study in order to investigate the linguistic profile of a larger sample.

We now reach the final stretch of our journey where I will discuss the significance of the study, limitations related to the data, recommendations for future research and some implications, despite being outside the scope of this study, for my own classroom practice.

### **5.3 Significance of the study**

The significance of the study lies in the fact that learners are not displaying the skills or English proficiency mentioned in curriculum documents compiled by the DoBE, despite a curriculum transition from the RNCS to the CAPS (see Chapter 1.2). The CAPS refers to English Home Language as a “proficiency level” required for “learning across the curriculum” (DoBE, 2011, p.8). 218 respondents (34% of 642 respondents) perceived themselves as FAL speakers of English and 59 respondents (9% of 642 respondents) perceived themselves as SAL speakers of English (see Chapter 4.4).

A significant characteristic of the target group was multilingualism as 518 respondents (81% of 642 respondents) perceived themselves as multilingual. The aforementioned, according to the works of Cummins (2001), highlights the need for the development of true home languages in order to improve the proficiency level of English (see Chapter 2). The low English proficiency has been investigated in the past in the Foundation Phase and it has been shown that many grade 3 learners are often incapable of reading English at a grade 1 level (Gautango, 2012, p. 6). The aforementioned is a concern since, as mentioned in Chapter 2, business is often conducted in English in South Africa, and learners need to be equipped to deal with a working world where English will ultimately improve their job prospects.

Due to the aforementioned, is necessary for teachers, schools and communities to investigate the profile of learners in their own area and community as, as was noted, due to the number of official languages in South Africa, the characteristics of learners in a specific province, area, community and sometimes even school, might differ. If teachers sufficiently understand who these learners are, they can work on adapting their own classroom practice in order to accommodate the needs and abilities of the learners. If the teacher teaches in a situation where learners have little exposure to

suburban life, the teacher can work on formulating lesson plans which will introduce them to different aspects of suburban life. The aforementioned will improve the social mobility of the learners and not limit them to areas where they mostly communicate in their own language.

Teachers in the field can now use my study as a basis for conducting a similar investigation in either a single classroom or all of the HL classes in a school. Researchers in the field can use my study as a basis for conducting similar research and continuing the dialogue in order to facilitate optimal learning for all South African children and to make potentially necessary curriculum adjustments.

#### **5.4 Implications of the study**

I initially decided to enrol for an MEd study to investigate my target group in order to improve my classroom practice to accommodate all learners, based on a linguistic profile of my target group. The linguistic profile of learners in a suburban area of the Tshwane metropolitan area (see Chapter 4) holds implications for both classroom practice and national policy. Regarding classroom practice, widely available academic literature makes many suggestions for accommodating learners in the English classroom who are not home language speakers of English.

Any teacher, not just myself, before even attempting to make changes in the classroom, needs to be a role model for how English should be used (Heining-Boynnton, 2010, p. 6). If time and resources do not permit large changes in the school or the classroom, being a role model for English usage would be the simplest change a teacher could make. With regard to actual teaching time, teachers should encourage participation and implement strategies to hold learners accountable for their learning (Bitter, O'Day, Gubbins & Socias, 2009, p. 19). Other small changes, such as choice of literature, do not require much support or many resources to implement but simply require planning. For example, choosing a short story set on a ranch in Texas is perhaps not the most appropriate choice for learners whose frame of reference does not stretch beyond life in the inner city.

Another suggestion which requires limited planning and resources is related to the power of talk (Conteh, 2003, p. 16-17). Talking is an essential part of learning a language. Despite limited opportunities for talk, with large classes and limited time, learners could be encouraged to undertake speaking activities during break or after

school. Another suggestion from existing literature is that learners communicate in their own language while the teacher speaks in English (Cushner et al., 2006, p. 235). If learners have a question they can therefore ask a peer who speaks their own home language.

Changes which require some effort refer to teaching methods which influence a learner's attitude towards learning (Gabryś-Barkera & Otwinowska, 2012, p. 382). For example, lessons contextualised in real life situations are more likely to keep learners engaged (Conteh, 2003, p. 10). Instruction should be set in certain contexts while visuals, pictures and graphs can assist in explaining concepts (Adelman-Reyes & Kleyn, 2010, p. 88). The aforementioned depends on the resources available to the teacher.

A technique which could benefit learners entails promoting metalinguistic awareness (Gabryś-Barkera & Otwinowska, 2012, p. 382). If learners are capable of comparing and contrasting a language with another, it will improve their ability to learn the language. Albeit sensible, the aforementioned would not always be possible as teachers are currently under strain to finish their own classroom syllabus.

Aside from the classroom, the study also suggests implications for national policy as the national curriculum should be adjusted to take into account that the learners are generally not only home language speakers of English but that a class will consist of learners with varying degrees of proficiency in English. There is also a need for comprehensive guidelines on how a teacher, in South Africa, in the English HL classroom should manage the aforementioned situation.

To conclude, in Chapter 4 we saw that many of the learners do not have a foundation in their home language and yet they are multilingual. They will require extra support in order to excel, which is why we need to start where learners are and not where we expect them to be (Heining-Boynton, 2010, p. 3). We need to investigate where learners are and revise fundamentals if required. Grade 8 and 9 teachers should work with primary schools if they notice that a specific competency tends to be underdeveloped when learners start grade 8.

## 5.5 Limitations of the research

I discuss limitations related to the research process and the data, as mention should be made of them in order to guide future research and attempts to reconstruct the study.

With regard to the data collection phase, I found the amount of spoiled questionnaires problematic. In order to avoid a similar situation in future research, I recommend the researcher either administers the survey questionnaire himself/herself, or implements measures which would ensure that the teachers have clear guidelines on how the learners should complete the questionnaire.

With regard to the data, as was mentioned in both Chapters 3 and 4, the linguistic profile of learners will differ in other communities or schools due to the fact that South Africa has 11 official languages (See Picture 3) and families often migrate between areas. Furthermore, the data sets describe the language profile of learners in a suburban area of the Tshwane metropolitan area and not rural areas. Teachers and researchers in the field should therefore cite data in this study as a guideline only and not as typical of the linguistic profile of learners in the area.

Upon analysing the data, it was felt that the questionnaire should be extended in order to include race and sex as the aforementioned would have provided a more comprehensive linguistic profile of the learners. It is therefore suggested that researchers consider including those variables when conducting a similar study.

Further, regarding the questionnaire, Question 7 (See Addendum D) included no clear guideline for learners on how to decide which languages they considered to be the languages they knew best, second best and third best. A researcher attempting to replicate the study should implement measures that will assist the learners on deciding which three languages they choose when answering the question.

## 5.6 Recommendations for further research

South African learners in suburban areas are often enrolled in schools where the LOLT is English, even though they come from a variety of linguistic backgrounds. My most important recommendation for further research is therefore an eventual national project to support GET learners in obtaining the required assistance in developing

proficiency in both their home language and English in order for them to excel when they enter the FET phase.

Regarding recommendations for future research, I recommend that researchers explore the link between the role of the teacher and the linguistic development of the learner. The teacher's ability to manage the classroom situation can provide insight into how the learners acquire proficiency in the language. It is recommended that when investigating the impact of the teacher on the linguistic development of learners, the teachers should be included as respondents in order to provide a subjective view of classroom management.

With regards to the data presented in table 5, the numbers related to language preference are not very high but it does indicate the possibility for research into not only what languages learners are most competent in, but also what languages they would prefer to receive tuition in.

## 5.7 Epilogue

*We have reached the end of our journey. The novice teacher started her career with the realisation that the abilities of the learners did not match the guidelines of what they should be able to do, and she was not sure how to support her learners to help them achieve the goals that had been set for them. As a starting point, it led her to establish the linguistic profile of learners in her own classroom. She investigated the situation and now has a better idea of who the learners seated in front of her are. Based on the linguistic profile of her target group, which she has now identified, she can adjust her classroom practice in order to support her learners. For the first time in her career, the novice teacher feels slightly more equipped to deal with her classroom situation which she recognised, from the first day of her career, as consisting of learners from a variety of linguistic backgrounds with differing levels of proficiency in English.*



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## Addendum A: Letter to Principal



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA  
Faculty of Education

P O Box 2749  
Brooklyn Square  
0075  
September 2011

Dear Sir/Madam

### **Research project: The linguistic profiles of GET learners**

One of the main functions of a university is to do research. As a masters student in the Faculty of Education, I am currently working on a project to determine the linguistic profile of GET learners in suburban schools.

In order to collect data I need the grade 8's and grade 9's to fill in a questionnaire which would take approximately 30 minutes to complete. The questionnaire contains 13 questions; both open and closed questions for example, "What language do you speak to your grandparents?" The questionnaire therefore does not prompt the learners for data of a sensitive nature. Although completed anonymously, only learners who return signed consent forms from home should fill in the questionnaire. Please note that the name of your school and all data collected will be treated as confidential. If you have any concerns or questions about this study, please feel free to contact myself or my supervisor.

I am awaiting GDE approval and will abide by all ethical principles and research criteria as required. I thus request that you permit me to administer this short questionnaire to your grade 8 and 9 learners at a time most convenient to your school's schedule.

Thanking you in anticipation of your support.

Tessa Harmse  
072 041 8815  
tharmse@gmail.com

For further details you can contact my supervisor,

Prof. Rinelle Evans  
Department of Humanities Education  
083 732 009

## Addendum B: Letter to Parents



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA  
Faculty of Education

P O Box 2749  
Brooklyn Square  
0075  
September 2011

Dear Parent/Guardian/Caregiver

### Permission to fill in a questionnaire

One of the main functions of a university is to do research. I am a Masters' student from the University of Pretoria and am working on a project related to describing the language profile of junior learners (GET phase) taking English as a home language. In order to complete my research I need grade 8 and 9 learners to fill in a short questionnaire anonymously (See attached example). This will be completed at school during a free period towards the end of term under the guidance of their teacher. You are welcome to contact me about the questionnaire or research results.

In keeping with the ethical principles of research, you as the legal custodian need to provide permission for your child to participate in this survey. Learners must also give their assent by signing too. Please provide your consent by filling in and signing the slip below and returning it to the teacher.

By signing this, I hereby grant permission for my child to complete the questionnaire as described above.

Parent (name & signature): \_\_\_\_\_

Child (name & signature): \_\_\_\_\_

Your positive support is valued!

**Researcher:**

Tessa Harmse  
M Ed candidate  
[tharmse@gmail.com](mailto:tharmse@gmail.com)

**Supervisor:**

Prof. Rinelle Evans  
083 7320099  
[revans@postino.up.ac.za](mailto:revans@postino.up.ac.za)

## Addendum C: Learner Consent Form



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA  
Faculty of Education

### Why am I here?

When we want to find out something and we want to ask you to complete/answer some questions about the languages that you speak.

This study will give us a chance to see how many languages are spoken by you and your friends.

Your parents/guardians have agreed that you can be part in the study.

### What will happen to me?

If you want to be part of our study you will spend some time with us answering some questions on paper. We will be busy for only 45 minutes and then we are finished! If you take part in the interview you will be busy for only 15 minutes. There are no right or wrong answers, and it isn't for marks.

### Will the project hurt?

No, the project will not hurt. If you feel tired after a while you can take a break. If you don't want to answer a question you don't have to. All of your answers will be a secret.

### Will the study help me?

We hope this study will help you learn more about yourself.

### What if I have any questions?

You can ask any questions you have. If you have questions later that you don't think of now you can phone Ms Harmse at 012 991 7691 or e-mail her at tharmse@gmail.com

### Do my parents/guardians know about this?

This study was explained to your parents/guardians and they said you can participate if you want to.

### Do I have to be in the project?

No one will be upset if you don't want to do this. You can say yes or no and if you change your mind later you don't have to be part of the project anymore. It's up to you.

- (a) Writing your name on this page means that you **agree to be in the project** and that you **know what will happen to you** in this study. If you decide to quit the project all you have to do is tell the person in charge.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the learner


\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

If you have any further questions about this study you can phone the investigator, Ms Harmse. If you have a question about your rights as a participant, you can contact the University of Pretoria, Faculty of Education Ethics committee at 012 420 3751.

## Addendum D: Questionnaire

	 <p><b>UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA</b> <b>UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA</b> <b>YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA</b></p> <p>Faculty of Education</p>	Q0 _____																			
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px auto; width: 80%;"> <p>I am enrolled for a Masters degree in education at the University of Pretoria. I am doing research on grade 8 and 9 learners who take English as a Home Language but who speak other languages too. You will help a great deal if you complete this questionnaire. Remember not to write your name anywhere. If you are unsure about anything you can ask your teacher.</p> <p>Tessa Harmse</p> </div>																					
<p><b>1. How old are you?</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">12 or younger</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: 20px; text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">13-14</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: 20px; text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">15</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: 20px; text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">16 or older</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: 20px; text-align: center;">4</td> </tr> </table>			12 or younger	1	13-14	2	15	3	16 or older	4	Q1 _____										
12 or younger	1	13-14	2	15	3	16 or older	4														
<p><b>2. I am in this school because (mark only one):</b></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">The school is close to where we live</td><td style="text-align: center; width: 20px;">1</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">The school is close to where my parents work</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">The school fees are reasonable</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">There is easy transport to the school</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">There are no other schools for me to go to</td><td style="text-align: center;">5</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">The school has a good academic standard</td><td style="text-align: center;">6</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">The school has many sports/cultural activities</td><td style="text-align: center;">7</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">I can learn in English</td><td style="text-align: center;">8</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">The teachers are good</td><td style="text-align: center;">9</td></tr> </table>			The school is close to where we live	1	The school is close to where my parents work	2	The school fees are reasonable	3	There is easy transport to the school	4	There are no other schools for me to go to	5	The school has a good academic standard	6	The school has many sports/cultural activities	7	I can learn in English	8	The teachers are good	9	Q2 _____
The school is close to where we live	1																				
The school is close to where my parents work	2																				
The school fees are reasonable	3																				
There is easy transport to the school	4																				
There are no other schools for me to go to	5																				
The school has a good academic standard	6																				
The school has many sports/cultural activities	7																				
I can learn in English	8																				
The teachers are good	9																				

**3. Which language/s:**

	1) did your teacher/s use in primary school?	2) did your teacher/s use in high school?	3) are mostly spoken by your teachers during break?	4) are mostly spoken by learners during break?	5) do you make notes in when your teacher speaks?	6) would you like to speak to your children one day?	7) did you learn to speak first? (mark only one)	8) would you also like to learn?	9) is spoken by most people where you live? (mark only one)	10) do/did you speak to your grandparents?	11) do/did you speak to your mother?	12) do/did you speak to your father?	13) do/did you speak to your brothers/sisters?	14) do you speak to your friends?
Setswana	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
seSepedi	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
seSotho	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
isiXhosa	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
isiNdebele	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Xitsonga	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Tshivenda	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
Siswati	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
isiZulu	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
English	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Afrikaans	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
Other	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12

**4. In which language/s do you wish the teachers taught you?**

Setswana	1
seSepedi	2
seSotho	3
iziXhosa	4
isiNdebele	5
Xitsonga	6
Tshivenda	7
Siswati	8
isiZulu	9

Q4.1 \_\_\_  
 Q4.2 \_\_\_  
 Q4.3 \_\_\_  
 Q4.4 \_\_\_  
 Q4.5 \_\_\_  
 Q4.6 \_\_\_  
 Q4.7 \_\_\_  
 Q4.8 \_\_\_  
 Q4.9 \_\_\_

**4.1 Why would you prefer those languages?**

My parents know those languages	1
My grandparents know those languages	2
My community speaks those languages	3
My friends speak those languages	4
I want to learn those languages	5
I think those are important languages to know	6
Because they are easier to understand	7
I want to speak those languages to my children some day	8

Q4.1.1 \_\_\_  
 Q4.1.2 \_\_\_  
 Q4.1.3 \_\_\_  
 Q4.1.4 \_\_\_  
 Q4.1.5 \_\_\_  
 Q4.1.6 \_\_\_  
 Q4.1.7 \_\_\_  
 Q4.1.8 \_\_\_

**5. In the English class I wish I understood \_\_\_ more**

the teacher	1
the books	2
the work	3
my friends	4

Q5.1 \_\_\_  
 Q5.2 \_\_\_  
 Q5.3 \_\_\_  
 Q5.4 \_\_\_

**6. Indicate how good you are at English:**

	1 Well	2 Okay	3 Poor
Reading	☺	☹	☹
Writing	☺	☹	☹
Speaking	☺	☹	☹
Listening	☺	☹	☹
Understanding	☺	☹	☹

Q6.1 \_\_\_  
 Q6.2 \_\_\_  
 Q6.3 \_\_\_  
 Q6.4 \_\_\_  
 Q6.5 \_\_\_

**7. Mark the 3 languages that you know best (mark only 3)**

	First language	Second language	Third language
Setswana	1	1	1
seSepedi	2	2	2
seSotho	3	3	3
iziXhosa	4	4	4
isiNdebele	6	6	6
Xitsonga	7	7	7
Tshivenda	8	8	8
Siswati	9	9	9
isiZulu	10	10	10
English	11	11	11
Afrikaans	12	12	12
Other	13	13	13

Q7.1 \_\_\_  
 Q7.2 \_\_\_  
 Q7.3 \_\_\_

**8. Where did you learn the language/s?**

	First	Second	Third			
From Preschool	1	1	1	Q8F1__	Q8S1__	Q8T1__
From Primary school	2	2	2	Q8F2__	Q8S2__	Q8T2__
From my parents/grandparents	3	3	3	Q8F3__	Q8S3__	Q8T3__
From my friends	4	4	4	Q8F4__	Q8S4__	Q8T4__
From my community	5	5	5	Q8F5__	Q8S5__	Q8T5__

**9. How old were you when you learnt the language?**

	First	Second	Third	
Age in years				Q9.1__ Q9.2__ Q9.3__

**10. How well do you know the language?**

	First			Second			Third					
	1 Well	2 Okay	3 Poor	1 Well	2 Okay	3 Poor	1 Well	2 Okay	3 Poor			
Reading	☺	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	Q10F1__	Q10S1__	Q10T1__
Writing	☺	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	Q10F2__	Q10S2__	Q10T2__
Listening	☺	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	Q10F3__	Q10S3__	Q10T3__
Speaking	☺	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	Q10F4__	Q10S4__	Q10T4__
Understanding	☺	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	Q10F5__	Q10S5__	Q10T5__

**11. My parents speak English:**

	1 Well	2 Okay	3 Poor	
Mom	☺	☹	☹	Q11.1__
Dad	☺	☹	☹	Q11.2__

**12. Being able to speak many languages:**

Helps me understand more people	1	Q12.1__
Makes school harder	2	Q12.2__
Is really difficult	3	Q12.3__
Is really easy	4	Q12.4__
Makes me feel good about myself	5	Q12.5__
Often confuses me	6	Q12.6__



## Addendum E: GDE Research Approval Letter



**education**  
Department: Education  
GAUTENG PROVINCE

For administrative use:  
Reference no. D2012/42

### GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	21 April 2011
Name of Researcher:	Harmse T.
Address of Researcher:	P.O. Box 2749 Brooklyn Square 0075
Telephone Number:	012 991 7691 / 072 041 8815
Fax Number:	n/a
Email address:	tharmse@gmail.com
Research Topic:	Exploring the linguistic profile of multilingual learners in English Home Language learners
Number and type of schools:	FIVE Secondary Schools
District/s/HO	Tshwane North; Tshwane South and Tshwane West

**Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research**

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school's and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

**The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:**

1. The District/Head Office Senior Manager's concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
2. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.
3. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.

*Making education a societal priority*

**Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research**

9<sup>th</sup> Floor, 111 Commissioner Street Johannesburg, 2001  
P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel: (011) 355 0505  
Email: Davo.Makado@gaubeng.gov.za  
Website: www.education.gog.gov.za

## Addendum F: Ethics Clearance Certificate

*Handwritten:* 7/5/2014



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA  
Faculty of Education

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

<b>CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE</b>	<b>CLEARANCE NUMBER :</b> <input type="text" value="HU 115407"/>
<b>DEGREE AND PROJECT</b>	MEd The Linguistic profile of multilingual learners in English Home Language classrooms
<b>INVESTIGATOR(S)</b>	Tessa Hamise
<b>DEPARTMENT</b>	Humanities Education
<b>DATE CONSIDERED</b>	27 August 2014
<b>DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE</b>	APPROVED

Please note:  
For Masters applications, ethical clearance is valid for 2 years  
For PhD applications, ethical clearance is valid for 3 years.

CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE: Prof Liesel Ebersohn

*Handwritten signature of Prof. Liesel Ebersohn*

DATE: 27 August 2014

CC: Jeannie Beukes  
Liesel Ebersohn  
Prof R. Evans

The ethics clearance certificate is issued subject to the following condition:  
1. It remains the student's responsibility to ensure that all the necessary forms for informed consent are kept for future queries.

Please quote the clearance number in all enquiries.

## Addendum G: Declaration of Originality

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

### DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

This document must be signed and submitted with every  
essay, report, project, assignment, dissertation and/or thesis.

Full names of student: Tessa Harmse

Student number: 24072223

#### Declarations

1. I understand what plagiarism is and am aware of the University's policy in this regard.
2. I declare that this dissertation (eg essay, report, project, assignment, dissertation, thesis, etc) is my own original work. Where other people's work has been used (either from a printed source, internet or any other source), this has been properly acknowledged and referenced in accordance with departmental requirements.
3. I have not used work previously produced by another student or any other person to hand in as my own.
4. I have not allowed, and will not allow, anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own work.

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT: 

SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR: 