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The Relationship between Mother Tongue and English Second Language Learning Strategies

Masters Research Report By:

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Masters in Educational Psychology

At the: University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

Supervisor: Ms Adri Vorster

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Declaration

I declare that this is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Educational Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

_____

Rachel Makoni

_____

Date

Acknowledgments

This research report has been enriched by the love, support and contributions of so many. I owe my heartfelt gratitude to so many.

Parents and family: My family has been my pillar of support and I am grateful for parents who supported my vision. Thank you.

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Thank you to Nicky Israel, Martin and Olwaseun who helped me with the data analysis.

Participants and teachers: To the students who took time to be a crucial part of my research and to the teachers that supported the work, I owe so much. Thank you.

Dedication

To Him who is able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all that I could ask think or imagine…

Abstract

South Africa is a multicultural and multilingual country. The majority of learners (90%) speak a mother tongue that is not English. The language of instruction is however English. English has become the dominant language in education, commerce and industry and therefore proficiency in the language is imperative. In order to help learners learn more efficiently, and to inform education policy making, an exploration of what language learning strategies learners from divergent mother tongue backgrounds employ, is beneficial. This study was conducted in a high school, in a township area of Gauteng, South Africa in order to investigate whether there is a relationship between the mother tongue of South African high school learners and English second language learning strategies employed by these learners. The sample consisted of 107 Grade 8-Grade 12 participants who were receiving instruction in English, with their mother tongue specified as one of the 9 African languages. Learners were asked to complete a 50 item questionnaire, as well as a demographical information form. The results showed that although there was no significant relationship between mother tongue and English second language learning strategies used by high school learners, other variables such as number of years of English language instruction and age were significant variables that influenced choice of English language learning strategy use. It was also found that metacognitive strategies were the most commonly used English language learning strategies. Research on the relationship between mother tongue and language learning strategy use is imperative given the significant number of learners that would benefit from this research and subsequent interventions implemented.

Keywords

English second language learning strategies, mother tongue, barriers to learning, African languages, high school learners.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH STUDY

1.1. Introduction

South Africa is a multilingual nation. Approximately 25 languages are spoken, of which 11 have been granted official status. There are 9 official indigenous languages, with English and Afrikaans being the two non-indigenous languages (De Wet, 2002). According to a survey conducted by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) & the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2011), only 10% of the children in South Africa use English as their first language, with approximately 90% speaking indigenous languages as their first language. To complicate matters further, South African learners often speak more than one language; aside from English, as a result of the ethnically diverse communities in which they are raised (Brock-Utne, 2015). They are therefore learning three or more languages at the same time and English is often only spoken as the third or even fourth language. Despite this, English appears to have remained the language of education, government and the economy (Casale & Posel, 2011). Further, the Language in Education Policy stipulates that learners can be taught in their mother tongue, but most African schools that were previously disadvantaged during the Apartheid era have rejected mother tongue education and have adopted English as the language of instruction (Probyn, 2009). Consequently, the majority of learners in schools whose mother tongue is not English, learn English as a second, third, fourth or even fifth language in order to progress scholastically and take part in the broader curriculum. Also, according to the National Language Policy Framework (Webb, 2003), English, and to some extent Afrikaans, have remained the most dominant languages in the socio-economic and political domains of society. High-paying careers and jobs therefore require knowledge of English (Wright, 2012). It thus seems imperative that learners learn to proficiently use the English language in order to achieve in school and make advances into the working world. Likewise, it is further important that those who are actively involved in supporting children in becoming more proficient English language users develop an understanding of the variables that can influence English second language learning.

1.2. Rationale

According to research conducted by authors such as Riches and Genesee (2006) and Dörnyei (2003) there are a number of variables that can influence English language learning and ultimately school achievement; one of the pivotal variables is the language learning strategies that children employ. However, as noted by Oxford (2013) language learning strategies do not work in isolation, but are in fact influenced by a number of other individual variables such as learning style/personality, purpose for language learning, socio-economic status, motivation, gender and mother tongue.

With regards to the latter, a number of studies have historically been conducted in order to investigate the relationship between mother tongue and language learning strategies. For instance, Tyacke and Mendelsohn (1986) conducted a study with adults from ten different language backgrounds in Canada, studying English as a second language, and found that learners' learning styles and strategies varied significantly depending on their first language backgrounds. In another study, Politzer and McGroarty (1985) found that a person's cultural background had a strong influence on strategy choice, with students from Hispanic and Asian language backgrounds using different learning strategies; and Asian students performing better than their Hispanic counterparts, whilst using fewer so-called good language learning behaviours.

Similar studies have been carried out over the past few decades in Japan (Schmitt, 1997), China (Cohen & Robbins, 1976), Taiwan (Yang, 1994), Puerto Rico (Green, 1991) and Singapore (Wharton, 2000), in order to investigate the relationship between mother tongue and language learning strategies. Research that has been conducted in South Africa has focussed more on the relationship between mother tongue and other variables such as labour market outcomes. For instance, Cornwell and Inder (2008) conducted a study in South Africa which aimed at exploring the relationship between labour market outcomes and the language most often spoken at home. They found that a pivotal determinant of employment and labour earnings was having English as a mother tongue and that there was not much variation in earnings or employment outcomes across the indigenous mother tongues. These findings once again highlight the importance of learners becoming more proficient English language speakers; however, as far as research into the language learning strategies of South African learners are concerned, there does not appear to be any published research findings on the relationship between language learning strategies and mother tongue.

Thus, despite the growing body of international research focussing on the relationship between mother tongue and second language learning strategies, there appear to be gaps in this area of research in the South African context. Taking into consideration that South Africa is not only a multilingual, but also a multicultural country that hosts people from a variety of language backgrounds, a study of this nature is deemed important. Subsequently, the present study aimed to not only fill the gap in South African research, but also contribute to international research by investigating the learning strategies that South African learners from various first language backgrounds use to learn English as a second language. Once English second language learners are more aware of the language learning strategies they use to learn English as a second language, they can begin to access meta-cognitive strategies more effectively and use this knowledge to facilitate achievement in school subjects. Research of this nature can also be used to direct teaching strategies in order to match the ways in which teachers teach the language to the ways in which learners from different first language backgrounds learn English. Finally, the information obtained from learners of these diverse language backgrounds can further be used to inform policy making.

1.3. Statement of the problem

The education landscape in South Africa has seen considerable changes since 1994, with a number of changes in the policies and particularly in the language policies. The present education situation is one that has evolved over the years. Currently, although enrolment in schools up to the age of 15 years is approximately 95%, repetition rates are high and failure to complete secondary school is a common problem amongst South African children (Branson, Kekana, & Lam, 2013). Branson, Garlick, Lam, & Leibbrandt (2012) conducted research based on the labour survey of 2007 in South Africa and found that of all the black African learners entering school, only 40,8% were reaching Grade 12. For learners in township and rural areas chances of reaching Grade 12 and then passing matric exams were very low; about 4 learners in every 10 (Branson et al., 2012). There are a number of factors that contribute to learners' levels of academic performance and failure to complete secondary schooling; such as socio-economic status, learners' motivation, the level of qualification of teachers, and learning through the medium of a language that is not their mother tongue i.e. English as a second language.

In the context of the stated rationale, this study will specifically focus on the latter as learning through the medium of a language that is not the learners' first language, can become a

significant barrier to learning and academic achievement (Nel, 2011). Consequently, ways in which learners can best learn English as a second language need to be explored and cognisance should be taken that learners from different mother tongue backgrounds may use divergent language learning strategies. Currently it does not appear as if the language in education policy (Department of Basic Education, 1997) is being applied in schools with these factors being taken into account.

1.4. Research aim

Taking the above into consideration the aim of the present study was to investigate the language learning strategies that South African high school children from various linguistic backgrounds use in learning English as a second language. In addition it also aimed to explore the language learning strategies most often employed by English second language learners in learning English.

1.5. Research questions and hypotheses

Given the aim of the study, the primary research question that was posed, was:

Is there a relationship between high school learners' mother tongue and the language learning strategies the employ when learning English as a second language?

Whilst taking into consideration previous research that had been conducted in this regard, it was hypothesised that there would be a significant difference between the language learning strategies that high school learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds use in learning English as a second language.

In order to explore the language learning strategies used by English second language learners further, the study also aimed to answer the following question:

Which language learning strategies are most frequently used by high school learners who learn English as a second language?

Given that there does not currently appear to be any published research findings on the language learning strategies most frequently used by South African English second language learners, it was difficult to hypothesise which language learning strategies would be most frequently used by the participants in this study.

1.6. Concept clarification

Mother tongue

For the purpose of this study, mother tongue is defined as the language a child learns first before any other language (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2008). As noted previously, given the linguistically diverse communities and even families in which some South African children are raised, it is often difficult to determine which language a child learns before any other language.

Second language

For purposes of this research, second language will refer to the study of English by learners for whom English is not a first language (Seidlhofer, 2005). It can therefore be a learner's second, third, fourth or fifth language.

Language learning strategies

The concept of language learning strategies evolved from the study of learning strategies as a whole. An early definition by Schmeck (1988) has formed the basis of other definitions. Schmeck defined a learning strategy as a sequence of procedures that accomplish learning. Language learning strategies can therefore be defined as methods or procedures used for successfully learning a language (Winke, 2007).

1.7. OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

Chapter	**Content**
Chapter 1	The **introduction to the research study** chapter covers the rationale, aims and research questions as well as the key terms and structure of the report.
Chapter 2	The **literature review** chapter presents the theoretical orientation of the study, the relevant and pertinent literature on mother tongue, second language learning and language learning strategies, while expanding on the context and background of the study.
Chapter 3	The **research design and methodology** chapter describes the procedures, methods and design of the study.
Chapter 4	The **presentation and discussion of findings** chapter presents the results of the data analysis using descriptive and inferential statistical analysis methods.
Chapter 5	The **overview, strength, recommendations, limitations and conclusion** chapter deals with the strengths, limitations, and recommendations associated with the research study while offering the final concluding remarks of the study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

2.1. Introduction

As noted previously, the purpose of this research study was to explore whether there is a relationship between mother tongue or first language and language learning strategies employed by South African learners to learn English as a second language. In order to fulfil this purpose, it is important for the researcher to investigate and explain certain concepts central to this study; i.e. mother tongue, second language learning and language learning strategies. Prior research that has been done in this area will be explored and presented to highlight the gaps in the current literature and support the rationale for a study such as this one. The purpose of this literature review is to explore the context of the study, to delineate the scope of the study and to look at what research has been done in the past, what was learned and what is still to be learned (Boote & Beile, 2005), all within the scope of a particular theoretical framework.

2.2. Theoretical orientation

Two theoretical perspectives can be considered in order to understand second language development.

Firstly, Cummins' theory on language can be used to support an understanding of whether there is a relationship between a first and second language. Cummins' research gave light to a number of areas in the field of language learning. He commenced his work in the 1970's with papers published on the relationship between bilingualism and thought/cognition and bilingual education (Baker & Hornberger, 2001). His aim was to stimulate thought on the psychology of bilingual thinking (Baker & Hornberger, 2001). Later research carried out by Cummins (1978) on immersion programmes and then on Linguistic Interdependence and the Educational Development of Bilingual Children (Cummins, 1979) became pivotal in curriculum development and assessment of bilingual and multilingual children. The current study can be related to some of Cummins' theories, which were developed in the 1970's and then expanded on and refined over the next two decades.

Although at the time, research predominantly proposed that bilingual and multilingual children were at a disadvantage and that they seemed to perform below the level of monolingual children on cognitive measures, Cummins (1998) postulated that bilingual or multilingual children were at an advantage over monolingual children as they were able to say the same thing in two or more ways and that the bilingual or multilingual child could think of things in one language and translate these into another language, which the monolingual child could not. His research suggested that bilingual and multilingual children benefitted subtly in academic, metalinguistic and intellectual realms. Therefore, the advantages of speaking and using more than one language began to be explored. By encouraging students to compare and contrast elements of two languages, educators could enhance learners' awareness of languages.

The Linguistic Interdependence Principle stated that to the extent that instruction in a second language could be effective in promoting proficiency to that second language, this proficiency could be transferred onto a first language if there was adequate exposure and motivation to learn the first language (Cummins, 1981). Cummins proposed that there was a link between how a learner learned a first language and how this learning impacted on subsequent languages learnt. The learner was viewed as having an underlying cognitive proficiency that could be seen across languages. An example of this principle in practice is; learners learning English as a second language, having an African language as a mother tongue. These learners could develop a deeper conceptual and linguistic proficiency in their mother tongue when learning in an academic environment made use of either part-time or full time English instruction. A relationship between a first and second language could therefore be facilitated by the learners through the 'underlying cognitive proficiency' that came about as a result of thinking in more than one language. In accordance with this principle, Cummins also proposed that if for example a learner was struggling in learning to read English, literacy could be developed in their mother tongue, for example Xhosa, and this development in the stronger language could be transferred to the weaker language literacy skills (Cummins, 1998). Cummins' studies looked at minority francophone students and found that instruction through French (a second language) was just as effective at promoting English proficiency as was instruction through English (the first language) (Cummins, 1980). It was further hypothesised that older learners with better developed cognitive academic language proficiency would acquire cognitive and academic second language skills more quickly than

younger learners and therefore the number of years that a learner was learning a second language and their age, linked to development, had a significant impact.

Cummins also identified two facets of language development, the Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and the Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) (Cline & Fredrickson, 1996). BICS referred to the more visible language processes, for example grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, while the CALP concerned the less visible functional and semantic aspects in second language learning (Cline & Fredrickson, 1996). He proposed that it took on average roughly two years for a learner to acquire conversational skills in a second language (BICS), while it took five to seven years to develop CALP (Cummins, 1999). Cummins highlighted that in this way, difficulties with language skills could be seen to account for what was initially attributed to learning difficulties and that learners could lack appropriate language skills which could then precipitate a barrier to learning.

Secondly, constructivist theory gives further insight into second language development. Lantolf, Thorne, and Poehner (2015) argued that according to Vygotsky's theory on the Zone of Proximal Development, the most essential development occurs in interactions between an individual and a more knowledgeable other who provides mediation in learning. This theory can be applied to English second language learning. The learner and the teacher are involved in constructing new meanings. This involvement happens through a dialogue in which through mediation from the teacher, a teacher and learner create an understanding of the language to be learnt. Gains in learning the second language can be achieved if dialogue that is thought through, prepared, planned and implemented is successful. According to Vygotsky, development of language is essential for learning and development to take place.

2.3. Language development

Language is a specialized and complex skill which spontaneously develops in children (Pinker, 1994). According to research on first language development, the acquisition of communicative skills depends in large measure on the successful development of the first language (Duquette, 1991). A person's ability to communicate in the first language will have an impact on his/her acquisition of a second, as well as other languages. By the age of three or four most children would have acquired the basic elements of their first language (Gleason & Ratner, 1997).

The SAHRC and UNICEF (2011) state that the right to education during early childhood begins at birth and is closely linked to optimal development in young children. The right to language acquisition and development is implicit in this development. Language learning strategies are used by children in the acquisition of their first language; this acquisition begins at birth and continues throughout the formative years of a child's life. Pinker (2009) made the assumption that children are innately equipped with algorithms designed to acquire the grammatical rules and lexical entries of a human language. These strategies/algorithms can later be applied to the acquisition of second and other languages. Language learning develops from a young age and can be impeded by conditions where the overall development of the child is affected.

A key concept for language development is learning the words of a language. Learning vocabulary is a branch of language learning (Asgari & Mustapha, 2012). Vocabulary learning is a significant challenge faced by learners learning a second language. Vocabulary learning strategies are steps taken by the language learners to acquire new words (Asgari & Mustapha, 2012). Schmitt (1997) looked at Japanese second language learners and defined vocabulary learning strategies in two groups; the first being strategies that learners use to discover new words, referred to as discovery strategies, and the second being how a word is consolidated once it has been encountered, referred to as consolidation strategies. In a study of Malaysian English second language learners, Asgari and Mustapha (2012) sought to find out what vocabulary learning strategies were employed by undergraduate English second language learners and they found that learners used both discovery and consolidation vocabulary learning strategies in either a medium or low frequency.

Studies on bilingualism and multilingualism have suggested that bilingual and multilingual children exhibit a greater sensitivity to linguistic meanings and may be more flexible in their thinking than are monolingual children (Cummins, 1984). It can be assumed that the more languages a child is exposed to and speak, the more likely they are to have explicit knowledge about the structure and functions of language itself. It may therefore be an advantage when applied to English second language learning that a learner has experienced more than one language system in his/her development of language.

2.4. Mother tongue

Defining a mother tongue in South Africa is not straightforward and at times can be problematic due to the multilingual nature of the society and the ways in which children learn their first language. A mother tongue can therefore tentatively be defined as a language that is learnt before any other language is learnt (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). The mother tongue can be derived from a person's ancestral heritage or the parents/caregivers determine through early language experiences what language the child will speak.

According to Wa Thiong'o (1986), language is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture. Ethnicity, norms and customs are thus interwoven into the fabric of a mother tongue. The mother tongue is an introduction into the world of thought, identity and culture. The individual learns to think and to see the world through the lens of the mother tongue. In other words, a mother tongue acquired in infancy influences the way in which one constructs his/her vision of the world (Fantini, 1991). Children acquire their native/mother tongues almost unthinkingly (Fantini, 1991).

Brock-Utne (2015) emphasized that linguistic diversity is an important and characteristic feature of South Africa. It is a richly multicultural country characterized by many languages spoken across the nation. According to the census carried out by Statistics South Africa (2012), the language that is spoken most in this country, is Zulu, which is spoken by 22.7% of South Africans. This is followed by Xhosa (16.0%), Northern Sotho (9.1%), Tswana (8.0%), Sesotho (7.6%), Tsonga (4.5%), Swati (2.5%), Venda (2.4%) and Ndebele (2.1%). Afrikaans is spoken by 13.5% of the population and English by 9.6%. Learners are therefore coming from a wide variety of language backgrounds.

It is often seen that language contact in the various communities impacts the languages that children learn to speak and subsequently what language is identified as a mother tongue. For example, the migration of people from areas in which one language is the mother tongue and more dominantly used, to other places where there is an influence of the local community that speaks a different language. In these cases, people may change from speaking their original mother tongue to taking up and using the mother tongue of the dominant group (Fishman, 2008). It therefore becomes difficult to clearly identify and differentiate the mother tongue of individuals. Infants are often found to have more than one mother tongue. Many South

African children originate from bilingual homes and multilingual communities and therefore can have more than one mother tongue (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007).

The multilingual nature of the country is represented in the different provinces and equally so in the different urban, rural and township areas within the provinces. Adults and children in the different townships learn their own languages and also the indigenous languages of others that live and work within the community (Heugh, 2002). Different languages can be used for different purposes. The identified mother tongue or tongues are taught to children from birth and as soon as they start to interact with others, different languages are introduced and the road to multilingualism is embarked on at a young age. English is often only introduced once the child begins formal schooling and in the case of children who attend schools that teach in an indigenous language, English will only be introduced after the first three years of formal schooling (Brock-Utne, 2001).

Initially when children enter school as non-English speakers, the policy in South Africa is that they can learn in their mother tongue (Alexander, 2013; Moyo, 2002). They can thus be taught the foundations of literacy and numeracy in their mother tongue (De Klerk, 2002). However, from grade four, most children are taught in English. This is in preparation for grade 12 and children's final school leaving examination, which is predominantly examined in English. Thus, from grade four onwards, the majority of non-English speaking learners are not only faced with the difficulty of learning to understand the English language for learning, but also encounter the challenge of thinking in a language different from their natural mother tongue that they have used for thinking. Learners need to learn to think in the English language in order to manipulate information and therefore succeed in learning the different school subjects. English is thus used as a tool for acquiring knowledge and the lexical, grammatical and construction elements of the language become inherent to the use of the language. This highly complex process requires time and a lot of effort on the part of learners with an indigenous mother tongue (Nel & Nel, 2013). Both the teachers and the learners may struggle to understand and use the language very well (Brock-Utne, 2015).

Research has however found that learners with an indigenous mother tongue that is well established are more able to transfer linguistic and academic skills to learning English (Nel, 2008). Children arrive at school with BICS, as discussed earlier, in their mother tongues and are able to express their needs and speak in social and contextualised situations (Nel & Nel, 2013). The BICS is expanded in school, but the primary focus in school is to develop CALP

so that they are able to read, write and learn in school. Having a well developed BICS and CALP can lead to academic success. It is therefore a barrier to learning when children need to learn in a second language as they are at a disadvantage to their English first language counterparts who when they begin school have BICS in English and will be at the stage where they are building CALP. Cummins postulated that it takes second language learners from five to seven years to develop CALP and therefore the learners of other mother tongues, because of their still developing BICS, fall behind their English first language counterparts in higher cognitive operations in learning (Nel & Nel, 2013). In order to try and combat this barrier, language instruction should be learned together with meaningful content and endeavours should be undertaken to understand how learners from diverse mother tongue backgrounds best learn English. The present study aimed to explore this.

The amount of time that English second language learners in South Africa spend learning, interacting and using English is often minimal and confined to the school setting (Nel, 2011). This is particularly true in the rural areas. Outside of the school, most learners will only use their mother tongue and possibly other African languages that they have encountered and is familiar with (Nel & Nel, 2013). Only a minority of learners that are highly motivated and who have the resources may engage in activities that allow them to spend more time learning and using English, which can in turn lead to the better use of language learning strategies and possibly better performance. The different languages and dialects spoken by the people are a valuable asset and the ways in which multilingualism is shared is a foundation that can be used to support learning English as a second language.

2.5. Globalisation, prestige and the necessity of the English language

English is an international language; it is spoken by a large number of people throughout the world. It is more widely spoken and written than any other language (Crystal, 2012). English is thus considered a universal language (Nel & Nel, 2013). It is the language of international contact, of academic and diplomatic discourse and the dominant language for entertainment (Moyo, 2002). English is regarded as a prestigious language in South Africa (Nel & Nel, 2013). Caregivers and parents aspire for their children to be fluent in the English language for a variety of reasons. Being competent in the language can lead to academic success and opens up opportunities for growth, development and material advancement, not only within the country, but also outside South Africa and in the rest of the world.

Since South Africa became liberated from Apartheid and took on a democratic position, there has been a slow and gradual shift in the usage of the English language at home and at school (Kamwangamalu, 2003). English has become established as the lingua franca in public life, education and workplaces (Alexander, 1999). Although English has had a colonial past in South Africa, it seems to have a global future. The language may have been associated with division and oppression in the past, but a shift is taking place in which the usage of the language is being recognised more and more as the language used internationally within academic, business and social realms.

English seems to have become hegemonic in South Africa and appears to be attaining dominance over other languages (Mesthrie, 2002). The Language in Education Policy seems to have unintentionally elevated English to a superior and prestigious status (Moyo, 2002). English is predominantly the language used in higher education, official documentation and in business transactions. Both parents and school learners have a high regard for the language and are well aware of the symbolic and material power of the language. Having a good command of the language in various situations is an empowering factor and conversely being unable to have a good command of the language can be disempowering (Alexander, 2013). Learning and having a good command of the language of power can provide better opportunities in the labour and other markets. The power of the English language can be seen in high-status functions and the language is utilised during important decision making processes (Alexander, 1999).

Competence and proficiency in the English language carries a social status in South Africa (Alexander, 2013). People that have a good command of the language are often admired and respected in communities. Others aspire to have this status and prestige and so the learning of English as a second language is perceived as being very important. This high status is not only evident in social settings, but also in professional settings. High status roles and functions in the workplace are predominantly occupied by those that are proficient in the English language (Alexander, 2013). Parents, caregivers and learners have the perception that if they have a good command of the language, they will be able to secure employment.

2.6. English as a second language

English as a second language is defined by Diaz-Rico (2008) as learners learning English in areas where English is not their primary language, but where it has a special status or public

availability. Second language learning was traditionally defined as the acquisition of a language once a first language has been learned (Spolsky, 1988). Nel and Nel (2013) defined English second language learners as those learners whose first language is not English, but are learning through the medium of English as it is the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) at a particular school.

In many countries across the world and in Africa, English has been adopted as the language of instruction for education in some or all of the school subjects. Most of the people in the populations of these countries speak another first language and will learn English as a second, third or even fourth language. The mother tongue of most South African learners is an indigenous tongue. The linguistic diversity in townships means that for day to day interactions in the community, a person needs to know more than just his/her own mother tongue. Learners often first encounter English at school where they are taught the language as a second language and then can after 3-4 years of mother tongue instruction use English as a medium for learning in academic pursuits (Moyo, 2002). Learners seldom use English outside the classroom and hardly hear it (Brock-Utne, 2015). This experience is not unique to South African learners, but is experienced by others in Africa and in other developing countries. English has been adopted as the language of instruction in African countries such as Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, Botswana, Swaziland and Zimbabwe (Brock-Utne, 2001), as well as in other developing countries such as the Philippines.

In Swaziland for instance, the language of learning and teaching for the first three years is KiSwati which is spoken by about 95% of the population, but from grade four, the medium of instruction switches to English and this is throughout a learner's primary, high and tertiary education (Brock-Utne, 2001). In the Philippines, the first language of most people is Pilipino. In 1974, the Philippines National Board of Education instituted a policy that made the medium of instruction for science and mathematics English and for all the other subjects, Pilipino (Kaplan & Baldouf, 2003). Learners are thus required to learn English as a second language in order to use it in the learning of the science subjects. Pilipino children encounter two languages concurrently in school, although most learners do not have prior contact with the English language before they begin school, they are introduced to English as a second language when they commence formal schooling.

During the Apartheid era in South Africa, the policy for Bantu education was that learners learnt in their mother tongue. The motive behind this policy was linked to the Apartheid

ideology of dividing the indigenous African people according to linguistic differences (Giliomee, 2003). In 1994 the Apartheid regime and policies were banned and South Africa moved into a system of democratic government after the elections. With the new government came a new era of policies. In order to promote bilingualism and multilingualism in education, policies were put in place that allowed for South African learners to receive early education in their mother tongue (Moyo, 2002). The language policy stated that all languages are equal, and that multilingual instruction should be promoted from grade R to grade four (Alexander, 1999). Although the policy in theory allows a learner to learn in their mother tongue or a language of their choice, the teaching resources are not, in practice available to proceed to higher education using indigenous languages and therefore learning in English (a second language) is somewhat inevitable.

A number of factors can be considered that will determine how successful learners will be at learning English as a second language. Firstly, learners who are in crowded classrooms with class sizes of over fifty learners will not benefit as much from second language English instruction as learners in classes that are smaller with a lower teacher-pupil ratio (Legotlo, Maaga, & Sebego, 2002). The learners in large classes do not receive as much individual attention as learners in smaller classes and therefore their progress in learning English as a second language may be hindered. Secondly, learners that are motivated to learn a second language will be more successful than learners who are not motivated (Mji & Makgato, 2006). They will often engage in activities that foster acquisition such as attending extra tutorials, use new vocabulary and will make use of a variety of methods and situations in order to learn English. Thirdly, the methods used for teaching a second language will determine whether learners will engage in the learning and benefit from the instruction they receive. Such methods include rote, interactional and textbook teaching methods. Linked to this and also instrumental to learning, is the level of the teachers' training and their proficiency in English. Teachers that are well trained and are proficient in the English language themselves are better able to instruct learners and successfully teach English as a second language. Another factor is access to libraries and exposure to reading material; this will also enhance second language learning. If learners cannot access these, their learning of English as a second language can be impeded (Letlogo et al., 2002). Parental involvement, enthusiasm and encouragement can also foster good language learning (Mji & Makgato, 2006). Furthermore, socio-economic status and access to resources will also affect how

successful a learner will be at learning English as a second language. Learners from under-resourced backgrounds can seldom afford the resources like technological aides and dictionaries that would aid their learning a new language. Learners from homes with lower socio-economic levels will often not be as successful at learning English as those from higher socio-economic backgrounds as a result of these economic discrepancies. Lastly, the use of learning strategies is very instrumental in the acquisition of English as a second language.

2.7. English as a second language, a barrier to learning?

Although the South African Constitution (Section 29.2) of the Republic of South Africa 1996 states that all learners have a right to receive education in their language of choice, most schools use English as the language of learning (Webb, 2003). This means that for the majority of South African learners, learning and assessment take place in a language that is not their mother tongue and perhaps, not even their language of choice (Department of Basic Education, 1997). Learning in a second language can therefore be considered to be a barrier to learning for most learners whose mother tongue is not English.

Ellis (2005) stated that learners learning in their first language acquire vocabulary, grammar and literacy skills more easily than second language learners. Second language learners may take a longer time to develop CALP and may find it more difficult to carry out higher cognitive operations in the language of learning (Nel & Nel, 2013). Learners that are more adept in the English language can produce, narrate, reflect on experiences, understand and think in the language (Nel & Nel, 2013). For some learners who are not proficient in English, linguistic difficulties can contribute to learning breakdown (Department of Basic Education, 1997). As language empowers learners to learn, deficits in the (English) language present as a barrier to the learners in that they cannot access the learning material fully (Department of Basic Education, 1997). Language proficiency has been found to be central to academic success.

Learners, learning through the medium of a language different from their own, will experience challenges, since everything that they learn depends heavily on their command of the language. They need to be able to not only think, but to express their thoughts in the language. Learners are faced with the difficulty of being unable to easily allow their knowledge and ideas to flow naturally into written or oral expression.

A number of factors contribute to learning in a second language being a barrier to learning. Firstly, teachers may spend less time on instruction; that is teaching core content of subjects, because they are focusing on teaching the English language (Fleisch, 2008). This is a significant problem for South African learners as their basic language skills (BICS) in English are often underdeveloped and require intensive improvement before they can establish their cognitive academic language proficiency. In addition to this, some second language teachers may find it challenging to teach through the medium of English and may revert to mother tongue instruction (code switching) to explain concepts. In this way, the learners do not get encouraged to communicate using the English language in classrooms. When code switching is utilised, learners are not being equipped with language knowledge in the language of assessment and this ultimately leads to academic failure (Nel & Nel, 2013).

Another difficulty is that because of the early change (grade four) from mother tongue instruction to English as a second language, the learners struggle to master the knowledge and skills required in school. South African learners who switch from mother tongue instruction to English instruction would therefore spend approximately three to four of their initial years of formal learning in their mother tongue. Then, from grade four they switch to English. Adding the minimum five years to this would mean that the learners would be in grades nine or ten before they have established a foundation of English Language that would enable them to fully engage with academic material taught in English. This is clearly a grave disadvantage and barrier to learning.

Lastly, because there is such a disparity between the learners' home languages and the language of instruction, social relations and class values embedded in the home language are often not transferred to the language of teaching and learning (Fleisch, 2008). Learners are learning in a language that is embedded in a culture and worldview, i.e. English, that many learners have little, if any contact or cognisance of. For most learners in South Africa and particularly for those in townships and rural areas, English is confined to the school environment and even more acutely to learning in classrooms and so the learners seldom communicate about everyday things to friends and family in English.

For most learners in South Africa, the content of the subject must be learned simultaneously with the language (Nel & Nel, 2013). In order for learners to cope, explicit language instruction and scaffolding is required and indeed necessary for learners to access the learning content and at the same time, learn the language (Nel & Nel, 2013). Curricula in

schools should be systematically planned and monitored in order to integrate language and content and develop the second language simultaneously with the curriculum knowledge (Gibbons, 2002). For learners to be successful and overcome the barrier of learning in a language that is not their mother tongue, they need to be able to access the curriculum and learn the content of the subject matter (Shin, 2008). A pivotal way in which this can be done is by endeavouring to identify what strategies learners use to learn a language.

2.8. Language learning strategies

The roots of research on language learning strategies can be found in the study of learning strategies as a whole. Since the 1960's advances have been made in this research. Piaget studied cognitive strategies and the ways in which people develop from birth to adulthood. Mandler studied planning as a strategy for memory and Vygotsky (1978, as cited in Oxford, 2011) described self-regulated, higher psychological processes (strategies) such as analyzing, synthesizing, planning, monitoring, and evaluating. Research then evolved from these beginnings and researchers began to look more specifically at language learning strategies. The work of Rubin (1975) highlighted characteristics of 'good language learners' and what characteristics made some learners more successful in learning a second language than others. The assumption was that if the language learning strategies used by good language learners could be identified, then these could be applied to help learners that were less successful at second language learning. Flavell (1979) proceeded with research into metacognition and the ways in which people monitor and evaluate their language learning. Other researchers (Green, 1991; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Wharton, 2000) carried out research that underlined the important role played by language learning strategies in the acquisition of a second language. Rebecca Oxford has done substantial research in the last 25 years on language learning strategies used by learners learning English as a second language and the learning strategies used by first language English learners learning a foreign language; mostly in the United States of America. Oxford's theoretical orientation and her definition of language learning strategies can be used to give a solid foundation to this study. Oxford (1990) defined language learning strategies as operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval and use of information or specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations (Oxford, 1990).

Learning strategies have been defined in various ways over the years. Schmeck (1988) defined a language learning strategy as a sequence of procedures for accomplishing learning of a language. Weinstein and Mayer (1986, as cited by Wittrock, 1986) define language learning strategies as behaviours or thoughts that learners engage in during language learning that are intended to influence the learners' encoding process. In this way a language learning strategy is an active process that requires the learner's active participation. These strategies can be used to learn, remember and then foster use of a language learnt. Appropriate language learning strategies can make learning more efficient and effective (Oxford & Crookall, 1989). Ellis (1985) defined a second language learning strategy as the means by which learners internalize second language rules. In this process of internalizing, different methods can be used by the learners. Strategies can be described as superordinate, abstract, constant and long-term processes (Selinger, 1991). In order to learn, learners can use different methods that help them internalize the material they are studying. In language learning, learners will consciously and unconsciously employ certain behaviours in order to become proficient in a language. According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990) language learning strategies involve thoughts or behaviours that individuals use to help them learn, understand and retain new information. Adept language learners are effective in language learning because they process information in specific ways. This definition highlighted the cognitive aspect of language learning strategy use as compared to Oxford's more functional definition (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003). Proficient second language learners are able to use certain language learning strategies in order to master a new language. They are able to process language taught to them and then retrieve the language from memory for use effectively.

The historical research on language learning strategies has highlighted that there are different types of strategies. Rubin (1975) postulated that there are direct and indirect strategies that good language learners use for learning. She reported six direct strategies including; clarification/verification, monitoring, memorizing, guessing/inductive inferencing, deductive reasoning and practice; along with two indirect strategies being creating opportunities for practice and deduction tricks. In other research, advice was given to learners about how to become good language learners. Some of the helpful strategies were; organize, be creative, learn to live with uncertainty, and use mnemonics (Oxford & Crookall, 1989). In more recent research, Cohen (2014) identified three groups of language learning strategies used by

learners, those that ensured learning, those used to remember vocabulary during language learning and those that were used to monitor and evaluate language learning.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) distinguished three main categories of strategies that learners use in learning a new language; cognitive, metacognitive and social/affective. They further replaced the word strategy with the term 'methods and techniques' (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003). Although the techniques and methods that they outlined were primarily of a cognitive theoretical orientation, the social/affective strategies seemed to accommodate all the other types of strategies that did not fit into the first two cognitive types of strategies. O'Malley and Chamot's strategy systems were highly compatible with those of Oxford. Oxford (1990) identified six strategies that learners use, including; cognitive, memory, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social strategies. She postulated that using these strategies would result in learners being more proficient and competent in a second language. Oxford (1990) further divided the strategies into direct and indirect strategies. The direct strategies included memory strategies, cognitive strategies and compensation strategies. The indirect strategies were metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies. Direct strategies are more directly associated with learning and the use of the target language in making a good judgement as they require the mental processing of the language (Asgari & Mustapha, 2012). The indirect strategies are internal and are characterised by indirect methods.

Memory strategies involve how learners will store and recover new information from memory. An example would be using rhymes or flashcards to remember new words. Cognitive strategies enable learners to understand and produce new language by many different means, ranging from repeating to analyzing expressions, to summarizing (Oxford, 1990). Compensation strategies allow learners to use the language despite their often large gaps in knowledge (Oxford, 1990). For example, learners can try to guess what the person will say next in English (Oxford, 1989). Metacognitive strategies include ways in which learners organize, manage and evaluate their learning. These strategies help learners to coordinate planning and organisation centered on learning a language (Cohen, 2014). Affective strategies are those that learners use to regulate emotions, motivations and attitudes (Oxford, 1990). An illustration of this strategy would be; learners who talk to others about the emotions they have while they are learning English as a second language. Finally, social strategies help students learn through interaction with others (Oxford, 1990). These can

involve actions like asking for help from English speakers and asking questions in English (Cohen, 2014).

Research into how learning English as a second language actually takes place would be beneficial in essentially aiding learners to learn more effectively. Through processes that involve the use of all mental, social and emotional resources, a learner can use strategies to effectively and efficiently learn English.

2.9. The relationship between mother tongue and second language learning

As theorised by Cummins, there is a relationship between mother tongue and a second language learnt. A person's mother tongue can play a role in the language learning strategies that learners from divergent language backgrounds use. In research on the subject of this relationship, Richards and Rodgers (2014) proposed that individuals are predisposed to approach learning a new language in a specific manner. These approaches are unconscious and partly determined by a learner's previous language learning experience. Whorf's relativity hypothesis stated that the mother tongue of a learner will cause him/her to focus on second language input in a particular way and cause him/her to use basic strategies differently than someone from a different mother tongue (Whorf, 1956). Therefore, the mother tongue affects cognitive functioning and essentially thought.

The role and influence of the mother tongue on the formation of a second language is termed, 'cross-linguistic influence' (Odlin, 2003). There are similarities and differences between a targeted second language and the mother tongue of learners that will impact on the learning of English as a second language. Historical research carried out by Ringbom (1987, 1992) found that Swedish speakers had an easier time learning English than did Finnish speakers. Swedish learners seemed to use more direct, compensation strategies than did their Finnish counterparts. Politzer (1983) found that Hispanic and Asian learners differed strongly in the kinds of strategies they used for language learning; Hispanic learners chose more social and interactive strategies while Asian learners opted for greater rote memorization (Wharton, 2000). This research gave weight to the stance that language learning strategy use can be linked to mother tongue. In another study O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Kupper, and Russo (1987) ascribed the lack of success of Asian students in learning a second language, to the persistence of prosaic strategies. The Asians seemed to use ordinary

language used for speaking and writing. Japanese first language learners for example often employ more passive learning strategies, (for example by opting to rote learn individually from videos or textbooks) and are therefore less likely to use strategies that involve co-operation between teachers and other learners when learning English as a second language (Griffiths, 2003).

As learners approach a new language, they may use strategies they used in previous language learning experiences that are often inherent to the learning of their specific first languages. A learner does not approach language learning with a blank slate. The strategies that they use to acquire first and other languages will influence the methods and strategies that the learner will use to learn the English language. All aspects of the learner and his/her past experiences are brought to the table as an individual attempts to learn a new language. These past experiences, characteristics and strategies for learning are embedded in the individual. In a study of Singapore learners, Wharton (2000) found that learners who were already bilingual (had previous language learning experiences) acquired a third language using more social than affective language strategies; these strategies may have been used in acquiring the previous languages learnt.

The core assumption that there is a relationship between the language learning strategies a learner of English uses and mother tongue has been investigated extensively (Oxford, 1990) and results show that a link can be made. The concepts of culture and language cannot be separated from each other, as they are inextricably woven together. The ways in which people think and feel, and the rules and roles that they approach life with, and particularly language learning, takes place in a holistic context. Our culture provides the conceptual and affective resources by means of which we act (Sam & Berry, 2010). Culture and language in particular mould the way in which people view the world and the way in which they relate to each other and to learning. A link can therefore be made between the directions for language learning (learning strategies) that an individual uses in learning English as a second language and their mother tongue.

A core assumption often made is that people from one group are fundamentally different from members of other groups (Sam & Berry, 2010). Individuals assume an identity from the cultural and social environments in which they interact. Some mother tongues may be similar, but they are most likely not alike. In the same way, the ways in which individuals

from divergent mother tongue backgrounds approach second language learning may be similar but not exactly alike. Each language group will often have unique characteristics in all areas including that of language learning, more specifically second language learning. Language learning strategies can be investigated in the South African context as they have been in other countries in which English is learned as a second language.

2.10. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to contribute to the body of research on language learning strategies by exploring the possibility of a relationship between a learner's mother tongue and the strategies used by him/her in order to learn English as a second language.

English is an international language that was adopted as the predominant medium for instruction in South Africa. The majority of learners in South Africa are learning English as a second language and need to use this language in order to master other subjects taught at school. The learners come from diverse multilingual backgrounds. Factors such as teacher-learner ratio, motivation, access to technological aids and other resources, parental support, socio-economic status and use of learning strategies will impact on the learning of English as a second language.

International research into language learning strategies has added to the body of knowledge about how learners learn English as a second language. The most substantial research has been carried out by Rebecca Oxford who identified six language learning strategies. She further categorized these into three direct and three indirect learning strategies.

Language development begins in childhood and continues throughout an individual's life. The development of a first language facilitates a way of viewing the world and subsequent languages learnt will impact on this worldview making it broader. The impact of a person's mother tongue on their learning a second language can be viewed at different levels.

Previous research has indicated that a link can be made between a learner's mother tongue and the strategies which the learner uses to learn English as a second language.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

3.1. Introduction

The research aimed to explore whether there is a relationship between participants' mother tongue and the strategies they use to learn English as a second language. In order to address this aim, the study has been embedded in a non-experimental research design, with quantitative data collected and statistical measures applied in analysing it. The independent variable (mother tongue) was operationalised by what the learners reported as their first language in the demographic questionnaire completed during the study (see Appendix D). The dependant variable (English second language learning strategies) was determined by the score that each participant obtained on the 50 item Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL).

3.2. Research questions

1. Is there a relationship between mother tongue and language learning strategies used when learning English as a second language in the South African context?
2. What language learning strategies are most commonly used by South African high school learners in learning English as a second language?

3.3. Research design

Given the aim of the study, this research was non-experimental, correlational and quantitative in nature. Quantitative methods begin with a series of predetermined categories and use this data to make broad generalisable comparisons (Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006). The research sought to determine if there was a relationship between the independent (mother tongue) and dependant variables (English second language learning strategies). In investigating this, the following hypotheses were formulated:

Null hypothesis: There is no significant difference between the language learning strategies used by learners from different mother tongue backgrounds in learning English as a second language in the South African context.

Alternative hypothesis: There is a significant difference between the language learning strategies used by learners from different mother tongue backgrounds in learning English as a second language in the South African context.

3.4. Sample

The participants for this study were recruited from a High School in the northern part of Johannesburg, Gauteng. The school is a government school, catering for learners from a low socio-economic township area. The learners in the school come from the surrounding community, are African and speak a variety of languages as their mother tongues. As the participants were all high school learners; their ages ranged between approximately 14 and 19 years as the sample was drawn from learners between Grades 8 and 12. At the time of data analysis, there were 107 respondents. Although questionnaires were distributed to all learners in the school, a number of potential participants had to be excluded as it was felt that their limited levels of English language proficiency would have made it difficult for them to interpret the questionnaire meaningfully.

Purposive, convenience sampling was used to select participants who fulfilled the inclusion criteria and were willing and available to take part in the research. "Purposive samples depend not only on the availability and willingness to participate, but that cases that are typical of the population are selected" (Terre Blanche et al., 2006, p. 139).To be included in the study, the participants had to have an African language as their first language; thus ensuring that they were learning in English as a second language. They also had to all be high school learners.

3.5. Procedure

In order to conduct the research, ethical clearance was obtained from the University of the Witwatersrand Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical). Once this was granted, the researcher contacted the Gauteng Department of Education to gain access to the High School, which is considered a government high school within the South African context. Following this, consent from the school's principal was sought; thereafter the parents/guardians of the participants were approached for consent. This was done as the majority of the participants were younger than 18-years and thus considered a vulnerable sample whose parents had to be contacted for consent. Each parent/guardian received an information sheet, highlighting the purpose of the research and the procedure to be followed.

They were further given a consent form and only once written consent had been obtained from the parents/guardians of the participants, were the learners approached. The participants were also given information and assent forms to sign; following which the questionnaires were given to the participants to complete.

3.6. Measurement instrument

A questionnaire comprising of two parts was completed by the participants (see Appendix D).

3.6.1. Section A: Demographic Details

This part of the questionnaire consisted of demographic questions in order to determine what the mother tongue of each learner was and what other languages they spoke. This questionnaire also allowed gathering of other information regarding possible extraneous variables such as gender and age. Other details such as the learners' perceptions of their English language ability and whether they had any special academic needs, were also explored.

3.6.2. Section B: Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) is a self report questionnaire initially designed for students at the Defense Language institute in California USA and then published by Rebecca Oxford in 1990 to assess the frequency of use of language learning strategies (Oxford, 1990). There are two versions of the SILL namely, version 5.1, used to assess learning strategy use of English first language speakers learning a second language and version 7.0 used to assess learning strategy use of English second language learners. The SILL is the most influential instrument in the area of language learning strategies and lays out the most exhaustive hierarchy of learning strategies to date (Rivera-Mills & Plonsky, 2007). South African learners in this study are second language learners and therefore version 7.0 was used in this study.

The SILL Version 7.0 contained 50 questions answered on a 5 point Likert rating scale. Learners were required to select an option that best described them. There were no right or wrong answers. The responses ranged from a score of 5 (Always or almost always true of me) to 1 (Never or almost never true of me); an example of a question from the questionnaire is, 'I ask questions in English'.

The SILL consists of six subscales, namely: remembering more effectively (Part A), using all mental processes (Part B), compensating for missing knowledge (Part C), organizing and evaluating learning (Part D), managing emotions (Part E), and learning with others (Part F). The average for each part of the SILL shows which groups of strategies the learner used most for learning English (Oxford, 1990). The highest score showed which strategy was most frequently used and the lowest score which strategy was least frequently used by each learner. The results of the SILL also showed which language learning behaviours were used and how learners from different mother tongue backgrounds went about learning English as a second language.

Utility refers to how useful an instrument is in real world settings for making decisions relative to peoples' lives (Oxford & Bury-Stock, 1995). The SILL was reported to have utility in classrooms, especially in assessing whether language performance is enhanced by strategy use.

Reliability refers to the accuracy or precision of the scores on an instrument. The reliability of the SILL was tested using the Cronbach Alpha, which is used to measure internal consistency. Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient is used on continuous data such as the Likert-type scale in the SILL (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995). The reliabilities for the SILL Version 7.0 have been high, when administered in English to second language learners in the U.S.A. SILL data from Oxford (1989) showed a reliability of .86 with 159 multilingual learners. Anderson's (1993, cited by Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995) data on 95 students had a reliability of .91 and in Talbott's study (1993, as cited by Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995) data had a reliability of .85. In order for the internal consistency and the reliability to be considered high, it needs to be close to 1.0; thus, the stated studies had a high degree of internal consistency.

Validity refers to how well an instrument measures what it purports to measure (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995). The content validity of the SILL was ranked as very high. The items on the SILL were matched with agreement at .99 against entries in a comprehensive language learning strategy taxonomy (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995). Both concurrent and predictive validity were found to be high between the SILL and language performance on a number of studies.

3.7. Data analysis

In order to determine whether parametric or non-parametric statistical techniques were to be used, Levene's test for the equality of variances was done. The outcome of this analysis determined that a Pearson correlation was calculated in order to determine the relationship between the dependant and independent variables. Finally, a One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was carried out in order to determine which variable or combination thereof would best explain the variance in learning strategies. The second question was analysed using frequency statistical analyses. The language learning strategy choices for all the learners were compared and the number of students who preferred each language learning strategy was recorded. The outcome of which language learning strategy was most frequently used by high school learners from divergent mother tongues was calculated in a frequency histogram.

3.8. Ethical considerations

As noted above, ethics clearance was sought from the University of the Witwatersrand Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical) as some of the participants were below the age of 18-years and thus considered vulnerable (Clearance number H 14/05/35, Appendix E) . Once this was granted, written consent/assent was obtained from the Gauteng Department of Education (Reference number D2015/044, Appendix F), the principal of the High School (Appendix A), the parents/guardians of the participants (Appendix B) and the participants (Appendices C and D). All parties received an information letter, highlighting the nature and purpose of the research. The information letters also assured participants and other parties involved that their information would be treated confidentially and that the name of the school and the identities of the participants, or any other personal or identifying information, would not be seen by anyone but the researcher and her supervisor. Anonymity will be ensured in the final research report and any publications that may arise from this as the names of the participants will not be disclosed in any part of the work. The researcher ensured that none of the participants' responses could be linked to their identities. The research was conducted on the premises of the high school. Completion of the questionnaire took 30 minutes. Participants were informed that they had a right to withdraw from the study at any time and that there were no risks or benefits in partaking in the research. The data provided by the learners is kept on a password protected computer and the raw data will be kept in a locked cupboard for approximately four years for research and publication purposes

and will then be destroyed. The high school will receive an executive summary of the research results. While every precaution was taken to ensure that the learners were not harmed in any way by participating in the research, helpful contact numbers of free counselling organisations were provided to learners, should any of them feel distressed after having completed the questionnaires or felt that they did not have the skills or expertise to learn in a second language.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

In order to investigate the hypotheses and consequently answer the research questions, the data obtained was analysed using quantitative statistical research methods. Statistics enable one to describe, organize and interpret measurements and draw conclusions and inferences about larger groups using the actual measurements of a sample of the group (Costello, 2009). Descriptive statistics organise, summarize and describe quantitative data (Mendenhall, Beaver, & Beaver, 2013).

Within the context of this study, descriptive statistics were used to describe and summarize information obtained from the demographical questionnaire. Each learner's reported mother tongue, pivotal to the research study, was obtained and then categorized into either a *Nguni* language, *Sotho/Tswana* language or *Other* language. Other important information regarding variables such as gender, age, socio-economic indicators and number of years of English language learning was obtained from the demographical questionnaire. This provided a clearer and richer perspective of the participants and assisted the researcher in accounting for extraneous variables which may impact on the results. Furthermore, as noted by Morgan and Sklar (2012) the descriptive statistics were also used to investigate the "assumptions underlying the data analysis (homogeneity of variance and normality of the distribution)" (p.120).

According to authors such as Ary, Jacobs, and Sorenson (2010) and Salkind (2012) inferential statistics assists in making inferences about the data collected and the generalisability of the results to the larger population.

As the descriptive statistics provided essential context for the interpretation of the inferential statistics, these will be discussed first in conjunction with a general description of the township in which the study was conducted. Thereafter, the results of the inferential statistics will be presented. This presentation will be guided by the research questions.

4.2. Description of the township

The participants in this study all reside and are educated in a township in the Gauteng province. The term township originated from the Apartheid era where this name was specifically used to refer to a non-white neighbourhood (Jürgens, Donaldson, Rule, & Bahr, 2013). The township in which the learners in this study live is quite large when compared to similar areas, contains formal and informal houses, has poor infrastructure and is overcrowded. The socio-economic status of the people living in the area is generally very low and there is a high rate of crime and unemployment (Richards, O'Leary, & Mutsonziwa, 2007). The population of the township consists of a large number of migrants (Tourikis, 1985); African people from different parts of South Africa, as well as from other countries in Africa. During the Apartheid era, it was one of the few township areas that black people could live in, in order to be closer to their workplaces (Mgquba & Vogel, 2004). People from diverse language backgrounds have formed a single community within which each of the languages and cultural backgrounds is represented, some more prominently than others. The problems faced by the residents of this township are cyclical; poverty, neglect, abuse and overcrowding seem to be recreated in the environment (Richards et al., 2007).

Some of the questions in the demographic questionnaire highlighted the living and psycho-social conditions of the participants. It was found that most of the 107 participants walk to school (83%) or catch a local taxi (17%) (see Table 4.1) and live in houses or shacks with four rooms or less (see Table 4.2). The class sizes in the school are large; each class containing between 45 and 55 learners. These and other findings support previous research that detailed the conditions of poverty within townships (Richards et al., 2007). Education may be one of the key elements that could break the barriers that create these cycles that the learners in the townships experience. More specifically, education that helps the learners best learn in the prevailing medium of instruction that is English. Success in education seems solidly attached to success in language learning. It is therefore imperative to explore the relationship between mother tongue and the English language learning strategies that learners from diverse mother tongue backgrounds employ.

Table 4.1. Descriptive statistics: Mode of transport used by the learners

Mode	Number of learners	Percentage (%)
Walk	89	83
Taxi	18	17
Total	107	100

Table 4.2. Descriptive statistics: Number of rooms in the learners homes

Number of rooms	Number of learners	Percentage (%)
No response	5	4.7
1	16	15.0
2	25	23.4
3	16	15.0
4	15	14.0
5	10	9.3
6	7	6.5
7	6	5.6
8	1	.9
9	2	1.9
10	2	1.9
11	1	.9
36	1	.9
Total	107	100.0

4.3. Descriptive statistics

As can be seen from Table 4.3., the number of female participants who were a part of the study was almost double the number of males in the study. There were nearly twice as many girls enrolled in Grades 10-12 as there were boys, which is a reflection of the more general gender representation of South African students enrolled in high schools (Motala, Dieltiens, & Sayed, 2009).

Table 4.3. Descriptive statistics: Gender of participants

Gender	Number of learners	Percentage (%)
Male	36	33.6
Female	71	66.4
Total :	107	100

The ages of the learners who participated in the study is recorded in Table 4.4. As the sample was drawn from a high school, it was anticipated that there would only be a few participants aged over 19 years. In the study, there were 5 learners aged over 19 years. Most participants (28%) were 16 years of age.

Table 4.4. Descriptive statistics: Age of participants

Age in years	Number of learners	Percentage (%)
14	15	14
15	25	23
16	30	28
17	7	7
18	16	15
19	8	7
20	4	4
21	1	0.9
No age given	1	0.9
Total	107	100%

The learners in the school spoke 7 of the 9 official indigenous South African languages as a mother tongue as is detailed in Table 4.5. The languages were further grouped during analysis (Table 4.6). The Nguni languages comprising Zulu and Xhosa made up 37.4% of the sample (Bosch, Pretorious, Podile, & Fleisch, 2008). The Sotho/Tswana languages, made up of Tshwana, Southern Sotho and Sepedi were the most frequently spoken mother tongues (43.9%) (Kamwangamalu, 2004). The final group was defined as the other languages, with Tsonga and Venda being spoken the least often amongst the participants (18.7%).

Table 4.5. Descriptive statistics: Mother tongue (first language) of the participants

Language	Number of learners	Percentage
1: Tshwana	7	6.5
2: Zulu	38	35.5
3: Xhosa	2	1.9
4: Venda	19	17.8
6:Southern Sotho	13	12.1
8: Tsonga	1	.9
9: Pedi	27	25.2
Total	107	100

Table 4.6. Descriptive statistics: Mother tongue according to groups

Language group	Number of learners	Percent	Valid Percent
1 Nguni	40	37.4	37.4
2 Sotho/Tswana	47	43.9	43.9
3 Other languages	20	18.7	18.7
Total	107	100.0	100.0

Because of the multilingual community in which the learners live and learn, all of the children spoke at least two indigenous languages (their mother tongue and one other language) in addition to learning English as a second language as detailed in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7. Descriptive statistics: Number of languages spoken by the learners

Number of other languages	Number of learners	Percentage (%)
1	42	39
2	46	43
3	13	12
4	5	5
5	1	1
Total	107	100

As seen in Table 4.8 below, of the 15 participants from the sample that reported having a special need, 11 reported that the need was medically related, for example problems with their vision or Tuberculosis. Two had emotional problems that were described as concentration or feeling distracted. One learner detailed that he had academic needs centred on Mathematics and Science, and one participant did not specify what area his/her needs were, while, the majority of the participants (84%) did not note any special needs.

Table 4.8 Descriptive statistics: Academic, special or medical needs of the participants

Needs	Number of learners	Percentage (%)
No special needs	90	84.1
Medically related needs	11	10.2
Psychologically related	2	1.8
Non-specified	1	0.9
Academically related	1	0.9
No response	2	1.8
Total	107	100

Table 4.9 details the number of years each of the learners stated as the years they had been learning English as a second language. A very small percentage (less than 13%) of the sample reported that they had been learning English for less than 8 years, while 9% of the participants had been learning English for more than 12 years. The majority of the participants had been learning English for about 9-12 years.

Table 4.9 Descriptive statistics: Number of years of studying English as a second language

Number of years	Number of learners	Percentage (%)
3	2	1.9
5	3	2.8
6	1	.9
7	4	3.7
8	3	2.8
9	22	20.6
10	31	29.0
11	11	10.3
12	20	18.7
13	8	7.5
14	1	.9
19	1	.9
Total	107	100.0

Table 4.10 below gives information on how the participants felt about learning English as a second language as this could impact their motivation to learn the language. None of the learners detailed that they seldom or never enjoyed English language learning. Sixty-one percent of the participants stated that they always enjoyed English language learning, 28% reported that they almost always enjoyed English language learning and 11% reported occasionally enjoying learning English.

Table 4.10 Descriptive statistics: Enjoyment of learning English as a second language

Enjoyment	Number of learners	Percentage (%)
Occasionally enjoy learning	12	11
Almost always enjoy learning	30	28
Always enjoy learning	65	61
Total	107	100

The importance of learning the English language is recorded in Table 4.11. Most of the participants (81%) considered the learning of the English language as very important and were motivated to learn for a variety of reasons.

Table 4.11 Descriptive statistics: Importance of proficiency in English language

Importance	Number of learners	Percentage
Very important	87	81.3
Important	19	17.8
Not so important	1	.9
Total	107	100.0

The learners stated various reasons for feeling motivated to learn English (see Table 4.12). The stated motivations were analysed and categorized according to themes that emerged. The most frequent theme that emerged for learners feeling motivated to learn English as a second language was that they were motivated to learn in order to communicate well with other people (36%). Learners also specified that the language was important to have in order to obtain an education, as the medium for learning was English (17%) and in order to advance in their chosen careers (17%).

Table 4.12 Descriptive statistics: Motivation to learn English as a second language

Why learn English?	Number of learners	Percent
Comprehension	6	5.6
Communication	38	35.5
Necessity	6	5.6
Career requirement	18	16.8
English dominance	15	14.0
Education	18	16.8
Teachers use language	1	.9
Fluency	1	.9
Desire L1 competence	2	1.9
Total	105	98.1
Missing data	2	1.9
Total	107	100.0

Table 4.13 gives details of how many learners in the sample specified each of the languages as their mother tongue and then the average usage of each of the language learning strategies were calculated. As detailed in the scoring instructions of the SILL, low frequency users scored between 1 and 2.4 for strategy usage, medium frequency users scored between 2.5 and 3.4, and high frequency users scored between 3.5 and 5.

As detailed in Table 4.13, there were 7 participants who detailed their mother tongue as Tswana. These participants reported using affective, memory, cognitive, social and compensation strategies in medium frequency and metacognitive strategies in high frequency. One participant identified his/her mother tongue as Tsonga and from the questionnaire it was concluded that this participant used memory, compensation and affective strategies in medium frequency, while using metacognitive, cognitive and social strategies in high frequency. Of the 38 learners who identified Zulu as their mother tongue; affective, metacognitive, cognitive and social strategies were employed in high frequency and memory and compensation strategies in medium frequency. The two Xhosa speaking learners detailed

that they used all except memory strategies in high frequency. The 19 participants, who detailed their mother tongue as Venda, reported using cognitive and metacognitive strategies in high frequency and memory, social, compensation and affective strategies in medium frequency. Thirteen learners stipulated that their mother tongue was Sotho and from their responses, it was calculated that they used memory, compensation and affective learning strategies with medium frequency and cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies with high frequency. There were 27 learners who identified their mother tongue as Pedi. These learners, on average, used compensation, memory and cognitive strategies with medium frequency and metacognitive, affective and social strategies with high frequency.

Table 4.13 Mother tongue and language learning strategy usage

Mother Tongue		Memory	Cognitive	Compensation	Metacognitive	Affective	Social
Tswana	Mean	3.2014	3.4271	3.1386	3.9157	3.1643	3.1386
	N	7	7	7	7	7	7
	Std. Deviation	.64641	.63952	.71495	.69387	1.08253	.87148
Zulu	Mean	3.3189	3.6561	2.9789	3.8424	3.5142	3.5237
	N	38	38	38	38	38	38
	Std. Deviation	.58875	.52318	.76495	.64170	.77946	.77891
Xhosa	Mean	2.9400	3.8550	3.8300	4.5550	4.0800	3.6650
	N	2	2	2	2	2	2
	Std. Deviation	.08485	.40305	.94752	.62933	.82024	.23335
Venda	Mean	3.0479	3.5532	3.3258	4.2047	3.3405	3.4011
	N	19	19	19	19	19	19
	Std. Deviation	.67784	.65540	.93971	.71731	.67177	.64883
Sotho	Mean	3.4238	3.7585	3.2015	4.2346	3.4700	3.7154
	N	13	13	13	13	13	13
	Std. Deviation	.58608	.42516	.71109	.45412	.81016	1.06590
Tsonga	Mean	3.4400	4.0700	3.0000	4.2200	2.5000	4.0000
	N	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Std. Deviation	.	.	.	.	.	.
Pedi	Mean	2.9300	3.3204	3.1437	3.9293	3.2133	3.1556
	N	27	27	27	27	27	27
	Std. Deviation	.59497	.50254	.70771	.69140	.90077	.97505
Total	Mean	3.1718	3.5581	3.1357	3.9979	3.3803	3.4142
	N	107	107	107	107	107	107
	Std. Deviation	.61919	.55101	.77253	.65869	.81801	.85470

4.4. Normality of the data

In order to determine whether parametric or non-parametric statistics were to be run, it was pivotal that the normality of the data be determined. The normality of the data was tested based on five assumptions. The first assumption was that the dependant variable should be measured at an interval or ratio level (Howell, 2003). The dependant variable in this study, English second language learning strategies, was measured at an interval level; with a five point Likert scale being employed.

Secondly, the independent variable should have two or more than two categorical groups (Howell, 2003), which in the current study were the different mother tongues that the learners spoke. There was no overlap between these groups. For purposes of analysis, the seven mother tongues reported by the participants were clustered into three groups as mentioned earlier; the Nguni languages, the Sotho/Tswana languages and other languages. Therefore the independent variable (mother tongue) fulfilled the second assumption.

The third assumption required was that there should be independence of observations (Howell, 2003) and this was fulfilled in that none of the participants reported more than one mother tongue and that each language group had different participants. No participant was a member of more than one group. The researcher implemented strict testing conditions during the collection of the data.

According to the fourth assumption, in order for the validity of the results to remain strong, no significant outliers should be present (Howell, 2003), and these were checked for in the scores that the participants obtained in the SILL 7.0. No outliers were present, no participant scored above 5 for language strategy use and none scored below 1,33.

The fifth assumption requires that the dependant variable be approximately normally distributed for each category of the independent variable (Howell, 2003). The following histograms illustrate that the dependant variable was approximately normally distributed for each category of the six language learning strategies. A normal distribution is indicated by the z scores of the variable being "clustered around the mean in a symmetrical, unimodal pattern, known as the bell shaped curve or a normal curve" (Vogt & Johnson, 2011, p.257). The use of the language learning strategies was normally distributed as illustrated in Figures 4.1 to 4.6 below:

Figure 4.1. Skewness and kurtosis: memory strategies

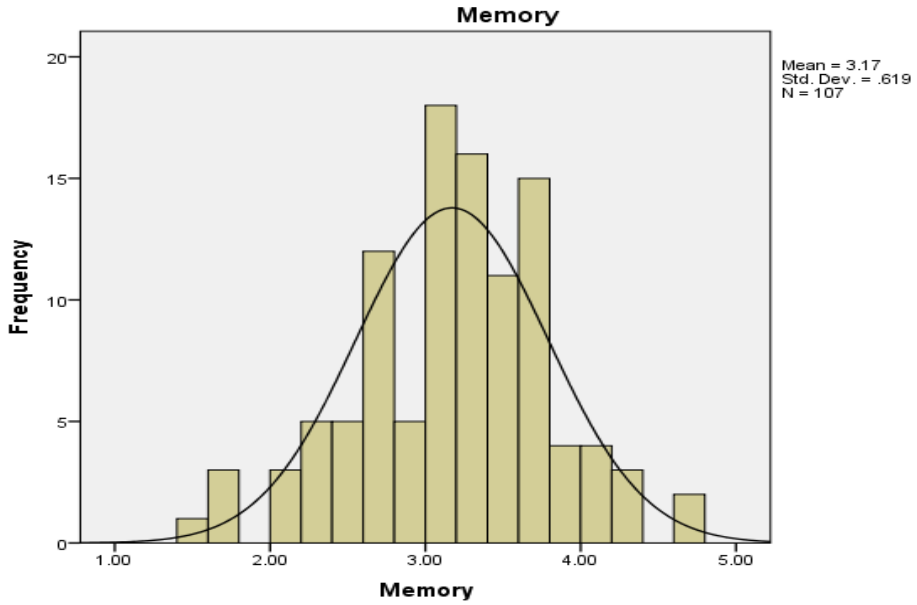


Figure 4.2. Skewness and kurtosis: cognitive strategies

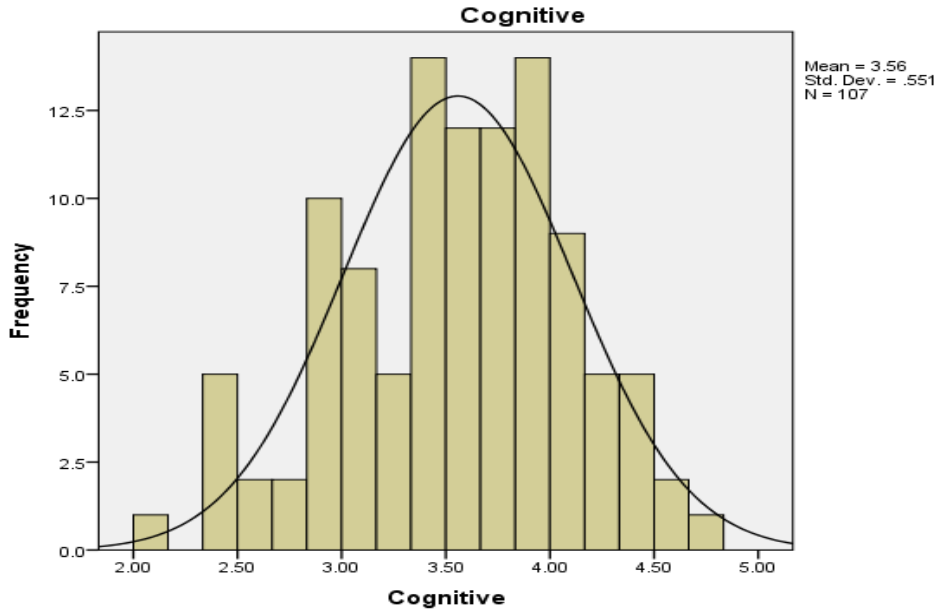


Figure 4.3. ***Skewness and kurtosis: compensation strategies***

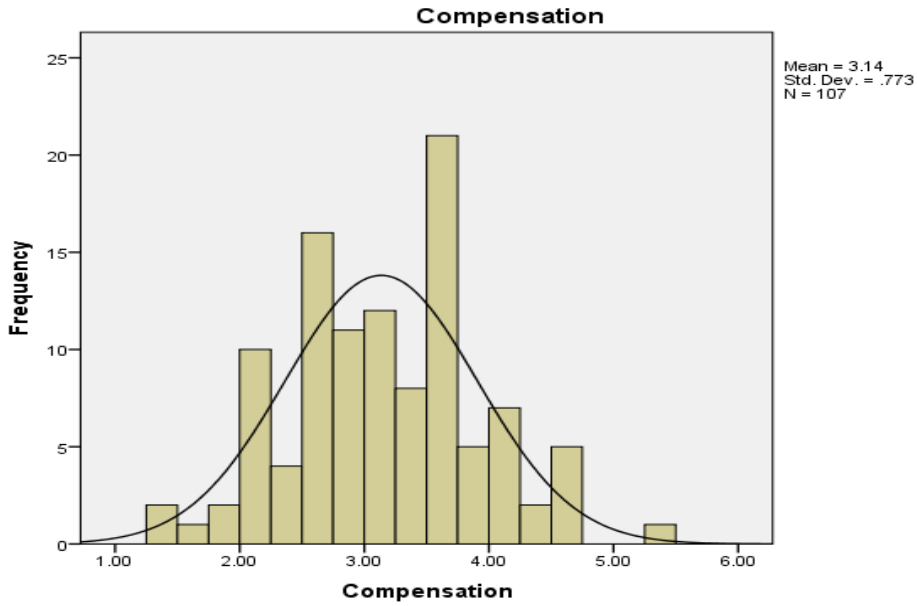


Figure 4.4. Skewness and kurtosis: affective strategies

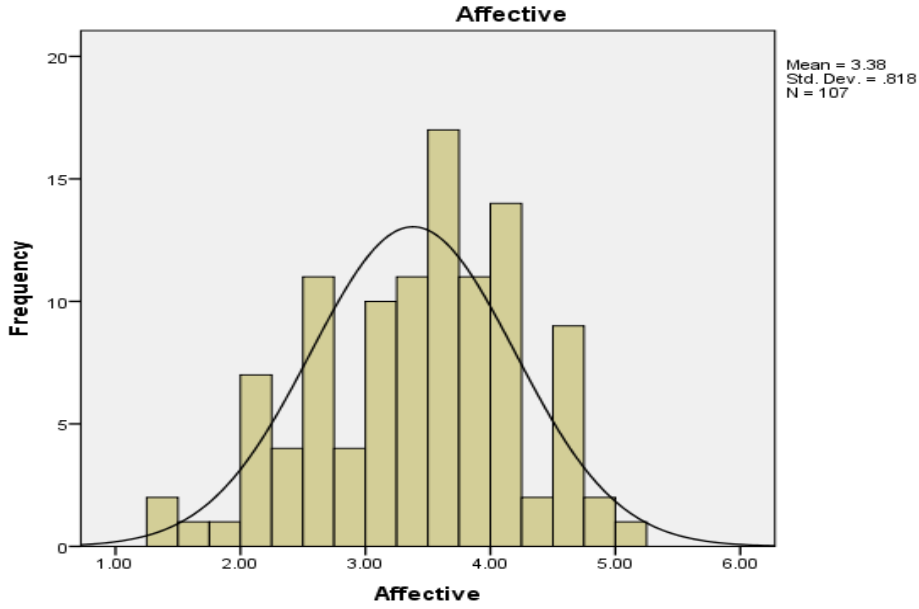


Figure 4.5. Skewness and kurtosis: social strategies

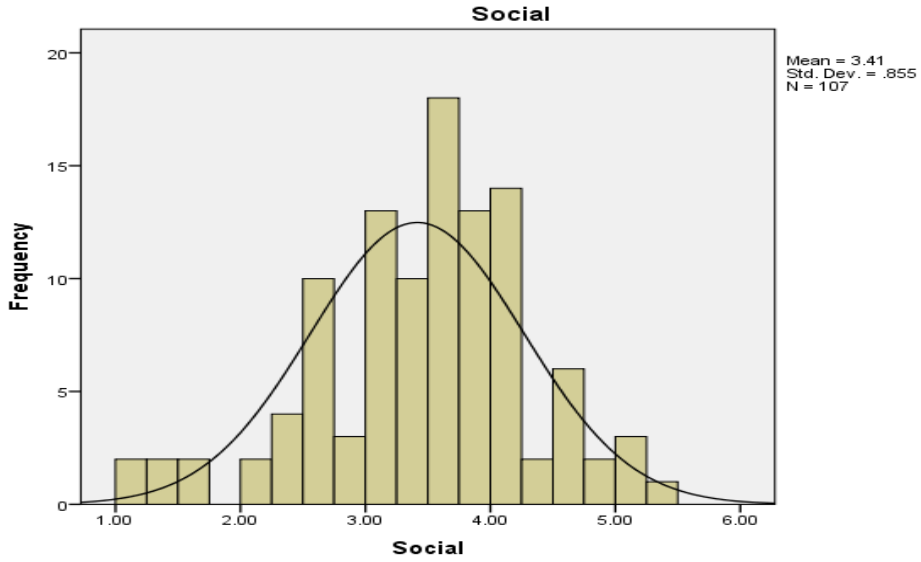


Figure 4.6. Skewness and kurtosis: metacognitive strategies

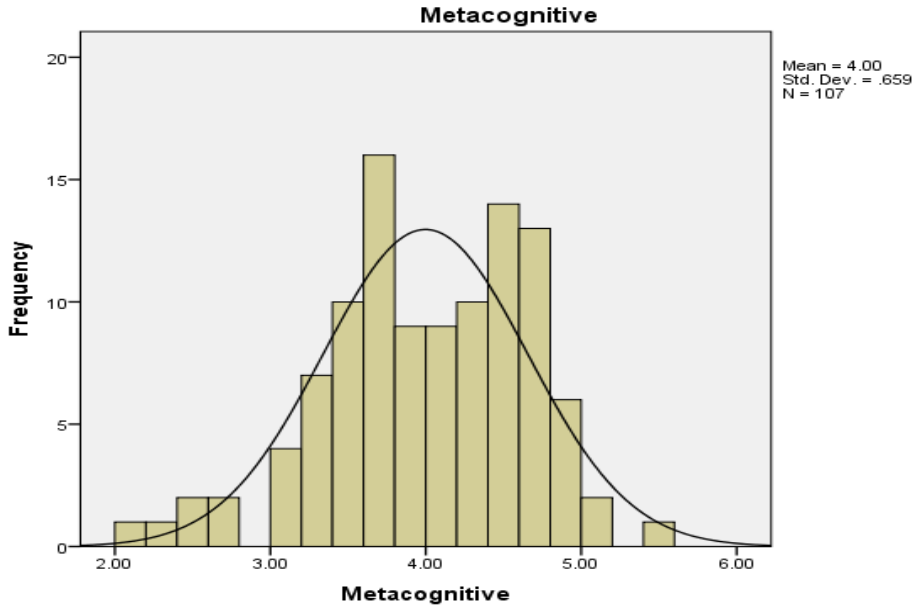


Table 4.14 provides data on the skewness and kurtosis of each of the six language learning strategies. The skewness and kurtosis provide information on the distribution of scores around the mean and in so doing assist in determining the normality of the data (Gavin, 2008). A skewness that is as close to zero is indicative of a more normally distributed variable, the abovementioned values all fell within the range of -1 to +1 and therefore the variables can be said to be normally distributed.

Table 4.14. Skewness and kurtosis for each histogram

Strategy	Skewness	Kurtosis
Memory	-0.18	0.18
Cognitive	-0.255	-0.2
Compensation	0.056	0.05
Metacognitive	-0.49	0.05
Affective	-0.37	-0.31
Social Strategy	-0.49	0.49

The sixth assumption that the data must meet is that there needs to be homogeneity of variance. Levene's test was used to determine this and there was a non-significant result, p ranged from .29 to .96 (as seen in Table 4.15 below), therefore the data fulfilled this assumption.

Table 4.15. Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variances

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Memory	.719	2	104	.490
Cognitive	.603	2	104	.549
Compensation	1.244	2	104	.293
Metacognitive	.048	2	104	.953
Affective	1.192	2	104	.308
Social	2.393	2	104	.096
Overall	1.524	2	104	.223

4.5. Inferential statistics

Inferential statistics make it possible to derive conclusions about a larger group based on the data obtained from a smaller group (Mendenhal et al., 2012). The data obtained from the SILL 7.0 questionnaire and the demographical questionnaire was analysed using inferential statistical methods. Parametric statistical techniques were used. An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was run. The purpose of running an ANOVA (Table 4.16) was to determine whether there was a significant deviation between the means of several groups (Mendenhal et al., 2012). Then the correlation coefficient was used to determine the degree of relationship between the independent and dependant variables (Mendenhal et al., 2012).

The first research question will now be analysed. Is there a relationship between mother tongue and language learning strategies used when learning English as a second language?

Table 4.16. One way ANOVA

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Memory * Mother Tongue	Between Groups	(Combined)	3.704	6	.617	1.672	.136
	Within Groups		36.936	100	.369		
	Total		40.640	106			
Cognitive * Mother Tongue	Between Groups	(Combined)	2.971	6	.495	1.695	.130
	Within Groups		29.211	100	.292		
	Total		32.182	106			
Compensation * Mother Tongue	Between Groups	(Combined)	2.661	6	.443	.732	.625
	Within Groups		60.600	100	.606		
	Total		63.261	106			
Metacognitive * Mother Tongue	Between Groups	(Combined)	3.305	6	.551	1.290	.269
	Within Groups		42.686	100	.427		
	Total		45.991	106			
Affective * Mother Tongue	Between Groups	(Combined)	3.649	6	.608	.904	.495
	Within Groups		67.279	100	.673		
	Total		70.928	106			
Social * Mother Tongue	Between Groups	(Combined)	4.445	6	.741	1.015	.420
	Within Groups		72.990	100	.730		
	Total		77.435	106			

The null hypothesis is:

Ho: There is no significant difference between the language learning strategies used by learners from different mother tongue backgrounds in learning English as a second language in the South African context.

The alternative hypothesis is:

Ha: There is a significant difference between the language learning strategies used by learners from different mother tongue backgrounds in learning English as a second language in the South African context.

The analysis of variance did not reveal any significant statistical difference in the language learning strategy scores of learners of different mother tongues, $p > 0.05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. There was no statistical difference between means ($p > 0.05$).

Pearson correlations were also run in order to further investigate whether there was a relationship between mother tongue and second language learning strategies. The relationship between mother tongue and memory learning strategies was explored using the Pearson Product moment correlation coefficient (Table 4.17.). Results depicted in the table below showed that there was a small, negative correlation between the two variables, r (107) = -.188, $p<.05$. The coefficient of determinance was 3.5% (r= -0.188x-0.188= 0.035x100= 3.5%) meaning that there is not much overlap between the two variables. Mother Tongue helps to explain 3.5% of the variance in respondents' scores on the memory learning strategy.

Table 4.17. Correlation between mother tongue and memory learning strategies

		Mother Tongue	Memory
Mother Tongue	Pearson Correlation	1	-.188
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.052
	N	107	107
Memory	Pearson Correlation	-.188	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.052	
	N	107	107

The relationship between mother tongue and cognitive learning strategies was explored using the Pearson Product moment correlation coefficient (Table 4.18). Results showed that there was a small, negative correlation between the two variables, r (107) = -.175, $p<.05$. The coefficient of determinance was 3% (r= -0.175x-0.175= 0.030x100= 3%) meaning that there is not much overlap between the two variables. Mother Tongue helps to explain 3% of the variance in respondent's scores on the cognitive learning strategy.

Table 4.18. Correlation between mother tongue and cognitive learning strategies

		Mother Tongue	Cognitive
Mother Tongue	Pearson Correlation	1	-.175
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.071
	N	107	107
Cognitive	Pearson Correlation	-.175	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.071	
	N	107	107

The relationship between mother tongue and compensation learning strategies was explored using the Pearson Product moment correlation coefficient. Results in Table 4.19.showed that correlation was very close to 0, that is r=0.053.This meant that changes in the variable mother tongue were not correlated with changes in respondents' use of compensation strategies.

Table 4.19. Correlation between mother tongue and compensation strategies

		Mother Tongue	Compensation
Mother Tongue	Pearson Correlation	1	.053
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.590
	N	107	107
Compensation	Pearson Correlation	.053	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.590	
	N	107	107

The relationship between mother tongue and metacognitive learning strategies was explored using the Pearson Product moment correlation coefficient. Results in Table 4.20 showed that correlation was very close to 0, that is r=0.050. This meant that changes in the variable mother tongue were not correlated with changes in respondents' use of metacognitive strategies.

Table 4.20. Correlation between mother tongue and metacognitive strategies

		Mother Tongue	Metacognitive
Mother Tongue	Pearson Correlation	1	.050
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.612
	N	107	107
Metacognitive	Pearson Correlation	.050	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.612	
	N	107	107

The relationship between mother tongue and affective learning strategies was explored using the Pearson Product moment correlation coefficient. Results showed that there was a small, negative correlation between the two variables, r (107) = -.120, p<.05. The coefficient of determinance was 1% (r= -0.120x-0.120= 0.014x100= 1.4%) meaning that there is not much overlap between the two variables. Mother tongue helps to explain 1.4% of the variance in respondents' scores on the affective learning strategy.

Table 4.21. Correlation between mother tongue and affective strategies

		Mother Tongue	Affective
Mother Tongue	Pearson Correlation	1	-.120
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.216
	N	107	107
Affective	Pearson Correlation	-.120	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.216	
	N	107	107

The relationship between mother tongue and social learning strategies was explored using the Pearson Product moment correlation coefficient. Results (Table 4.22.) showed that there was a small, negative correlation between the two variables, r (107) = -.104, p<.05. The coefficient of determinance was 1% (r= -0.104x-0.104= 0.010x100= 1%) meaning that there is not much overlap between the two variables. Mother Tongue helps to explain 1% of the variance in respondent's scores on the memory learning strategy.

Table 4.22. Correlation between mother tongue and social strategies

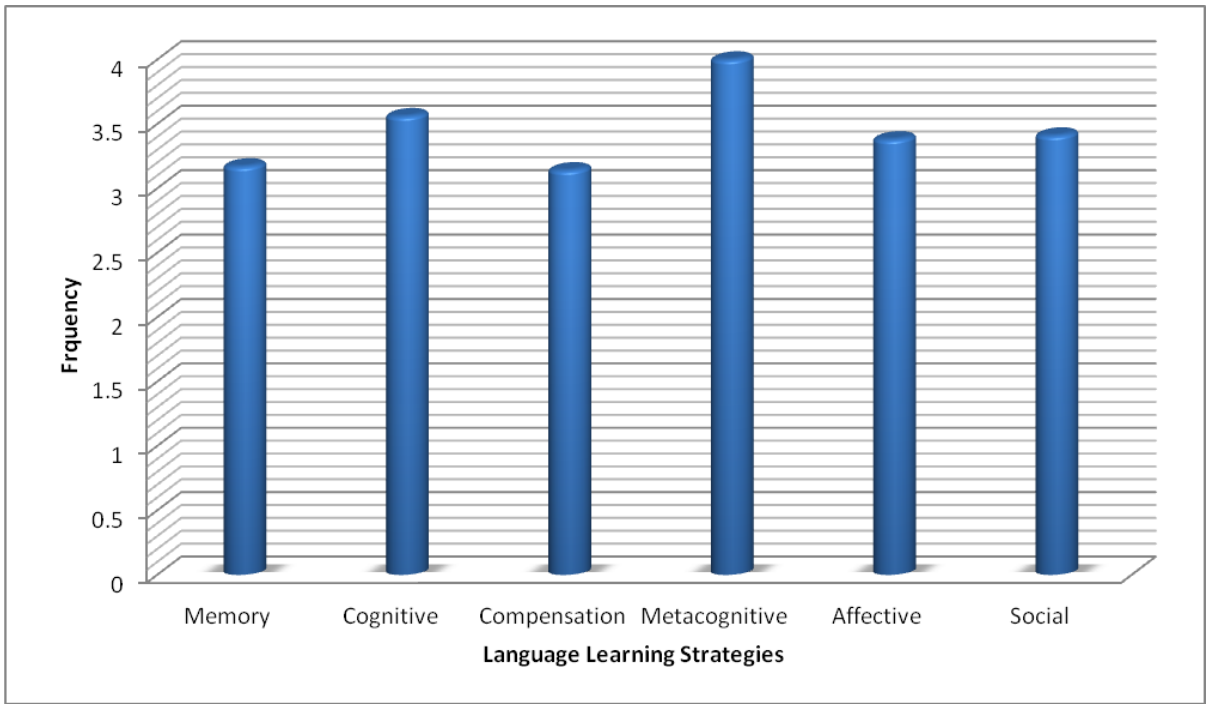
		Mother Tongue	Social
Mother Tongue	Pearson Correlation	1	-.104
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.286
	N	107	107
Social	Pearson Correlation	-.104	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.286	
	N	107	107

It can therefore be concluded that the variables were not strongly correlated and this correlation was in a negative direction.

The second research question will now be analysed. What language learning strategies are most commonly used by high school learners in learning English as a second language?

As depicted in the graph (Figure 4.7) below, the most commonly used English second language learning strategies by the participants were metacognitive strategies. Compensation strategies were the least commonly used strategies.

Figure 4.7. Language learning strategy frequency of use



4.6. Conclusion

There were 107 learners who participated in the study. An ANOVA was carried out to determine whether there was a significant deviation from the mean between the three groups of languages. The results showed that there was no significant deviation from the mean. Language learning strategy scores were approximately normally distributed for each of the six strategies. There was a homogeneity of variances as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances (p = .25-.96). Pearson correlations were run and results suggested that there was a small correlation between mother tongue and English language learning strategies. It can be concluded that there was no significant difference between the language learning strategies used by learners from divergent mother tongues. The most frequently used language learning strategy was metacognitive strategies.

In this chapter, the research questions were examined using statistical analyses, and the results were presented. An in-depth discussion of the results of the analysis follows in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

The landscape of South African education has a unique history, from the unfair practices of the Apartheid legacy to the present day situation in which the policies are attempting to address the inequalities. The effects of Apartheid are still rife and it is on this foundation that current policies in education are being constructed. The policies made and practiced during the Apartheid era were used to divide and oppress; this was particularly so in education. Post-independence, the new democratic government inherited a system that required rigorous transformation. Due to the country having 25 languages, 11 were granted official status; 9 indigenous languages in addition to English and Afrikaans. The new policies in education drawn up by the Department of Basic Education included a Language in Education Policy (Department of Basic Education, 1997). The ways in which schools have implemented the language policy has resulted in most learners having to learn English as a second language in order to grasp subjects taught in this second language.

It is therefore imperative to conduct research within the South African context that would positively impact on addressing this barrier to learning. The aim of this study was to investigate the language learning strategies used by English second language learners in order to gain insight into the process of English second language learning. Less successful language learners and those facing barriers to learning due to the language element could potentially be aided as a result of the research (Chamot, 2005). This research study into the language learning strategies employed by learners from diverse mother tongue backgrounds is pivotal to making a positive impact on addressing English as a second language barrier to learning.

Research over the past three decades in Europe, the U.S.A., Korea, China, Canada and Japan has identified a number of variables that influence learning and more specifically English second language learning. In these studies, factors such as motivation (of both the learners and the teachers), socio-economic status (and subsequently access to resources), personality/learning style, gender, age, and language learning strategies, that impact the learning of English as a second language have been investigated. Research has shown that

there is a relationship between strategy use and English second language learning success (Macaro, 2006). This study aimed to investigate whether there was a relationship between the mother tongue of learners in a South African context and English second language learning strategies employed by learners from diverse mother tongue backgrounds.

A government high school in a township area in Gauteng was approached for data to be collected. In total 107 male and female learners participated in the study. The learners completed two questionnaires, a demographical questionnaire and the SILL. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the results.

5.2. Is there a relationship between mother tongue and language learning strategies used when learning English as a second language in the South African context?

The results from the analysis of the questionnaires completed by 107 high school learners from 7 of the 9 indigenous South African languages revealed that there was a small correlation between mother tongue and English second language strategy use. However, a number of other factors seemed to have more of an impact on the strategy choice of the learners. These will be discussed below.

Previous researchers found similar results. In a historical study, Bailey, Madden, and Krashen (1976) investigated the language learning strategies that 73 adults used in learning English as a second language in the USA. The adults aged between 17 and 55 years of age, stipulated 12 different languages as their mother tongues. The majority; 33 participants spoke Spanish as their mother tongue. The other 40 spoke Italian, Greek, Persian, Turkish, Japanese, Chinese, Thai, Afghan, Vietnamese, Hebrew and Arabic. The researchers found that the adults used similar second language learning strategies and their mother tongues did not have a significant impact on their language learning strategy use. This suggested that perhaps other factors had a more significant impact on the choice of second language learning strategies than did the divergent mother tongues of the participants. Factors such as the gender of the participants, their motivation to learn English as a second language and the number of years that the learners had been studying English as a second language were all variables that had an impact on the second language learning strategy choice and these will be discussed below.

5.3. What language learning strategies are most commonly used by South African high school learners in learning English as a second language?

The second research question aimed to investigate which language learning strategy was most frequently used by learners from divergent mother tongue backgrounds. The results of this study revealed that the language learning strategies most commonly used by the learners who participated in this study were metacognitive strategies. The least frequently used strategies were memory and compensation strategies. These results were consistent with the findings in other studies derived from divergent contexts in Africa and further abroad.

In a historic study aimed at examining what language learning strategies were most commonly used by Spanish high school learners inside and outside the classroom, O'Malley et al. (1987) conducted research with 70 learners learning English as a second language and found that metacognitive strategies were used by 69.9% of the high school learners in the sample. This was the most commonly used language learning strategy, followed by cognitive strategies that were used by 30% of the learners, the least commonly used strategies were social affective strategies.

In Botswana the official language is Setswana; English is the official language of commerce and education. The learners in Botswana are learning English as a second language and will be required to grasp other school subjects taught using the medium of English. In a study conducted between 2002 and 2005, Magogwe and Oliver (2007) looked at the language learning strategies used by 480 primary, high and tertiary learners. They found that the most commonly used language learning strategies amongst the high school learners were metacognitive strategies; this was consistent with the findings in the current study.

In a similar study Salahshour, Salahshour, and Sharifi (2013) studied the relationship between language learning strategy use, language proficiency level and learner gender. They found that from their sample of 65 Iranian high school learners whose average age was 17 years, the most frequently employed learning strategies were metacognitive strategies. The learners reported using language learning strategies in general at a medium frequency level.

Ok (2014) conducted a study with 325 high school learners in Korea. She aimed to investigate the frequency with which they used language learning strategies and to determine which language learning strategies were most frequently used. She found that on average, the

learners used language learning strategies in medium frequency and that they used compensation strategies most frequently and affective strategies least frequently. It has been hypothesized that a possible cause for affective strategies being so infrequently used across various studies is that learners may not be aware of the potential that the use of affective strategies carries (Magogwe & Oliver, 2007). It may also be possible that learners seem to use social strategies less frequently because they have not built up the confidence to engage with others in social environments using the English language.

Cumulatively, the research suggests that metacognitive strategies are used more frequently by higher proficiency learners and that more successful learners use these strategies (Anderson, 2008; Chamot, 2005). Chamot (2005) stated that learners who used metacognitive strategies could think about their thinking and have direction in their learning through careful planning. The SILL questionnaire administered in the study was in a way a metacognitive questionnaire. It gave the learners an opportunity to think about their learning and evaluate their perceptions of how they were doing. Learners who use metacognitive strategies reflect on their learning and make conscious decisions to improve. A healthy, critical reflection of the content and context of second language learning as well as factors that lead to success in English second language learning will lead to academic success for the learners who use these strategies effectively and consistently. Although the participants in the study were facing many barriers to learning, such as inadequate resources and large class sizes, many of them seemed to be able to prioritise learning and to think about their thinking around learning and academic success. Learners, who use metacognitive strategies prepare and plan, monitor and evaluate their learning (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Metacognitive strategies empower learners to make more conscious and better decisions about their learning.

Thus, as stated above, it would appear that the current study indicates that learners from a variety of language backgrounds use metacognitive strategies in learning a second language; however, further research needs to be conducted as to whether teachers are adapting their teaching strategies accordingly to ensure optimal learning of English as a second language. Metacognitive strategy instruction in the South African context is fundamental for learners learning in a second language as metacognitive strategies empower learners through a facilitation of thinking about, analysing and evaluating the learning process. The implications of instructing learners on using metacognitive strategies in second language learning will have a profound impact on reducing the barrier to learning that is created when learning in a

second language. If learners appropriately make use of metacognitive strategies, they can identify gaps in their learning as well as judge what is useful to and what is detrimental to their learning English as a second language.

5.4. Language learning strategy use and gender

Research into language learning strategy use and gender has produced contradictory results (El-Dib, 2004). Some studies have found that there are no differences in strategy use between males and females (Vandergrift, 1997; Oh, 1992). Others have found that females use more strategies than males (Macaro, 2000). In a more recent study, El-Dib (2004) found that the differences they found between men and women was in the type of strategies that they used rather than the frequency with which the strategies were used.

Similarities were found in the results of the present study and those of El-Dib (2004); that is that males and females did not vary greatly in their frequency of strategy usage but rather in the types of strategies they used. The results showed that there was a significant positive correlation between gender and the choice of affective language learning strategies. Females in the study were more likely to use affective strategies than their male counterparts. Similarly, in their study of gender differences in English second language learning choice in a University in Hong Kong, Peacock and Ho (2003) found that females in their study used more affective language learning strategies than males. Hong-Nam and Leavell (2006) conducted a study in a South Western University in the USA. The participants were 55 male and female English second language students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The researchers found that the females in their study, tended to use affective and social strategies more frequently than the males did.

5.5. Language learning strategies used as clusters

The literature suggests that language learning strategies are not used in isolation, but that they can be combined and used in clusters (Cohen, 2014). Clusters are made when the likelihood that a learner will use certain language learning strategies in combination is high. Respondents in a study conducted by Cohen (2014) suggested that for more complex language learning tasks, clusters of language learning strategies were employed. Effective strategy use was reported to be used in combinations and that more effective language learning happened when clusters of strategies were used (Macaro, 2006). Metacognitive strategies could then be used to evaluate the efficiency of the use of various clusters.

Developmental psychologists found that as children get older, they are more efficient and flexible in their combinations and use of strategies (Macaro, 2006).

In the present study, strong negative correlations were found between proficiency and memory and cognitive strategies. That is, the more proficient a learner viewed themselves to be, the less likely they were to report using memory and cognitive strategies. More proficient learners were found to be more likely to combine the other strategies than to use the memory and cognitive strategies. Clusters were evident in the high frequency use of metacognitive, cognitive and social language learning strategies and in the medium frequency use of memory and compensation strategies.

5.6. Language learning strategies and motivation

Although research on language learning strategies has found that language learning strategy use significantly impacts second language learning, some researchers have argued that motivation has a significant impact on language learning and not enough emphasis has been placed on this integral variable (Gillette, 1994). Motivation was defined by Masgoret and Gardener (2003) as goal-directed behaviours, feelings and cognitions that individuals assume. Motivation to learn English as a second language is a variable that has strong implications on English second language learning and therefore warrants further discussion.

In a longitudinal, qualitative study with six second language learners at a university in Delaware, U.S.A., Gillette (1994) found that 'a learners social environment was crucial in determining whether acquiring a second language was viewed as a worthwhile pursuit or not' (p.197). She found that for two of her participants, their outlook and ultimately success in learning a second language seemed to be influenced not principally by the language learning strategies they employed, but by context and exposure to the world in which they lived. One of the participants had from a young age been encouraged to learn a second language as it was considered useful, fun and interesting. This participant was therefore extrinsically motivated to learn the second language and succeeded in learning the language. Success in her case was impacted upon by a strong motivation to learn English and a positive attitude in both the learner's family and in the society at large.

Masgoret and Gardner (2003) supervised a meta-analysis on the motivations to learn English as a second language of 10 489 individuals from 75 samples. Their findings indicated that there were correlations between motivation and achievement. The more motivated an

individual was to learn a second language, the more likely that they were to achieve success during the language learning. In their study, motivation was considered to be "a major affective, individual difference variable contributing to achievement in learning another language" (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003, p. 174).

In the South African context, as was stated previously in the literature review, English has been given dominance as a language of power and status; it is one of the principal languages of learning. Better jobs, financial success, status and renown are attached to the English language and proficiency in it. The legacy of Apartheid policies has left many with a painful personal history of the implications of not being educated in the language of power. This historical background was evident in the study. The school that the learners were in was an English medium school although very few of the learners had English as their mother tongue. Thus the learners are inadvertently disadvantaged. The learners who participated in the study were asked to give a qualitative response to what motivated them to learn English as a second language. The results revealed that students were well aware of the hegemony of the English language, a large percentage (56%) of the 107 learners stipulated that they were motivated to learn English because it was necessary for communication and education. The learners found that in order to learn their school subjects, they had to learn the language that the school subjects were instructed in. Communication in the various school subjects happens largely in English. Therefore there was a strong underlying motivation to succeed in learning and this was inextricably woven with comprehending the language of teaching.

Eighteen of the 107 participants stated that they were motivated to learn English because it was a career requirement. These participants detailed instrumental reasons as a motivating factor. Instrumental reasons are those that are practical for example getting a job or passing Matric. The participants were motivated because they perceived that learning English as a second language would one day be useful in attaining a goal. Other researchers found that participants were motivated to learn less for instrumental and more for integrative reasons. In a historic study, Graham (1987) looked at the motivations of learners across the U.S.A. in colleges and high schools and found that participants in her study were motivated to learn English as a second language in order to assimilate and integrate into the communities in which they lived. Cook (2013) had similar findings, she found that learners were motivated to learn English as a second language in order to integrate into the society that they were living in. Integrative reasons given in the present study were that learners were motivated to learn

English as a second language because they desired English first language competence and they wanted to understand others who spoke only English.

5.7. Other variables that impact on choice of language learning strategy

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between mother tongue and English second language learning strategies. As part of the demographics questionnaire the learners were encouraged to consider other factors that may impact their English language learning. Learners were asked to stipulate their age, gender, the number of years they had been learning English as a second language, why they were motivated to learn English and how important it was for them to become proficient in the English language. An analysis of the data revealed that these other variables could impact choice of English language learning strategy amongst the participants who took part in the study. Motivation and gender were discussed above.

With regards to the proficiency rating, the results of the current study showed that the more proficient the learners perceived themselves to be; the more frequently they made use of language learning strategies in general. These findings were consistent with the findings of other researchers, for example, Su (2005) conducted a study with 419 Taiwanese students studying English as a second language in a vocational college. She found that students that perceived themselves as more proficient used English language learning strategies more frequently than those that viewed themselves as less proficient. Hong-Nam and Leavell (2006) postulated that proficiency was a key contributor to success for students that were learning in their second language. These authors looked at the language learning strategy use of 55 students enrolled in an intensive English programme. The participants were from divergent linguistic and cultural backgrounds. They found that students who were more strategic (used more language learning strategies) were more likely to become more proficient than those that used language learning strategies less frequently. In a historic study, Oxford and Nyikos (1989) sought to find out what variables affected the choice of English language learning strategies. In the study, learners rated themselves in reading, listening and speaking the English language. They found that self-perceived proficiency had an impact on the learners' use of language learning strategies. The higher the learners rated themselves in terms of proficiency, the greater their strategy use (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989). The current study also found that there was a negative correlation between affective strategies and proficiency, meaning that the more proficient the learner viewed themselves to be, the less

likely they were to use affective strategies. Other researchers have postulated that perhaps the reason why fewer learners cited the use of social and affective strategies was that the learners possibly erroneously viewed these as less real strategies (Richards & Renandya, 2002).

In this study, correlations were run and a strong positive correlation was found between number of years of English language learning and the use of compensation strategies. That is, the more years a participant had been learning English, the more he/she was likely to report using compensation strategies. O'Malley et al. (1987) found that as the number of years that a learner was learning English as a second language increased, the use of cognitive strategies decreased and the use of metacognitive strategies increased. The results of the current study further revealed a positive correlation between metacognitive strategies and number of years of English language learning, revealing that the more years that a learner had been studying English, the more likely it was that he/she would use metacognitive strategies. On the contrary, Cohen and Aphek (1981) discovered that advancing in number of years of learning a language did not necessarily correlate with better strategy use. The research generally hypothesizes that learners at different ages use different language learning strategies and that learners who have been learning English as a second language for more years use different strategies than those who have been learning English as a second language for less years (O'Malley et al., 1987; Oxford, 1992).

If further research is carried out within the South African context to investigate the impact of these variables, a more comprehensive picture of second language learning and strategy use will be made available.

5.8. Implications of the study

This study has been crucial in exploring an area of English second language learning that has had little investigation in the South African context. The findings have pivotal implications for both learners and teachers in the South African context. This research can be used to improve the teachers teaching and the learners learning in a number of ways.

Through the sharing of the current research results with both the teachers and the learners, an awareness of the strategies that are available can be developed. If teachers can understand the importance and significance of the use of second language learning strategies and if they can pass on this knowledge and practice to the learners, it would be highly beneficial. Explicit and regular mediation on language learning strategies and more specifically on the use of

metacognitive strategies by teachers will benefit learners as they will become more aware of how they learn, on what works and on what does not work in their language learning endeavours. If educators can develop an awareness of appropriate and effective means of learners using their cognitive resources this will benefit second language learning. Educators need to formulate goals that encourage learners to engage in reflective thinking and the awareness of strategy use will ultimately increase the learners' language proficiency (Moomsamy, 2014).

The research has established that there is a link between self-perceived proficiency and second language strategy use. The learners that perceived themselves to be more proficient English language learners used second language learning strategies more frequently. If educators could use a variety of methods to encourage students to use second language learning strategies, but particularly metacognitive strategies, this would impact the learning of English as a second language positively. If the teachers utilise the information from this and other research studies; teaching students to think about their thinking, to encourage the development of second language learning strategies and to evaluate their processes of learning, strides will be made in reducing the barrier to learning that learning in a second language has become.

In order to enhance second language achievement in the multilingual context of South African schools, teachers can be encouraged to be more aware of the individual differences in strategy choice and therefore plan their lessons taking cognisance of this. If more appropriate instruction is given according to the individual language learning strategy profiles of the learners, proficiency in the English language will improve and this will positively impact the learning of the other subjects as well. In this way the teachers can begin "to meet the multilingual demands of the learners and their educational needs" (Nel, 2011, p.169) and the barrier of learning English as a second language can be addressed.

5.9. Strengths of the study

This study provided an exploration into an area of English second language learning that can enhance the experiences of learners in the diverse classroom that is characteristic of South African schools.

The results of the research have provided information that can be used to enhance the teaching and learning of English as a second language in South Africa. This study was

conducted in a context that is representative of the contexts that a large number of South African learners experience. The study highlighted the fact that learning in English can create barriers to learning and if these can be addressed previously disadvantaged learners can benefit in their learning of a curriculum that is taught in a second language.

5.10. Limitations of the study

The sample for this study was drawn from a single school in a township in Gauteng. The sample size of 107 participants could have been larger. A large number of possible participants were excluded as their comprehension of English was not adequate enough for them to complete the questionnaire. More schools not only in the Gauteng province, but in each of the provinces of South Africa would have been ideal.

Another limitation on this study was that two of the indigenous African languages were not spoken by any of the learners and only one learner spoke Tsonga; this had an impact on the analysis of results. Not all the indigenous African languages were thus represented in the sample. In order to analyse the data, the languages needed to be grouped as some of the mother tongues were only spoken by a few participants. Using a larger sample from a broader area would have meant that the languages did not need to be grouped and therefore would have generated better results.

There was the possibility that there were many extraneous variables that may have impacted on the choices of second language learning strategies chosen by the learners. Variables such as the quality of the school, one in which there were over 50 learners in a class which made it difficult to monitor what the learners were doing at the back of the class due to a lack of space, the cognitive ability of the learners, meaning that learners with special educational needs who possibly needed to be in a more specialised and less academic environment, the competence levels of the teachers to teach in English, the motivation levels of the teachers and the learners and the socio-economic status of the participants potentially influenced the English second language strategy choice.

The nature of the questionnaire (SILL Version 7.0) was such that those who could not read or understand the level of English used in the questionnaire were excluded from the study. The low literacy levels in under-resourced communities was not accounted for in the study and only participants who could read the English questionnaire could be included in the study. Related to this factor is the exclusion of learners who had dropped out of school. The sample

therefore consisted of principally those who were largely able to cope and function in the school environment.

Lastly, learners may have answered the questions according to their perception of what was socially desirable and this may have impacted on the language learning strategy use results.

5.11. Recommendations for further research

There are a number of suggestions to be implemented in studies that investigate mother tongue, second language learning, language learning strategies and the relationship between these.

Firstly, for the studies to give a more comprehensive picture, a larger sample size may be recommended, in order for each indigenous language to be represented. The sample can be drawn from a number of different schools in different provinces of the country. This would give a broader representation of the 11 official languages. It is recommended that a larger scale study be conducted.

It would be important to investigate what language learning strategies are employed by learners when they are taught through the medium of an indigenous tongue. Published research findings would grow the body of research in this area.

Exploratory research can be carried out in order to investigate what variables that have the most significant impact on English second language learning. In the present study, variables such as number of years of English language learning and the age of learners had an impact on the language learning strategies that English second language learners employed. This may be a suitable area to explore and investigate more thoroughly in future studies. Factors that influence second language learning are vast and influence second language learning in complex ways.

Linked to the previous recommendation is the recommendation that qualitative research on the relationship between mother tongue and English second language learning strategies be undertaken. This research would generate multifaceted insights that would give richer data and a more comprehensive picture of the field of English second language learning.

Research pertaining to how teachers teach English as a second language would add to the body of knowledge in this field of English second language as learning strategies are often a reflection of the teaching strategies that were employed.

If in future studies an easier to read questionnaire than the SILL Version 7.0 can be constructed this will be more effective in assessing what language learning strategies learners from diverse mother tongues use. Due to the difficulty of the language used a number of learners who could not read at that level of English were excluded from the study. Consideration of an oral questionnaire or combination of written and oral could be more effective in assessing language strategy use in a broader spectrum of intellectual ability.

If an holistic approach (one which looks at all levels of education, from decision makers to teachers that implement and learners that engage in learning) is adopted in the research of teaching and learning of English as a second language, paying particular attention to finding more long term rather than short term solutions, the landscape of education in South Africa will be enhanced (Cummins, 2000). Cognisance of the multilingual, multicultural and multi-racial nature of the country should be prioritised in any research and subsequently interventions that may be employed to improve the standard of education in South Africa and in particular that of previously and currently disadvantaged learners.

5.12. Conclusion

This research study was carried out in the context of a South African township school. Research into this field of English second language learning was previously limited and the current study was pivotal in investigating the relationship between mother tongue and the English second language learning strategies employed by learners from diverse indigenous South African mother tongue backgrounds. The participants completed two questionnaires, a demographical questionnaire and the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning Version 7.0. The results of the statistical analysis revealed that there was no significant difference between the language learning strategies used by learners from divergent mother tongues. The results also revealed that the most commonly used strategy in the group of participants was metacognitive strategies. The aim of this study was to initiate enquiry and further study into the field of mother tongue and its impact on English second language learning strategies. Further qualitative and quantitative research is essential in providing a richer perspective and understanding into this area of language learning.

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APPENDIX A

Psychology Department

School of Human and Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand

Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050

Tel: (011)717 4500 Fax: (011) 717 4559

School Information Form

Dear Principal

Good day. My name is Rachel Makoni. I am presently studying for my Masters' degree in Educational Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am currently conducting research for the purpose of obtaining this degree. My research aims to investigate the relationship between mother tongue and English second language learning strategies. I hope that my study will serve to contribute to a greater body of research concerning language learning strategies in a multi-cultural context.

I would like to invite your learners to participate in this study. Participation in this study will require the learners to complete a two part questionnaire comprising the following: Section A: a demographic questionnaire, which will ask questions regarding their children's ages and gender for example, as well as Section B: The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning. Participation is voluntary, and learners will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to complete the study or not. The survey or questionnaire will not be seen by any person in the school at any time and will be processed only by myself and my supervisor. The learner's responses will only be looked at in relation to all other responses. Learners may choose to refuse to answer any questions they would prefer not to and withdraw from the study at any time. All information collected will be treated as confidential. There are no direct risks or benefits attached to participating in this study.

If you consent for your learners to participate in the study, they will be asked to complete the questionnaire as carefully as possible. The process will take approximately one hour (instructions, completing the questionnaire, receiving feedback). The administration of these items will take place during a time which is convenient for the staff and learners in order to not jeopardise any academic

time. A feedback letter will be provided to the school once I have analysed my results. Please note that because participation is confidential I will not be able to disclose information about the learners' scores. Only my supervisor and I will have access to a child's name and scores during the analysis process, thereafter the child's information will remain confidential. Also, the research conducted may be published by the researcher in the form of a peer reviewed article, or presented at a conference. However, the information of the school and the participants will remain confidential.

Your consent for your learners' participation in this study would be greatly appreciated. Please do not hesitate to contact me or my research supervisor should you require further information.

Kind Regards
Rachel Makoni

Rachel Makoni:
raeray2013@gmail.com

Adri Vorster:
adri.vorster@wits.ac.za

Psychology Department

School of Human and Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand

Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050

Tel: (011)717 4500 Fax: (011) 717 4559

School Consent Form

I_____ give consent for the learners at _____ to partake in the study explained on the previous page.

I understand that:

- Participation in this study is voluntary.
- That learners may refuse to answer any questions they would prefer not to.
- The learners may withdraw from the study at any time.
- No information that may identify any child will be included in the research report and all responses will remain confidential.
- There are no direct risks or benefits for participation in this study.

Signed:_____ Date: _____

Appendix B

Psychology Department

School of Human and Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand

Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050

Tel: (011)717 4500 Fax: (011) 717 4559

Legal Guardian Information Form

Dear Legal Guardian

Good day. My name is Rachel Makoni. I am presently studying for my Masters' degree in Educational Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am currently conducting research for the purpose of obtaining this degree. My research aims to investigate the relationship between mother tongue and English second language learning strategies. I hope that my study will serve to contribute to a greater body of research concerning language learning strategies in a multi-cultural context.

I would like to invite your child to participate in this study. Participation in this study will require that you sign consent for your child to participate in this study. Your child will be asked to complete a questionnaire comprising two sections, Section A: a demographic form requesting information on your child's age, gender, etc. and section B: a questionnaire that looks at his/her language learning strategies. This will take approximately one hour. Participation is voluntary, and your child will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to complete the questionnaire or not and withdrawal will not result in any negative consequences for the individual pupil. The questionnaire will not be seen by any person in the school at any time and will be processed only by myself and my supervisor. Your child's responses will only be looked at in relation to all other responses. He/she may choose to refuse to answer any questions he/she would prefer not to and he/she may choose to withdraw from the study at any time. All information collected will be treated as confidential. There are no direct risks or benefits attached to participating in this study. Once the research has been conducted, if there are any concerns that you have or you feel your child may need counselling or further support, please contact either one of the following organisations:

- The Emthonjeni Centre (011 717 4513 or e-mail: nthabiseng.modikoane@wits.ac.za)
- The Family Life Centre (011 788 4784/5 or famlife@iafrica.com)
- Lifeline South Africa: 011 728 1347 (24 hour number)
- Childline: 08000 55 555 (24 hour number)

If you consent for your child to participate in the study, he/she will be asked to complete the questionnaire as carefully as possible. The administration of the questionnaires will take place during a time which is convenient for the staff and learners in order to not jeopardise any academic time. A feedback letter will be made available to the school once I have analysed my results.

Please note that because participation is confidential I will not be able to disclose information about your child's scores. Only my supervisor and I will have access to your child's name and scores during the analysis process, thereafter your child's information will remain confidential. Also, the research conducted may be published by the researcher in the form of a peer reviewed article, or presented at a conference. However, the information of the school and the participants will remain confidential.

Your consent for your child's participation in this study would be greatly appreciated. Please do not hesitate to contact me or my research supervisor should you require further information.

Kind Regards
Rachel Makoni

Rachel Makoni:
raeray2013@gmail.com

Adri Vorster:
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Psychology Department

School of Human and Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand

Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050

Tel: (011)717 4500 Fax: (011) 717 4559

Legal Guardian Consent Form

I_____ give consent for my child

_____ to partake in the study explained on the previous page.

I understand that:

- Participation in this study is voluntary.
- That my child may refuse to answer any questions he/she would prefer not to.
- My child can withdraw from the study at any time.
- No information that may identify my child will be included in the research report and my child's responses will remain confidential.
- There are no direct risks or benefits for participation in this study. Once the research has been conducted, if there are any concerns that I have or feel that my child may need counselling or further support, I can contact any of the organisations on the information sheet for assistance.

Signed :_____ Date: _____

Appendix C

Psychology Department

School of Human and Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand

Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050

Tel: (011)717 4500 Fax: (011) 717 4559

Learner Information and Assent Form

Dear Learner

My name is Rachel Makoni. I am studying at the Witwatersrand University and am pursuing a Masters Educational Psychology degree. I am currently conducting research for the purpose of obtaining this degree. My research aims to investigate the relationship between mother tongue and English second language learning strategies. I hope that my study will serve to contribute to a greater body of research concerning language learning strategies in a multi-cultural context.

I would like to invite you to participate in the research by doing a task which will enable me to learn more about the strategies you use when learning English. Please complete the questionnaire comprising two sections, Section A: a demographic form requesting information on your age, gender, etc. and Section B: a questionnaire that looks at your language learning strategies. It will take you about one hour to complete both the demographic form and the questionnaire. This task has nothing to do with your school work. It is only to help me with my university work.

It is your choice whether you want to take part in this study or not and you will not be advantaged or disadvantaged for deciding to take part or for refusing to take part. That means that you will not for instance get extra marks if you decide to complete to forms. Likewise, no marks will be deducted from your school work should you not wish to take part. It is really your choice.

The information you give in the questionnaire will not be seen by any person in the school at any time and will be processed only by myself and my supervisor. All your responses will be kept confidential. Your responses will only be looked at in relation to all other responses. There are no direct risks or

benefits attached to participating in this study. However, should you feel that you need some counselling or support, you can contact one of the following organisations to get assistance:

- The Emthonjeni Centre (011 717 4513 or e-mail: nthabiseng.modikoane@wits.ac.za)
- The Family Life Centre (011 788 4784/5 or famlife@iafrica.com)
- Lifeline South Africa: 011 728 1347 (24 hour number)
- Childline: 08000 55 555 (24 hour number)

You can ask me about anything you don't understand and we can take a break if you're tired. If you don't want to continue, we can stop whenever you want and you do not have to answer questions that you do not want to. Only I will see your answers. Your teachers and friends will not be told anything about what you have written.

If you agree to take part in this study, please complete the form attached to this. I would really appreciate your assistance in my research and value your answers.

Kind Regards
Rachel Makoni

Learner Assent Form

I _____ agree to partake in the study explained on the previous page.

I understand that:

- Participation in this study is voluntary.
- I may refuse to answer any questions they would prefer not to.
- I may withdraw from the study at any time.
- No information that may identify me will be included in the research report.
- All responses will remain anonymous.
- There are no direct risks or benefits to participating in this study; however, if I feel that I need counselling or support, I can contact any of organisations listed on the previous page for counselling and support.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D

Psychology Department

School of Human and Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand

Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050

Tel: (011)717 4500 Fax: (011) 717 4559

Dear Participant

I would like to do some tasks with you to find out the strategies you use when learning English. Please complete the following in as much detail and as honestly as you can. Section A contains questions about you mother tongue and other details concerning your learning English, and Section B contains multiple choice questions that allow you to select how you best learn English. The two sections will take about 30 minutes to complete.

1. Name and Surname :_____
2. Age: _____
3. Gender: (please circle) Male Female
4. Mother Tongue (Which is your preferred language to speak at home): _____
5. Other languages you speak at home: _____
6. Number of rooms in your house: _____
7. How do you get to school? (Please circle most appropriate answer)
   - Taxi
   - Walk
   - Personal vehicle
   - Lift club service
   - Bus

8. Your caregivers are: (Please circle most appropriate answer)

- Your biological parents
- Your foster parents
- A single parent (the other one has passed away)
- A single parent (your parents are divorced)
- Your adoptive parents
- Other adult relatives
- Other adult caregivers
- Other caregivers (older sister/brother, etc.)

9. Do you have any special academic needs or medical conditions which are known to you and may affect your academic performance? (Please circle most appropriate answer)

Yes No

10. If yes please specify what these academic needs and/or medical conditions are:

11. How many years would you say have you been studying English? _____

12. How do you rate your overall proficiency in English? (Please circle most appropriate answer)

Excellent Good Fair Poor

13. How do you rate your overall proficiency in English compared with the proficiency of other students in your class? (Please circle most appropriate answer)

Excellent Good Fair Poor

14. How important is it for you to become proficient in English? (Please circle most appropriate answer)

Very Important Important Not so Important

15. Do you enjoy English language learning? (Please tick most appropriate answer)

Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Almost Always	Always

16. What motivates you to learn English?

Section B

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

Directions

The following are questions that you can answer by choosing one of the answers that best describes you. Please read each statement. On the separate worksheet, write the response (1, 2, 3, 4 or 5) that tells HOW TRUE OF YOU THE STATEMENT IS.

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

- Never or almost never true of me means that the statement is very rarely true of you
- Usually not true of me means that the statement is true less than half the time
- Somewhat true of me means that the statement is true of you about half the time
- Usually true of me means that the statement is true more than half the time
- Always or almost always true of me means that the statement is true of you almost always

Answer in terms of how well the statement describes you. Do not answer how you think you should be, or what other people do. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements. Put your answers on the separate worksheet. Please make no marks on the items. Work as quickly as you can without being careless. If you have any questions, let the researcher know immediately.

EXAMPLE

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

Read the item and choose a response (1 through 5 as above), by circling the correct number.

I actively seek out opportunities to talk with native speakers of English.

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

You have just completed the example item. Answer the rest of the items on the worksheet.

Part A

1. I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.

2. I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.

3. I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or a picture of the word to help me remember the word.

4. I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.

5. I use rhymes to remember new English words.

6. I use flashcards to remember new English words.

7. I physically act out new English words.

8. I review English lessons often.

9. I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.

Part B

10. I say or write new English words several times.

11. I try to talk like native English speakers.

12. I practice the sounds of English.

13. I use the English words I know in different ways.

14. I start conversations in English.

15. I watch English TV shows spoken in English or go to the movies spoken in English.

16. I read for pleasure in English.

17. I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.

18. I read for pleasure in English.

19. I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.

20. I try to find patterns in English.

21. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.

22. I try not to translate word-for-word.

23. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.

Part C

24. To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.

25. When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.

26. I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.

27. I read English without looking up every word.

28. I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.

29. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.

Part D

30. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.

31. I notice my English mistakes and I use that information to help me get better.

32. I pay attention when someone is speaking English.

33. I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.

34. I plan my schedule so that I will have enough time to study English.

35. I look for people I can talk to in English.

36. I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English.

37. I have clear goals for improving my English skills.

38. I think about my progress in learning English.

39. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.

40. I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making mistakes.

41. I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.

42. I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.

43.I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.

44. I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.

Part F

45. If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.

46. I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.

47. I practice English with other students.

48. I ask for help from English speakers.

49. I ask questions in English.

50. I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.

Thank you very much for your time.

Recording Sheet: SILL Version 7.0 (Oxford, 1990)

Name: _____

Part A	**Part B**	**Part C**	**Part D**	**Part E**	**Part F**	**Whole SILL Sum**
1.	10.	24.	30.	39.	45.	Part A -
2.	11.	25.	31.	40.	46.	Part B-
3.	12.	26.	32.	41.	47.	Part C-
4.	13.	27.	33.	42.	48.	Part D-
5.	14.	28.	34.	43.	49.	Part E-
6.	15.	29.	35.	44.	50.	Part F-
7.	16.		36.			
8.	17.		37.			
9.	18.		38.			
	19.					
	20.					
	21.					
	22.					
	23.					
Sum	Sum	Sum	Sum	Sum	Sum	Sum
Divide by 9	Divide by 14	Divide by 6	Divide by 9	Divide by 6	Divide by 6	Divide by 50
=	=	=	=	=	=	=

Instructions for scoring the SILL Version 7.0

1. Total each column and put the result on the line marked "Sum".
2. Divide the sum by the number in the block below to get an average for each part.
3. Round the average off to the nearest tenth. Your average will fall between 1.0 and 5.0 because the only responses on the SILL are 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5.
4. To calculate your overall average, add up all of the sums for the different parts of the SILL. This will give you a total raw score. Divide this raw score by 50 (the total number of items on the SILL). This will give you your average for all the items.
5. Refer to the profile of results below to see how you make use of the learning strategies.

Key to understanding averages:

Frequency of use		**Average**
High	Always or almost always used	4.5 to 5.0
	Generally used	3.5 to 4.4
Medium	Sometimes used	2.5 to 3.4
Low	Generally not used	1.5 to 2.4
	Never or almost never used	1.0 to 1.4

What this means to you:

1. The overall average shows you how often you use the language learning strategies in general.

2. The averages for each part of the SILL indicate to you how often you use those kinds of strategies. See below for a list of the strategies covered in each part of the SILL.

What strategies are covered in each part of the SILL (Oxford, 1990).

Part A – Memory strategies – remembering more effectively.

Part B – Cognitive strategies – using all your mental processes.

Part C – Compensation strategies – compensating for missing knowledge.

Part D – Metacognitive strategies – organizing and evaluating your learning.

Part E – Affective strategies – managing your emotions.

Part F – Social strategies – learning with others.

Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49 Makoni

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER H14/05/35**
PROJECT TITLE	The relationship between ethnicity and English second language learning strategies
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Ms R Makoni
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	Human & Community Development/Psychology
DATE CONSIDERED	23 May 2014
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved Unconditionally
EXPIRY DATE	20/11/2016
DATE 21/11/2014	**CHAIRPERSON** (Professor T Milani)

cc: Supervisor : Dr A Vorster

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10000, 10th Floor, Senate House, University.

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to completion of a yearly progress report.**

_____ _____/_____/_____

Signature **Date**

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

GAUTENG PROVINCE
Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

For administrative use:
Reference no: D2015 / 044

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	**9 May 2014**
Validity of Research Approval:	**9 May 2014 to 3 October 2014**
Name of Researcher:	**Makoni R.T.**
Address of Researcher:	**98 Rooi Els Street**
	Sharonlea
	Johannesburg
Telephone Number:	**071 375 4666**
Email address:	**raeray2013@gmail.com**
Research Topic:	**The relationship between Mother Tongue and English Second Language learning Strategies**
Number and type of schools:	**ONE SECONDARY School**
District/s/HO	**Johannesburg North**

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:

Attended
2014/05/12

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.*

Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research
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