

**Non-South African French-speaking students' curriculum experiences in a community
of practice at a private tertiary institution**

by

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the almighty God, the giver of life, ancient of days and the unchangeable changer who eventually proved to me that delay is not denial. You are indeed the God of the Heavens and the earth. You gave me the expertise, capability and courage to undertake this research. I worship you for your faithfulness and love.

ACRONYMS

ACOP	Academic Community of Practice
COP	Communities of Practice
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
HE	Higher Education
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
IT	Information Technology
LOLT	Language of learning and teaching
LPP	Legitimate Peripheral Participation
SA	South Africa
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
UNISA	University of South Africa

ABSTRACT

This research set out to explore the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students in a private tertiary education institution. The study was qualitative in nature and utilized narrative inquiry and the case study approach. Data-gathering methods included a blend of semistructured interviews, document analysis, participant observation and field notes. Data analysis employed content and thematic analyses.

Findings that emerged from the study were seven-fold: First, the academic experiences of French-speaking students from pre-degree to third-year degree programme entailed a rigorous negotiation with the LoLT. They negotiated the pre-degree route to mainstream degree programme due to non-compliance with academic standards set for higher education. Second, French-speaking students negotiated the pre-degree route to mainstream degree programme because their curricula of study, while they negotiated secondary school education in French-speaking countries were not recognized by most South African public universities. Third, French-speaking students experienced a number of hidden curriculum experiences which were not visible but influenced the planned, enacted and assessed curricula. Fourth, the department of lecturers was a useful asset. Lecturers were sourced from different sociocultural perspectives of the world. The impact of lecturers' department led to commitment to achieve excellence and dedication towards student learning.

Fifth, the use of Zulu, Sotho and sporadic use of Afrikaans languages by lecturers became sociocultural experiences of French-speaking students. The impact of this was felt by French-speaking students when they took a longer time to negotiate transition from French-speaking to English-speaking. The rate at which white lecturers spoke and the unfamiliar accents of black South African lecturers became important aspects of experiences they negotiated at Montana College. Sixth, learning ensues when there is a hybridization of the three sociocultural factors namely language of communication, acculturation to the domain of influence and mediated identity. Seventh, it was found that power relations manifested themselves in different perspectives at Montana College. Lave and Wenger (1991) proposed that power relations exist in the field of education where teachers exercise their roles as facilitators of learning and students see that they are in possession of economic power, by virtue of the fact that they pay fees. Consequently the issues of power relations abound in the

form of the “continuity-displacement contradictions” as suggested by Lave and Wenger (1991:115-116).

Much new knowledge came to light, especially in terms of the three sociocultural factors (language, acculturation and identity). When these are in a state of redress, there is an emergent learning, depending on the extent of hybridization between the sociocultural factors. The magnitude of learning is conceptualized to depend on the extent of redress or hybridization among the sociocultural factors.

KEYWORDS

Academic performance

Academic Community of Practice

Communities of Practice

Continuity-displacement contradiction

Culture

Curriculum

Educational experience

French-speaking students

Hybridization

Legitimate Peripheral Participation

Sociocultural experience

DECLARATION

Student number: **42879582**

I declare that this doctoral thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

SIGNATURE

(Mr. C.A. Adebajji)

DATE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF LANGUAGE EDITING

I, ARLEN KEITH WELMAN, hereby certify that I have revised the language of the dissertation “Non-South African French-speaking students’ curriculum experiences in a community of practice at a private tertiary institution” written by Charles Adedayo Adebajji, and have found the standard of the language acceptable provided the indicated corrections have been made.

(signed) A.K. Welman, M.A. (English), B.Ed. (UP)

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ABSTRACT

This research set out to explore the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students in a private tertiary education institution. The study was qualitative in nature and utilized narrative inquiry and the case study approach. Data-gathering methods included a blend of semistructured interviews, document analysis, participant observation and field notes. Data analysis employed content and thematic analyses.

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CHAPTER ONE

VIGNETTE OF A PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION CURRICULUM

1.1 Introduction

This study set out to explore the curriculum experiences of non-South African French-speaking students in a private higher education institution of South Africa from a pre-degree to third-year degree programme. The private higher education institution is conceptualized as an academic community of practice with stakeholders comprising beginners and experts, drawing on the work of Otten (2009) and Wenger (1998). Otten suggests that any investigation of “interculturality” in higher education has to centre on “interaction patterns” of educational practices and the construction of cultural meaning (2009:407). Interculturality as it applies to this study is conceptualized as an array of dissimilar cultures displayed by stakeholders in an academic institution. Intercultural competence will be taken as the driving force of learning in an academic community of practice. It therefore implies that an investigation of the setup of academic culture and how it applies to both beginners and experts in the academic institution is important. Using Wenger’s (1998) lens, a beginner is a new entrant to the community of practice, learns the principles of the community by participating in the culture of the community. This study shows that a novice gains access to the community of practice via legitimate peripheral participation, drawing on Lave and Wenger (1991). French-speaking students are thus seen as legitimate peripheral participants via the access given to them by their compliance with the admission policy of the academic institution. Consequently stakeholders engage in the definition of meaning in terms of what they share or lose to reach their goals in the community.

The French-speaking students originate from Francophone (French-speaking) countries of Africa. They arrive in South Africa with their indigenous languages and culture. This makes their sojourn complex because they are compelled to learn new cultures in an academic environment comprising different cultural principles. In an attempt to explore the research problem their curriculum experiences were contemplated as suggested in the literature (e.g. Billett, 2006; Dillon, 2009; Kurz, Elliot, Wehby & Smithson, 2010; Hume & Coll, 2010), by

looking at their academic performance, experiences negotiated within the private higher education institution, linguistic inclination and adjustment, acculturation to the academic environment and the host society, and how they negotiated their identities in the midst of the sociocultural diversity of the campus environment. Chow (2006) proposed that academic performance and schooling experience be conceptualized as educational experience. Linguistic adjustment, acculturation to the society of sojourn and how the non-South African French-speaking students (otherwise referred to as international students) mediated their identities were classified as sociocultural factors, capable of challenging their educational experiences.

Academic performance was seen as a measure of compliance or deviation from the assessed curriculum. It was taken as a measure of conformity to the planned, intended, and enacted curriculum as suggested by Kurz et al. (2010). Schooling experience, a component of educational experience as conceptualized by Chow (2006), was explored under the lens of the hidden or latent curriculum because such experiences are seen as extraneous factors which are not usually taken into consideration when designing, enacting and assessing the intended curriculum in an academic institution.

The three sociocultural factors, namely language, acculturation and how the non-South African French-speaking students mediated their identities were investigated under the tenets of the hidden curriculum. However, language was fragmented into two aspects because it was vital for learning and teaching at the research site. English language was the specified medium of instruction for higher education at the research site. Therefore it was categorized as an intended curriculum factor. Other languages that were utilized in the research field by all the students and stakeholders fell directly under the hidden curriculum factors. These considerations were employed as suggested in the literature (e.g. Billett, 2006; Dillon, 2009; Langhout & Mitchell, 2008). Scott (1993:14) paved the way for an inquiry into the curriculum experiences of the non-South African French-speaking students of this study by arguing that curriculum issues in higher education are complex because they have been consigned to a school-based notion, whereas there seem to be other salient, non-school factors to consider when designing the curriculum. These non-school factors are classed as the hidden curriculum experiences, capable of impacting upon the planned, enacted and assessed curricula in the academic institution. A gap was therefore revealed, in terms of the

intended, enacted and assessed curriculum because curriculum developers seldom consider hidden curriculum issues when designing, enacting and assessing the curriculum. Similarly, in South Africa issues of curriculum experiences of French-speaking students are lacking. The available studies within reach in South Africa suggest that most of the investigations on curriculum issues have largely been concentrated on primary and secondary education. A few examples include Brown, Miller and Mitchell (2006), Hume and Coll (2010), Kurz et al. (2010), and Langhout and Mitchell (2008). The role of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in the design of the curriculum was unvoiced as far as one of the most comprehensive studies on curriculum in South Africa was concerned (Taylor, 1993).

The transition to higher education institutions of learning has been the subject matter in the extant literature (e.g. Haggis & Pouget, 2002; Knox, 2005; Laing, Robinson, & Johnston, 2005; Macaro & Wingate, 2004; Peat, Dalziel & Grant, 2000; Rhodes, Bill, Biscoomb, Nevill & Bruneau, 2002; Smit & Wolmarans, 2010). Of note is the paucity of research on the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students in the private South African higher education institution. According to Erguvan (2013:160), in a study of foundation programmes in Turkish private universities it was stated that “research is needed on foundation universities, particularly on students, as well as faculty members.” This study aims at addressing the identified gaps in the literature by exploring the academic performance, campus experience, linguistic adjustment, acculturation and identity negotiation of students from French-speaking countries who study in a private South African higher education institution. An exploration of these parameters under the lens of the intended/planned, enacted, assessed and hidden curriculum presented the opportunity of revealing the challenges confronting them in their academic environment. Much needs to be explored concerning the curriculum experiences of non-South African French-speaking students in the private South African higher education institution. What then are the curriculum experiences of non-South African French-speaking students in a private higher education institution?

1.2 Background and context of the study

This research site is located as it was observed at the time of the investigation, and will be referred to as an academic community of practice as suggested by Otten (2009). The research site was located within the Gauteng Province, accessible to many students who at the time of investigation either lived at the hostel located adjacent to the main campus, or travelled by

road from neighbouring cities and towns to the academic institution. Many of the students interviewed stated that accommodation was too expensive at the school. They travelled by road to the campus to reduce accommodation costs. The campus had well-built lecture rooms with technological facilities to aid teaching and learning, although there were not enough lecture rooms for the student population as at 2011. The provider of higher education thus embarked on building projects in early 2011 to alleviate the concern for lecture rooms and lecturers' spaces. The building project was completed by January 2012 and extensively used for administrative purposes and extra lecture rooms. These new lecture rooms served the Foundation Phase students and a few students in the main degree programmes. The school had a functional library with limited space for students to work. Students queued to have access to the library facilities. Computers situated in the library serviced the entire campus population, except for those specifically situated in the Faculty of Information Technology (IT). Students had limited access to internet facilities and thus were timed when they used computers.

The particular site of the campus encouraged interaction among the diverse students. Students sat under canopies and trees to discuss personal and academic issues. Lecturers had their own offices, except for the Foundation Phase department that had lecturers in a single office with a limited number of computers whose operational time they shared amongst themselves. Whenever there was congestion in terms of access to computers for research purposes, lecturers resorted to using their laptops for self-development. Consultations with students were booked 24 hours in advance to resolve academic and personal challenges. By the end of 2011 more offices had been built to accommodate consultation hours to reach the students. Personal challenges that went beyond the academic sphere were referred to counsellors or academic advisors. Academic advisors comprised different categories. Academic advisors were appointed from different countries to meet the needs of the diverse student population. The underlying assumption in this kind of arrangement was to directly understand the various student populations from different countries of the world, represented in the academic institution.

The private provider of higher education, compared with most mainstream tertiary institutions was cost-effective in terms of tuition and accommodation because it did not receive any kind of government subsidy. However tuition was cost effective for the French-

speaking students because in the public universities, international students were charged double tuition. Students were either self-sponsored, or granted bursaries by organizations and banks. The socio-economic status of parents who sent their still dependent children to the research site was assumed to be high. Poor parents could probably not send their children to the study site because of cost implications. The average tuition per annum ranged from R45000 to R55000 excluding accommodation and other living expenses. This escalated by 10% on a yearly basis. Students were expected to pay monthly installments until their fees had been paid in full. French-speaking students and other foreign students paid 50% at the time of registration, and the remaining fee was divided into ten installments on a monthly basis. Whenever any student neglected to pay fees scheduled on a monthly basis, such student was automatically prevented from entering the academic premises, a condition which caused academic and psychological stress in fee defaulters.

Lectures were presented in English in all six faculties of Montana College. Students who had linguistic challenges had to rely on a module in English which all students took to enhance their linguistic concerns. The provider of higher education made it a policy to make English compulsory for all students because both South African and non-South African students had linguistic problems. French-speaking students' English proficiency was evaluated in terms of the academic reports they obtained from recognized English schools, and they were orally interviewed by student advisors in English before being accepted to study at the research site. From the pre-degree to the third-year degree programmes the French-speaking students had to register for English modules to alleviate their linguistic concerns since they suddenly found themselves in an environment with English as language of instruction. French was not offered at this research site. Some of the lecturers spoke French but most of them informally spoke other indigenous languages apart from the language of instruction. However, it was a policy at the private provider of higher education to use English as the medium of instruction. Students who passed the pre-degree were critically screened according to their pass rates and were assigned to the six faculties at Montana College. The other pre-degree students who passed were absorbed by public institutions. At Montana College the following courses were offered: biomedicine, accounting, law, graphic arts and design, Commerce and Information Technology. All the courses were taught in the medium of English.

Throughout my engagement with the research site from January 2011 to the date of completing this study, the heritage day was set aside to encourage cultural diversity, an avenue found to enhance adaptation of immigrant students to their society of sojourn as suggested by Asanova (2005). The main issue was whether a single day was enough to enhance their drive towards acculturation. Another major campus gathering organized annually was called “market day”, an initiative aimed at familiarizing students from the marketing department with the concept of marketing. The school allowed set days for social gathering to foster interaction and integration, especially in the evenings. Many of the foreign students did not participate in the social gathering occasions. The main campus had a ministadium for sporting activities to encourage interaction and integration of all students. The school had swimming facilities, basketball facilities and a cafeteria for refreshments and interaction during free periods. Towards the end of 2012 an additional cafeteria was under construction to cater for the influx of both indigenous and foreign students.

The quest to conduct this study stemmed from the findings obtained from my recently concluded study entitled “Educational and sociocultural challenges of immigrant students in a South African public school” (Adebanji, 2010). The focus of this concluded study was on the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)’s immigrant students. In that study it was found that DRC’s immigrant students had a poor academic achievement and arduous schooling experiences. They negotiated linguistic challenges in the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) and in the indigenous languages spoken at the school, and difficult acculturation and identity negotiation experiences. As a result of these findings, it dawned on me to investigate whether DRC’s immigrant students cross over to higher education institutions of learning. If they do, my interest hinged on investigating their curriculum experiences and the route they take into higher education by considering their educational and sociocultural experiences, which are traces of the intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curriculum issues (Chow, 2006; Kurz et al., 2010; Langhout & Mitchell, 2008). Furthermore I extended my research to other non-South African French-speaking students from other Francophone countries such as Cameroon, Gabon, the Chad Republic and the Republic of Benin. This was done in an attempt to broaden the scope of the sample in this study to students other than from the DRC. This study provides a holistic and comparative picture of the curriculum experiences negotiated by the students from non-English speaking countries living within the sociocultural diversity of South Africa.

The context of this study involved an examination of the factors impacting upon the educational and sociocultural experiences of French-speaking students in a private higher education institution. In conducting this study the campus environment, lecturers, facilities available for higher education, language policy, as well as issues relating to the acculturation and identity negotiation of the students from French-speaking countries were explored. The international students' office at the university/college campus also offered a rich source of data for the study (otherwise known as the student advisory unit). Relevant experiences from the French-speaking students' immediate community also provided data for the study as suggested by Xu, Connelly, Fang and Joann (2007). I also took into account that at most South African higher education institutions an undergraduate is expected to study for a minimum of three years; honours students for minimum of one year; masters and doctoral students for up to four years, depending on the academic institution (Scott, Yeld & Hendry, 2007). These facts formed the basis of the interpretation of data for the study.

The study was undertaken at the main campus of a private provider of higher education in South Africa here pseudonamed Montana College for ethical reasons. Montana College was established in 1989 and hires 130 permanent and contracted academic staff members. The institution also employs 81 support and organizational employees (Steyn, 2011). The institution has seen tremendous growth in the last three years. However, French-speaking students and other students were decreasing in number because of the yearly escalation of fees and the stringent measures on visas. It was gathered from student advisors that the governments of French-speaking countries were no longer funding students to study in South Africa. International students comprised about 25% of the overall student population at the time of this study. Less than 5% of the student population was from French-speaking countries as at February 2013. Their number has been declining in the last three years. The following information (Table 4.2) provides evidence that the institution has tremendously grown and details the staff strength as at March 2013 when I conducted documentary analysis. The information was compiled from 2006 to 2013.

Table 1.1: Staff population, facilities available and student population at Montana College

MARCH 2006	MARCH 2013
986 students	4300 students (based on registrations to 13 th February 2013)
87 staff	376 staff
8 student advisors	96 student advisors
19 lecture venues	54 lecture venues
6 computer labs	22 computer labs (including libraries & internet Cafes)
1 main campus	1 main campus plus 11 satellite campuses
350 capacity student residence	1024 capacity student residence

A total of 17 accredited degrees were offered across six faculties, which were mainly served by the pre-degree programme. The pre-degree programme is a separate faculty on its own, which makes the total number of faculties at Montana College equal to seven. Montana College is vested with degree-conferring authority by the Council on Higher Education (CHE). Consequently all qualifications at Montana College are accredited by the CHE. I was a staff member at the main campus of Montana College. I made sure to interview the French-speaking students that I taught after they had written their examinations. This was done in an attempt to avoid bias and not to disrupt their studies. Furthermore, during the lecture periods with a number of them I intently watched them in class for a whole semester. I could not speak or understand French.

The French-speaking students had their local languages but did not use them on campus. They mainly spoke with other French-speaking students in French when not in class. At the campus French-speaking students were in the midst of South African students, other international students and lecturers. The South African languages spoken on campus were Zulu, Sotho, Sepedi, to mention but a few. These South African languages were audibly spoken in the class among other South African students during group work sessions. Other international students from countries like Ghana, Nigeria, Lesotho and Rwanda spoke English. However, when international students from the same country met, they retracted to their enclaves and spoke the indigenous languages, but not to the point that they were heard by the majority of students at Montana College. The majority of South African students at

Montana College generally spoke Zulu because it was the universal language they could come to terms with. South African lecturers also spoke Zulu, Sepedi and Sotho but not openly because according to the policy at Montana College, English was the medium of expression. White South African lecturers also spoke Afrikaans but it was not officially recommended because Montana College had an English-only policy. It was however observed that there were times when South African students came to South African lecturers for consultation. These South African lecturers explained concepts to the South African students in Zulu language although this was unethical.

Academic and non-academic staff members were appointed according to the employment equity act. Lecturers were drawn from a wide range of African countries in an attempt to internationalize the HEI. However, there were more South African lecturers than foreign lecturers but the ratio balanced out to cater for the academic setting in terms of student population and diversity.

Bogdan and Taylor (1975) propose that an investigator normally gains access to an establishment in an attempt to conduct research by seeking permission from relevant authorities such as the management. Permission was sought and granted by the Research Committee of Montana College to conduct this study. The letter of permission is attached to this thesis in Appendix A. I was not granted permission to use the real name of the private provider of higher education. Out of all the French-speaking students interviewed, only six were my students and at the time of the first round of interviews in 2012, they had already completed the mathematics module that I taught them. I was assured by the work of Schurink (2004b) that a qualitative investigator cannot be separated from his or her study so as to avoid subjectivity. It was profound in me that I had to avoid my personal experiences of the French-speaking students and the other staff members to influence my findings.

1.3 Problem statement

The number of international students entering South Africa is on the increase (Klotz, 1997, 2000). Information on their curriculum experiences and how they gain access into higher education is very limited. Students from French-speaking countries come to South Africa with limited or no aptitude in English language. They are compelled to register in English proficiency schools before starting academic work, to provide them with the basic concepts

of English needed to succeed at tertiary level. They communicate in French skilfully. Furthermore they are not proficient in any of the South African indigenous languages. Their secondary school educational and sociocultural experiences are characterized by few opportunities and many challenges (Adebanji, 2010). Their journey to higher education has been found to be by means of the pre-degree programme in a private higher education institution. It is suggested by Otten (2009:410) that learning takes place through actions and interactions that reproduce and transform the social and cultural structure of a community. Otten (2009) presents a platform for investigating how students learn in an ACOP. The learning trajectory of French-speaking students is thus problematized by attempting to develop a theory to explore how they learn. As a result, how the French-speaking students learn, adapt to the academic institution (academic acculturation) and develop academic identity (how they take responsibility for their learning) are problematized. They are caught in the midst of institutional power relations which tend to challenge their curriculum experiences. The dynamics involved in their curriculum experiences require the formulation of a theory to understand how they learn in the midst of a multiculturally disparate environment, with the additional challenge of having to learn in English. In the context of the exposition of the problem this far, I pinpointed the following hypotheses as:

- 1) The curriculum experiences of French-speaking students entail delayed transition from French to English, which is the medium of instruction, as a result of their reluctance to effectively engage with the demands of the academic community of practice in which they found themselves. In the light of the proposed hypothesis, additional hypotheses are presented:
- 2) French-speaking students negotiate higher education through the pre-degree programme as a result of their inability to demonstrate compliance with the demands of first-year main degree programmes.
- 3) French-speaking students negotiate challenging experiences in terms of the intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula in the academic community of practice.
- 4) Hidden curriculum experiences play important roles in the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students in the academic community of practice.
- 5) Sociocultural factors play vital roles in the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students in the academic community of practice.

- 6) The private provider of higher education employs the tool of sociocultural diversity among lecturers and staff, and institutionalized policy to provide a favourable academic environment for French-speaking students in the academic community of practice.
- 7) Learning occurs when there is a hybridization of the three sociocultural factors (language, acculturation and identity) among French-speaking students in the academic community of practice.
- 8) The curriculum experiences of French-speaking students are challenged by power relations in the academic community of practice.

Equipped with these hypotheses, the following research question emerges: What are the curriculum experiences of students from French-speaking countries in an academic community of practice?

In search of answers to the main question, the related subquestions were stated and investigated subsequently. These are:

- 1) Why do French-speaking students negotiate higher education through the pre-degree programme in the academic community of practice?
- 2) Do French-speaking students negotiate challenging experiences in terms of the intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula in the academic community of practice?
- 3) How do hidden curriculum experiences impact on the planned, enacted and assessed curricula experiences of French-speaking students in the academic community of practice?
- 4) What are the effects of sociocultural factors on the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students in the academic community of practice?
- 5) What are the strategies put in place by the private provider of higher education to provide a favourable academic environment for French-speaking students in the academic community of practice?

- 6) Does learning occur when there is a hybridization of the three sociocultural factors (language, acculturation and identity) among French-speaking students in the academic community of practice?
- 7) How do power relations among other stakeholders challenge the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students in the academic community of practice?

1.4 Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of the study was to explore the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students in a typical academic community of practice. In pursuance of this aim the following research objectives were considered:

- 1) To explore the reasons why French-speaking students negotiate higher education through the pre-degree programme in a typical academic community of practice.
- 2) To explore whether French-speaking students negotiate challenging experiences in terms of the intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula in the academic community of practice.
- 3) To explore whether hidden curriculum experiences impact on the planned, enacted and assessed curricula experiences of French-speaking students in the academic community of practice.
- 4) To explore how sociocultural factors impact on the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students in the academic community of practice.
- 5) To explore how academic communities of practice can position themselves to provide a favourable support and environment for French-speaking students.
- 6) To explore whether learning occurs when there is a hybridization of the three sociocultural factors (language, acculturation and identity) among French-speaking students in an academic community of practice.
- 7) To explore how power relations among other stakeholders challenge the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students in the academic community of practice.

1.5 Motivation for the study

The desire to conduct this study originated from the recently concluded study on the educational and sociocultural challenges of immigrant students in a South African public school (Adebanji, 2010). In that study the focus was on the DRC's immigrant students and a number of major findings emerged. To start with, cultural ecological theory (Ogbu & Simons, 1998) could not explain the diminished academic performance of DRC's immigrant students. DRC's immigrant students experienced acts of unfriendliness, loneliness, linguistic adjustment difficulty and intolerance. Experiences of racism were common at the school because teachers who taught them brought in indigenous languages to explain lessons in class to indigenous students at the expense of DRC's immigrant students. They were challenged by impolite modes of behaviour emanating from indigenous students to teachers at the school. The advantage that they had at the school in terms of having permission to education without being competent to pay tuition fees likely became their cause of diminished academic attainment. The school had a quick turnover of teachers because the school governing body could not pay for supplementary teachers. The students were involved in unusual dimensions of conduct coming from indigenous students in terms of betting and smoking at the school. They (DRC's immigrant students) experienced the exhibition of weapons by indigenous students. The integration of culture into their school work at school appeared to augment their commitment to learning. They could not begin acculturation and identity mediation in the conventional culture. It was not clear from the study if a number of these findings were hidden curriculum issues which constituted hindrances to the academic wellbeing of the DRC immigrant students. The study therefore opened a new window in terms of attempting to understand that the intended curriculum could be hampered by hidden curriculum issues in an academic institution.

Equipped with these findings, my curiosity was aroused to conduct a study on the post-secondary challenges of students from French-speaking (otherwise referred to as Francophone) countries. In an attempt to explore further their educational and sociocultural challenges within the private provider of higher education institution, literature was searched for, but their educational and sociocultural experiences were not documented in South Africa. Consequently, the quest to conduct this study to learn about their curriculum experiences in a private higher education institution emerged. This study attempted to enhance the understanding of factors affecting the enrolment and sustainability of students from French-

speaking countries. The study was embarked upon to shed light on the possibility of understanding the presence or absence of any forms of sociocultural hybridization (language, acculturation and identity). This line of action was pursued to explore whether insight into intricate curriculum issues affecting the community of French-speaking students with respect to academic and social learning could occur in a typical academic community of practice.

Rodriguez (2009:18) contends that facilitators of learning are infrequently equipped to comprehend the multifaceted experiences and associations brought about by their students to many places, societies as well as the available languages spoken. Although Rodriguez conducted a study on secondary school students, the study is useful because it provides the opportunity to explore whether lecturers in an ACOP are prepared to facilitate learning in the midst of different cultural predispositions. At the university level Gopal (2011) conducted an investigation on how to teach the faculty to facilitate learning cross-culturally. The work of Gopal presents a relevant platform to explore the preparedness of faculty members in the private provider of higher education to teach cross-culturally. Teaching cross-culturally was envisaged to fit into the purpose of operating in a community of practice. It was envisaged that we may be given information that may enhance the understanding of lecturers and the higher education institution community in a manner that could advance the understanding of many places, different cultures and languages of communication. This study was visualized to bring forth the introduction of remedial curriculum initiatives relating to higher education among international and indigenous students in South Africa – the latter known to be sensitive to xenophobia and discrimination. Furthermore the research study was conceptualized to inform curriculum development, enactment, alignment and assessment in the South African higher education system to provide understanding of the sociocultural diversity which confronts higher education. The next section provides a brief account of how the study was conducted.

1.6 Definition of working concepts

Academic performance: In this study I conceptualized academic performance as a measure of students' demonstration of competence against set criteria or outcomes in the curriculum (Chow, 2006; Dillon, 2009). It was taken as compliance with the intended and enacted curriculum as proposed by Kurz and other researchers in their study.

Acculturation: Acculturation is a broad term that is used to describe the extent of incorporation and adaptation of immigrant students in their society of sojourn (Berry et al., 2006). I have taken it to imply the extent of belonging to the academic institution and the French-speaking students' degree of acceptance of the academic and social cultures within the private Higher Education Institution (HEI). It is taken as a measure of life satisfaction (Chow, 2007), and how the French-speaking students of this study were able to negotiate their pre-conceived cultures with the cultural tenets of the private HEI and its immediate environment. The peak of acculturation in this study has been taken to connote assimilation to the academic community (Piedra & Engstrom, 2009).

Cultural compromise: The cohabitation of French-speaking students with other stakeholders in an academic community of practice is challenging. The reason is that as long as “any two people meet, how effectively they communicate is determined by their knowledge of a common language like English and perhaps by their nationality” (Israel, 2011:111). Consequently as the French-speaking students engage in learning the common language of communication, they are seen as being in the state of compromising their original cultural tenets to attain set goals. Cultural compromise in the light of this study involves the dynamics of the available cultural offering by the dominant group of people in the ACOP to the learners of the dominant culture. The French-speaking students, despite being stakeholders in the ACOP are subjected to learning the pre-established cultural principles on the ground as long as they are able to learn via participation and interaction with community members. Consequently they engage in the process of giving up some of their previously acquired cultural identity to learn novel cultural principles in the ACOP. This conceptualization is reinforced by the understanding that language is a link between two or more dissimilar cultures (Yeh et al., 2008). This framework evolves from the understanding that was acquired from the scholarly work of Cohen-Almagor (2006), who described a phenomenon which agrees with the situation of the stakeholders in an ACOP. Cohen-Almagor (2006) refers to a unique compromise which was described as “tactical compromise.” Tactical cultural compromise seems to describe the scenario at hand in an ACOP. It is a reflection of the non-static stance reached as a consequence of restraints brought about by the process of negotiation between dissimilar cultures in time. Consequently this study draws on Cohen-Almagor's (2006) stance that in academic communities of practice stakeholders never

relinquish their goals to reach a set identity. The consequence of this struggle culminates in stakeholders attaining the pedestal of cultural compromise in an ongoing basis.

Curriculum: This was taken to imply a description of a specified programme of study, aimed at navigating the educational path of students in the private academic institution in which this research study was conducted (Davis, 1994). Consequently I refer to the arena for knowledge creation and exhibition as the curriculum, depicting both issues at the private academic institution and the approach of learning facilitation (Blunt, 2005:1021). I also adopt Wenger's (1998) conceptualization that the curriculum is the mode of operation which is aimed-at for learning to take place in a community of practice.

Educational experience: I adopt the concept of educational experience according to Chow (2006) in a study of immigrant students in a Canadian higher education institution as an exploration of academic performance and schooling experience. It is conceptualized in this study as the intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curriculum issues.

Hidden curriculum: In an academic institution the programme of study (curriculum) is outlined. Lecturers follow it to the letter as a guide, to stimulate student learning. A hidden curriculum in this study comprises issues that are seldom taken into consideration when designing the intended curriculum, and when enacting it (Langhout & Mitchell, 2008).

Identity negotiation: For the purpose of this study identity negotiation is taken to imply a mobile construct that spotlights the quest of an individual to become a particular person instead of being in a static stance. It (identity) is also a dilemma of being incessantly shaped in harmony with the way an individual is situated in terms of previous experiences (Vandeyar, 2008:115). It is taken to symbolize a phenomenon that is always influenced by ethnicity and control (2008:115). Identity mediation is furthermore regarded as a demonstration of cultural amalgamation, flexibility, and an array of diverse trajectories of experience (2008:116). I also adopt the description of Mana and others (2009:450) that the negotiation of identities is a struggle, sandwiched between a conventional mainstream culture and a faction of novices from a dissimilar culture. The mediation of identities among the non-South African French-speaking students of this study is conceptualized as a hidden curriculum issue.

Intercultural competence: According to Deardorff (2009), intercultural competence is described as an individual's capacity to interrelate effectually and suitably in cross-cultural settings centred in the person's intercultural behaviours, understanding and expertise. The intercultural competence of stakeholders in this study would imply their capacity to effectively interact with one another despite coming from different cultural backgrounds. It is envisaged as capable of leading stakeholders to the domain through practice. French-speaking students' intercultural competence is envisioned to enable them to interact with the presented, enacted and assessed curricula. It is also thought that it is capable of enabling them develop academic acculturation and academic identity through their power of negotiation in the ACOP.

Language proficiency: Language proficiency is taken in this study as a measure of the degree of integration of the host society's language with the home front language of non-South African French-speaking students. In the case of this study exploration of language proficiency falls under two categories. The first involves a demonstration of proficiency in the language of instruction (conceptualized as part of the intended, enacted and assessed curriculum). The second is a demonstration of proficiency in terms of learning the local languages spoken and used for conversation in the mainstream society and within the campus environment (conceptualized as part of the hidden curriculum), drawing on Chow (2006) and Kurz et al. (2010).

Marginalized community of practice: I employ the scholarship of Lave and Wenger (1991:115-117) to initiate discussion on marginalized community of practice. This is because of the incursion of power relations among the stakeholders in the COP. This study refers to a marginalized community of practice as a demonstration of the power dynamics operating and dictating the extent of belonging and participation of stakeholders in an ACOP. In a marginalized COP, astuteness in a commonly defined identity, dictates the pace and the extent of acceptance among members. The deprivation of members of the ACOP from belonging and participating in the core of activities is an indication of the marginalization of its members. This study draws on the scholarly input of Atencio and Koca (2011), in a study of gendered communities of practice. In that study students who could participate in sports were recognized as role models, and were regarded as custodians of the potential of masculinity. Other members who could not display traits of masculinity were relegated and

treated differently. This is an indication of the power dynamics in a typical marginalized COP. Such marginalized members are restrained from enjoying the benefits of the “shared repertoire of communal resources” (Merriam et al., 2003:172). Consequently the refusal of the French-speaking students by stakeholders to centripetally engage with the activities in the ACOP is taken as an act of marginalization.

Non-conventional and non-traditional students: Non-conventional and non-traditional students mean the same thing. These are international students who come to South Africa to study in the midst of different cultural stipulations. Consequently French-speaking students are referred to as non-conventional and non-traditional students, drawing on Leibowitz (2009). Wherever these terms are used, they refer to students from foreign countries who would return to their usual countries of sojourn after completing their studies. A distinction is made between them (non-conventional and non-traditional) and immigrants. Immigrants relocate to start a new life in their preferred country of sojourn (Ogbu & Simons, 1998).

Rehearsal: Rehearsal is a terminology adopted in this study to indicate the non-static negotiation of stakeholders to belong to the ACOP. This terminology has been adopted from Wenger’s (1998) argument relating to the constant attempt of novice stakeholders, studying experts as they declare their identity in the community. Consequently as novice members move centripetally into the core of activities, their incessant attempts as they study experts in the community are taken as rehearsals.

Schooling experience and introversion: Schooling experience is conceptualized in this research study to involve all the experiences negotiated by non-South African French-speaking students within the private HEI (Chow, 2006). It involves every experience negotiated by the non-South African French-speaking students in the midst of their peers and other salient forces in operation within the campus setting or community. These kinds of experiences are conceptualized as hidden curriculum experiences in this research. According to the Concise Oxford English Dictionary (Eleventh Edition), introversion is a characteristic exhibited by a person predominantly concerned with his/her own thoughts and feelings rather than with external things. Introversion is used in the context of this study to depict a state of reticence where issues of shyness and/or inability to proficiently express oneself became

issues in the ACOP. Introversion could become the schooling experience of students especially when confronted by challenging experiences such as language incompetence.

Sociocultural experiences: These are conceptualized as experiences negotiated by non-South African French-speaking students in the academic institution and mainstream society. Sociocultural experiences are categorized into language proficiency, acculturation and identity negotiation (Chow, 2006). Sociocultural experiences have been regarded as hidden curriculum experiences in this study, with the exception of the language of learning and teaching (LoLT), which has been categorized as part of the intended, enacted and assessed curriculum (Kurz et al., 2010). Language, acculturation and mediation of identities have been conceptualized as inter-related in concept (Adebanji, 2010).

Social vigour of learning: Social vigour of learning, as it applies to this study, is an exhibition of skills by the members of an ACOP. It assists the members of the ACOP to express their readiness to interact and participate in the stipulations of the community. Novices learn faster when the social vigour of learning is shared and demonstrated by the members of the community. Drawing on Wenger (1998) the social vigour of learning among community members fuels the capacity of members to interact and integrate into the core of activities which they share. It therefore implies that when experts in the academic community of practice are in possession of the relevant dimension of social vigour, novices would learn the curriculum of the community faster.

Stakeholders: Experts and novices in an ACOP are conceptualized as stakeholders. In this study they comprise the French-speaking students, South African students, lecturers, student advisors, Deans of Faculties, academic managers, international students from other African countries and staff members in the counselling department to mention but a few. Each of the stakeholders is equipped to function and participate in the core of activities in the community. French-speaking students are unique when they newly enter the community as legitimate peripheral participants by virtue of their admission to study at the academic institution, drawing on Lave and Wenger (1991). They constitute a cohort of students who are required to legitimately and peripherally participate in the curriculum of the ACOP.

Suicide: Suicide is a borrowed concept from Durkheim's (1961) theory of suicide. It is used in this research to imply the termination of effort to participate in the ACOP. Tinto (1975) refers to the withdrawal of students (a similitude of suicide) from academic relevance as dropout. These two terms have similar connotations in this study because they are tied to inability of stakeholders to participate in the curriculum of the community. Consequently when novice participants disengage from the core of activities in the ACOP, suicide is implied to have taken place.

1.7 Programme of the study

Chapter One: Introduction to the study

This chapter has provided the orientation to the study in terms of introduction, background and context, problem statement and the research questions, aims and objectives, motivation for the study, and the research design. It has also defined the working concepts and programme of the study.

Chapter Two: Theoretical framework

This chapter presents the theory of Wenger (1998) which explains the fundamentals that describe social participation as a procedure of learning in a community of practice (COP). It highlights the interrelated theory of Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP) proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991) who describe the initiation of learning in a community of practice (COP) as legitimate peripheral participation (LPP). It has also discussed the intricacies of power relations in an ACOP. Tinto (1975, 1993) acts as an adjunct in terms of the interaction that is needed to foster learning within a community in order to avoid withdrawal or dropout from the academic institution. Durkheim's (1961) theory of suicide is discussed in an attempt to predict the behaviour of the non-South African French-speaking students to the presented and hidden curricula by the provider of higher education. The concept of hybridization of socio-cultural factors is proposed to test whether learning occurs when there is a hybridization of the three sociocultural factors (language, acculturation and mediation of identities in the academic environment). A rigorous discussion on how learning takes place in a COP such as the campus environment forms a major debate in this chapter. The campus environment is conceptualized as an Academic Community of Practice (ACOP), where there are novices and experts in terms of the COP curriculum.

Chapter Three: Literature review

This chapter offers related studies of the curricula, educational and sociocultural experiences of immigrant students in higher education. Challenges and orientation of events on national and international basis are discussed. The planned/intended, enacted and assessed curriculum issues are discussed. The chapter also tracks certain unidentified experiences that are categorized under the hidden curriculum experiences. The chapter is concluded by presenting the findings of the consulted scholarship.

Chapter Four: Research methodology

The research methodological model is discussed in detail in this chapter. It encompasses the qualitative research approach, narrative research strategy, case study, population and sampling, data-gathering instruments and procedures, and data analysis. The epistemological models used by the researcher in this study are enumerated.

Chapter Five: Data presentation phase 1

This chapter presents the first phase of findings in the study with respect to the surfacing of themes and subthemes in the data. It outlines the emerging themes from the 28 French-speaking students, the Dean of the IT Faculty, manager of the pre-degree programme, 5 French-speaking student advisors, 5 lecturers and 6 South African students whose interviews were transcribed. The chapter concludes with a tentative summary that attempted to give an overview of the entire process negotiated in the chapter.

Chapter Six: Data presentation phase 2

Chapter Six presents the emerging themes from interview transcripts of the private provider of higher education representatives. The representatives were lecturers who taught the French-speaking students, the Dean of IT Faculty, student advisors and head of the pre-degree programme. Their perspectives were used as a triangulation appraisal for the study. The chapter concludes with a summative account of findings obtained from the two perspectives of collected and analyzed data.

Chapter Seven: Discussion and analysis of findings

Findings of the study in relation to findings from other studies are discussed in this chapter. The chapter attempts to present the interconnectedness and disparity between other research

and this study. The chapter concludes with a précis that attempts to single out cogent and novel findings from the study.

Chapter Eight: Major findings and contribution to knowledge

This chapter singles out the major findings of the study. The contribution to the body of literature, conclusions and recommendations for practice and further studies are elicited.

CHAPTER TWO

MECHANISM FOR KNOWLEDGE CONSTRUCTION AND INTERPRETATION

2.1 Theoretical framework

The first chapter presented the orientation with regard to the research problem and how it would be addressed. In Chapter Two of this study I reviewed the literature to shed more light on the meaning of communities of practice and legitimate peripheral participation and how they are linked to the topic under exploration. This approach provides a framework that would increase our knowledge base on the concept of communities of practice (COP) and legitimate peripheral participation (LPP), and their implications for the curriculum experiences of non-South African French-speaking students. The theoretical framework considered suitable for understanding the phenomena in this study seems to be bounded by the theories of learning. These are Wenger's (1998) theory of Communities of Practice (COP) as well as Lave's and Wenger's (1991) theory of Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP). These frameworks would therefore have an undertone of learning because communities of practice emphasize concepts of learning, meaning making and the construction of identities. This choice was made because learning is the core of activities in an academic institution, as suggested by Wenger (1998) and Lave and Wenger (1991).

These two theories are interconnected because LPP speaks to affirm the essence of COP. The LPP concept is seen in this study as a link that facilitates participation among stakeholders in the community at the periphery of the community. It navigates the path of newcomers in a centripetal direction, into the core of activities therein. The point of convergence between the LPP and COP theories is located in the capacity of legitimate peripheral participants to access the COP as new entrants until their participation is complete. LPP provides the energy to facilitate centripetal participation of members as they navigate from the novice status to become experts in the community. The LPP model also assists in understanding the power relations in an academic environment concerning the roles of experts and novices, and helps to equilibrate the power relations in the course of time and accrued understanding of the roles

of actors in the COP. Durkheim's (1961) theory of suicide is used to provide a foundational understanding of the behaviour of students in an environment where integration and non-integration are the two forces operating within a typical community as the campus environment. Tinto (1975, 1993) presents an understanding of the impact of participation/non-participation in a COP like the academic institution. An attempt will be made to relate these theory perspectives to the issues raised concerning the experiences of non-South African French-speaking students of the curriculum in Chapter Three. The chapter concludes by contemplating the conceptualized framework which has been proposed in the research study to further explain how learning takes place in a socioculturally diverse academic community.

2.2 The defining features of Communities of Practice (COP)

The concept of COP was originally employed by Lave and Wenger (1991) in their exploration of apprenticeship as a representation of situated scholarship (Young & Kotze, 2009). Communities of Practice comprise groups of individuals who share a concern or a craving for what they do and who work together frequently to gain expertise (Wenger, 1998). Wenger (1998) insists that communities of practice are individuals familiarly connected together by common knowledge and a desire for mutual enterprise. The COP framework has been chosen in this study based on Wenger's (1998:3) perception of learning as social membership, which does not only fashion what we run-through, but also our identity and the interpretation we ascribe to what we engage in. The private provider of higher education, which provides the research site, is viewed under the COP lens because it matches the description of communities of practice.

A COP symbolises an active curriculum to the apprentice, in the midst of experts who are accustomed to the tenets of the community (Wenger, 1998:4). The private provider of higher education thus provides a community where the newcomer is an apprentice (beginner). They (novice and experts) engage in active learning, via interactive communication with legitimate members of the academic institution. These apprentices come to the community for the purpose of learning the principles of the curriculum. Although the COP tenets were originally applied and investigated by Etienne Wenger as he explored artisans in their informal settings, there are similarities in the learning trajectories of artisans and the stakeholders in an ACOP.

I adopt the ascription of Otten (2009) that a tertiary education institution may be conceptualized as an ACOP.

A major difference that I have observed is the research contexts. Secondly, the learning curriculum of artisans is informal whereas the curricula in an academic institution are conceptualized as both formal and informal. In this study care has been taken to distinguish between the context under which Lave and Wenger conducted their research, and the context for my research study. Furthermore consideration has been given to how the COP tenets would fit into this study by distinguishing between formal curriculum (intended, enacted and assessed curricula) and the informal curriculum (hidden curriculum). Drawing on Wenger's (1998) claim, the artisan learns the skills related to the specified curriculum of the trade. On the other hand stakeholders in an academic institution grapple with academic and non-academic issues. The following brief subsections provide the reader with the motivation to link the relevance of the COP model to an academic institution. They provide justification for recognising a typical academic institution as an academic community of practice. Furthermore I reflectively draw on the notion that in the academic community of practice, there are subdivisions of other communities of practice that work towards the same goal of learning (Wenger, 1998:108). In this study I refer to these subdivisions as subsets of a bigger COP which in this case is the ACOP.

2.2.1 Domain

The word "domain" in the familiar sense implies "sphere or realm". I take time to explain the sense in which it is applied in the communities of practice. The domain as it applies to the principles of communities of practice is the destination or goal. It would imply a status or an identity which is propelled by decisions and actions taken by participants in the COP. In this study the domain of French-speaking students is the degree in their view, and it is hypothesised that they would seize every opportunity to attain it. Consequently in the light of the sociocultural framework proposed by Chow (2006) it is expected that they would develop the skill to learn the language of communication relevant to attain degrees. It is also anticipated that they would develop what I refer to as academic acculturation and academic identities. As far as Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002:31) are concerned, the domain of a community is its purpose of existence. Wenger et al. (2002:31) steers this research in the direction of exploring the purpose of the academic community of practice. It thus seems to

imply that the academic community of practice is saddled with the responsibility of assisting the novice participants to become proficient in the curriculum of the academic community of practice until they reach the desired domain. The domain clearly defines the identity of the specific community, its role in the world, and the significance of its achievements to its participants and to other people. The non-South African French-speaking students are, all the way through their quest as they navigate higher education, and yonder, perceived to be capable of developing the skills which would allow them to become university graduates (the domain). Consequently all the learning activities that they would participate in would be initiated by their motivation to earn university degrees. Three sociocultural factors are conceptualized from the scholarly work of Chow (2006) to directly or indirectly impact on the briskness with which participants in a COP reach their domain. Chow's work provides leverage for this study because he conducted his study on the sociocultural and educational adaptation of Vietnamese-Canadian university students in Regina who also had to learn English. These sociocultural factors are subsequently incorporated in the discourse on communities of practice to enhance the understanding of intricate dynamics in the ACOP. The available evidence relating to the debates on issues cutting across the curriculum also serve as reference points in this chapter.

Foreign language speakers are confronted by the requirement to learn English in an environment that has adopted English as the language of interaction (Chow, 2006). Their degree of interaction with other stakeholders who are proficient in English is viewed as part of their quest to reach the domain. Their interaction with more knowledgeable others (Reyes, 2007), therefore becomes a hidden curriculum experience, capable of assisting them to reach the domain. In the same vein, their interaction with the presented, enacted and assessed curricula becomes a tool that facilitates the rate at which they would reach the domain. This is because the intended, enacted and assessed curricula are perceived in this study as communities of practice, and subsets of the academic community of practice. All of these subsets are conceptualized to work towards the same goal of assisting the French-speaking students to reach the domain. The same conceptualization seems to apply to their development of academic identity and academic acculturation. This study proposes a hypothesis that the French-speaking students would require to attain a set identity which would connect them to the scholastic and non-scholastic curricula in the academic community of practice. Consequently it would imply that the set identity becomes the

motivation to attend lectures, seek consultation with tutors and mentors, in an attempt to reach their domain. By virtue of the intricate link between acculturation and identity (Yeh et al., 2008) they are conjectured to initiate the process of growing beyond their usual ways of doing things in their countries of origin to encapsulate novel ways of doing things and acclimatizing to their new environment (Yeh et al., 2008:784). I incorporate the findings from Yeh et al. (2008) into this work because they explored cultural interactions, acculturation, family obligations, language use and social support. I find these issues useful because they are salient points to consider in communities of practice. The difference between the work of Yeh et al. (2008) and this work is that the former was targeted at exploring Chinese immigrant high school students' cultural interactions, acculturation, family obligations, language use, and social support. Although the French-speaking students in this study are not immigrants in high school, I find the issues addressed by Yeh et al. (2008) versatile for this work. It is understandable that the French-speaking students came to study at the research site, after which they would return. Cultural and power relations also seem to influence their decisions as they navigate the course of getting to their domain. These frameworks therefore point to the notion that learning is not limited to the intellectual capacity of learners in an academic environment but involves devising ways of knowing and integrating to the curriculum of the terrain of influence (Dall'Alba & Bamacle, 2007). Consequently I argue that learning to reach the domain entails navigating trails of experiences to attain a set identity.

2.2.2 Community

As participants in the community of practice trail their domain, they engage in building a community via engagement in shared undertakings and discussions. Examples include attending lectures together, consultation with tutors and lecturers and the requirement to get involved in self-regulated learning. In this study the latter activities given as examples of shared undertakings, are formal engagements. On the other hand the requirement of French-speaking students in terms of their obligation to interact with other stakeholders in the academic community is grouped as informal interaction. I refer the attention of the reader to the fact that both formal and informal engagements are directly or indirectly linked to issues cutting across the curriculum. I link formal engagements to the planned, enactment and assessed curricula in the COP. Informal engagements such as interaction with indigenous students are classified as hidden curriculum experiences for lucidity. According to Tinto

(1975) the knack of students in an academic institution to get out of their comfort zone is invaluable. When a student takes the initiative to interact with more knowledgeable others (Reyes, 2007), learning would ensue (Tinto, 1975). These findings place this study in perspective to explore the significance of French-speaking students' concerted effort stepping out of their usual comfort zone as they reach out to more knowledgeable others in the COP. Similarly the knack of French-speaking students in terms of how effectively they consult with their lecturers becomes another dimension of categorization. This study is compelled to explore the briskness with which the French-speaking students utilise the available scholastic resources in the academic institution to reach the domain. An opportunity is also created to explore the attitudes of the French-speaking students in terms of their readiness to learn new concepts, attend lectures promptly and use the services of institutionalized sections of the academic community of practice to their advantage. In the light of these latter arguments, I predict a link between the presented, enacted and assessed curricula and the negotiation of the French-speaking students in reaching the domain. Similarly, it is conjectured that hidden curriculum experiences which they would negotiate could become invaluable in their journey to the domain. In summary the diverse relationships in communities of practice stimulate members to pursue their interest in an attempt to reach the domain. Therefore members construct relationships that allow them to learn from one another. Consequently the intended, enacted and assessed curricula among the French-speaking students as well as the hidden curriculum experiences are presented as predicaments in this research study.

2.2.3 Practice and brokering (negotiation)

The third defining characteristic of learning within the tenets of communities of practice borders on the practice itself. It is a collective inventory of capitals: involvements, apparatuses, and methods of confronting cyclical challenges (Wenger, 1998). Consequently communities of practice are not just communities of interest. Each member is regarded as a practitioner (Wenger, 1998). In this study these vital components of the COP might be regarded as offering frameworks for the more multifaceted academic and non-academic learning required among the French-speaking students. In more practical terms, this study views academic learning as part of the intended, enacted and assessed curricula, drawing on the seminal work of Kurz, Elliot, Wehby and Smithson (2010). The scholastic implication of this framework is that academic learning is closely linked to the presented, enacted and assessed curricula. On the other hand non-academic learning is viewed as part of the hidden

curriculum experiences negotiated by participants of the community. In academic communities of practice, it is conceptualized that academic and non-academic activities are intertwined. They are both seen as being pivotal and instrumental to the learning that ensues among stakeholders in the academic community of practice.

In the communities of practice framework, members are seen as capable of “crossing boundaries” to other groups of intertwined communities of practice with elapsed time and given space (Wenger, 1998:126-133). The idea of members shifting positions otherwise referred to by Wenger as “crossing boundaries” is conceptualized in this study to imply the movement of French-speaking students from one facility/faculty to another in pursuance of a particular concern or need. It is thus envisioned that participation, as responsible members of the COP is incumbent on the stakeholders. This framework predisposes this study to exploring the effects that may ensue from the French-speaking students’ encounters with lecturers, tutors, mentors, student advisors, South African students and students from other African countries, to mention but a few. This research study therefore perceives the academic community of practice under exploration as being a bigger community of practice, with subsets of other little communities of practice. In clearer terms the smaller communities of practice are seen in this study as being subsets of a larger institutional facility available to French-speaking students via interaction and negotiation to reach the domain. Consequently, practice becomes the vehicle through which the domain would be accomplished. This line of thought puts this study in the vanguard of making a tentative guess that the French-speaking students receive adequate support, capable of assisting them to reach the domain as they take on the identity of practitioners. I envision the scholastic contributions of lecturers, tutors, mentors, assessments, learning of the language of learning and teaching, to mention but a few, as subsets of a bigger academic community of practice. The frequent use of the facilities in the smaller subsets or communities of practice is conceptualized to carry participants through to the domain. This study recognises the aforementioned practices as negotiation to achieve the desired domain. Therefore the practices are classified as part of the intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curriculum experiences.

I recognise that practice is not limited to the presented, enacted and assessed curricula alone. There are other non-academic endeavours that participants in the academic community of practice engage in. For example it has been spelt out that interaction is a vital tool that

facilitates learning (Tinto, 1975). The requirement of the French-speaking students to learn the language of learning and teaching for example is conceptualized to depend on their capacity to leave their comfort zones (a measure of interaction) in order to interact with more knowledgeable others. French-speaking students are thus conjectured to prefer hanging out with peers from similar French-speaking countries. If they would improve their learning of English, this study, based on the understanding obtained from the COP principles, conceptualizes that they would have to leave their comfort zones (a measure of COP) to other communities of practice. It becomes easier to view them as being under compulsion to attend lectures together with stakeholders because of the domain in view. This study hypothesizes that it is challenging for them to leave their usual enclaves (a type of COP) to interact with other English-speaking students. Consequently it is conceptualized in this study that learning may not occur until the French-speaking students reach out from their subsets of communities of practice to other communities of practice within a bigger academic community of practice.

I use this same principle to extrapolate other salient requirements of the French-speaking students. This study perceives that the French-speaking students are required to acculturate to the academic community of practice. Acculturation is taken as a practice, a conscious effort to negotiate a usual culture with a novel one (Yeh et al., 2008). It is speculated that acculturation tendencies in an academic community of practice reside within communities of practice. Consequently it is envisioned that conscious efforts are required by the French-speaking students to acculturate to the academic institution. Utilizing the terminology of Wenger (1998:108) the movement of French-speaking students from one subset of COP to another consolidates practice and it is referred to as “brokering” or negotiation to reach the domain. Similarly to attain a set identity, “brokering” is essential and it is conceptualized to follow the same identified route of vacillating between communities of practice in a bigger academic community of practice. In order for the French-speaking students to attain academic identity, they are assumed to require moving between subsets of communities of practice. Academic identity in this context involves the development of the necessary academic self-esteem sufficient for students to take responsibility for their learning (Vandeyar, 2010). As they take responsibility to attend lectures, tutorials, seek consultation with lecturers, they are perceived as engaging in what Wenger (1998:108) refers to as “brokering” to attain a domain. These interspersed movements are indicative of participants moving from one subset of COP to the other.

2.3 Debates on the COP principles and their implications on the current study

A basic concept in the COP framework entails knowing that a newcomer does not only learn as an appropriately positioned member. The newcomer is rather regarded as a dynamic learner within the community or domain by noticing and showing people who have been in the domain what has been learnt (Li et al., 2009). In the light of this study it would imply that as the French-speaking students attend lectures for example, listening to lecturers attentively becomes a learning process. As lecturers give examples on principles and concepts, students would be attuned to noticing concepts they are required to understand. Assessment of what they have learnt in the course of attending lectures becomes the evidence that they have learnt concepts in the curriculum. The fact that they attend lectures is thus revealed by assessment strategies put in place by the academic institution. Consequently they would be taken to have demonstrated compliance with the intended, enacted and assessed curricula if they succeed academically. Students who are linguistically challenged would not be capable of following the course for example, because they have been excluded in the ongoing discourse in the academic community of practice. In the line of argument proposed by Li et al. (2009), although such excluded students are participants of the academic community of practice, they would be seen as being inactive in the community. Their inactivity could ensue from the fact that they are not in possession of the currency of communication, which is the language. Consequently it becomes debatable whether they are learning or not. It occurs to me that in a community of practice, becoming members alone may not suffice but acquiring the wherewithal to function and participate is of better value. I therefore argue that in applying the COP tenets to this study, care should be taken to assess the relevance of participants in the community.

Furthermore an inquiry arises as to whether participants are in possession of the correct tools to operate in the community. I take a more critical stance to explore the work of Li et al. (2009) further by theorizing that noticing and listening to experts in the academic community of practice alone may not suffice. An investigation into the acquisition of the correct tools to function is more relevant. This research study therefore deviates from the scope of Li et al. (2009) by considering the linguistic stance of the French-speaking students, and how they have been capable of adjusting to the academic climate of the campus. Since the adjustment process of foreign students is capable of leading them to taking a stance on identity

(Vandeyar, 2008), my inquiry is steered in the direction of exploring academic identity as well.

It is Bandura's point of view that watching other people who are conversant with modes of operation in a community supersedes the gimmick of learning via trial and error (Bandura, 1977). I react to Bandura's argument in the same vein as I have done earlier by reiterating that watching other participants in the community may be superficial. Rather, it would be more valuable to consider other essential factors such as the acquisition of the correct tools needed by the participants who are engaged in watching other members in the community. Bandura's views are not rubbished, however since Bandura's study was conducted in 1977, it becomes glaringly obvious that circumstances may have changed and that the dynamics involved in the learning process of participants in an academic community of practice have become more complex. What is the significance of an onlooker in a community of practice without the correct tools to participate in the activities of the community? An onlooker's presence in the ACOP becomes inconsequential if for example, he/she does not speak the language of communication, has not gone through the adjustment process, and does not possess the knack of identifying with reasons for becoming a member of the ACOP. Issues of what I conceptualize as linguistic power relations could be important when the situation of an onlooker is considered, for effective engagement to evolve in the ACOP. The following sections highlight cogent considerations in the COP framework.

2.3.1 Communities of practice as learning in a communal context

The COP theory perceives learning as a communal event and moves away from the more conventional mental forms of learning (Lave, 1993). Barab, Barnett and Squire (2002:495) describe a COP as a group of people that are co-dependent, and who engage in communally defined ventures, viewpoint, and understandings over an extended time frame in the pursuance of a joint activity or commitment. This definition suggests that participation is a motivational factor that guarantees learning in the community – a positioned kind of learning. A tertiary education institution environment fits into this description as an Academic Community of Practice (ACOP), with students operating as collectively interreliant individuals and sharing jointly distinct practices (Barab et al., 2002:495). In this study the tertiary education institution community is thus conceptualized as an ACOP. Examples may involve students having to attend lectures together, doing group assignments, and doing oral

presentations for others to learn. These activities may span a specified period of time until they exit the higher education institution.

In the case of this study it would imply that the French-speaking students, other immigrants in the tertiary institutions and South African students constitute groups of people who engage in undertaking a common enterprise. They may also be involved in sharing a set of problems or enthusiasm about subject matter at the academic institution of learning. They are also conceptualized as people who intensify their understanding and know-how with respect to the presented curriculum at the academic institution. The community members do this by interacting in an ongoing process with lecturers, other students and faculty administration. This description fits into the operations of an academic community where lecturers facilitate learning by presenting the designed curriculum in the midst of ethnically diverse students with similar goals of obtaining a university degree. Wenger et al. (2002:4) contribute to this discourse by looking at a learning community in relation to sharing an enterprise such as the need for students in the tertiary institution to learn concepts together in pursuit of a degree or certificate (the domain). The students may understudy specified phenomena together in groups. They may also jointly negotiate the process of interaction to attain set out goals of the curriculum by the academic institution. An important point of exploration in this study is premised on the extent to which the community is fuelled by the energy to cooperate in the community to the extent that the participation of the members would be worthwhile. This framework therefore places the responsibility on me to explore the degree of commitment of participants in the community to the point that issues of the curriculum among community members are addressed. According to Asanova (2005) the commitment to learn in an academic environment would depend on the sense of belonging of members. Although Asanova (2005) explored a private secondary school setting in Toronto, this idea becomes useful in this study. Comradeship was a key ingredient that fostered the sense of belonging in the study conducted by Asanova (2005). Although the contexts are different, Asanova's work places the responsibility on me in this study to explore the degree of comradeship among community members in the ACOP.

2.3.2 Communities of practice as learning by engagement

Merriam, Courtenay and Baumgartner (2003:172) who focused on learning in a marginalized COP argue that communities of practice are characterized by mutual engagement with the

participants around the joint venture. Their engagement may also encompass a shared repertoire of capital (e.g. language and curriculum). The non-South African French-speaking students in this study are perceived to engage directly or indirectly with the specified and unspecified curricula at the academic institution. The unspecified curricula are the hidden curriculum issues which present themselves as part of the factors they confront while engaging with one another and with the intended curriculum. These hidden curricula may consist of schedules, expressions, belongings, and ways of doing things. Furthermore the hidden curricula may include chronological accounts, gestures, undisclosed language, diversity, course of action or representation. All these principles may have been taken as rules and regulations in the ACOP. These hidden curricula may also have constituted part of the community's *modus operandi*.

Schedule of events at the academic institution level may involve the need for non-South African French-speaking students to attend lectures together with other students, presentation of group work with peers, laboratory experimentation in groups, etc. In other words the community is defined by its activities in which explicit and implicit information is negotiated between participants. Therefore meaning is fabricated through what the community (i.e., the students, lecturers, heads of faculties, student advisors, etc.) actually engages in, drawing on the work of Merriam et al.(2003:172). This kind of learning by engagement constitutes a practice or daily activity, being a learning process in itself. It may thus be conceptualized that in an ACOP, every activity that is carried out is aimed at fostering the process of understanding the events and routines that are present therein. These activities may go on until the desired learning takes place via the path of engagement with the community's stakeholders (Merriam et al., 2003:172). Since the central focus of this study is the French-speaking students, Merriam et al. (2003:172) constitutes a framework of inquiry that would assist in establishing the level of engagement among participants in the ACOP. Consequently the level of engagement of French-speaking students in the ACOP will be problematized for investigation.

2.3.3 Communities of practice as learning via the route of observation and interaction

Li et al. (2009:3) are of the opinion that a typical COP offers a secure milieu for stakeholders to engage in learning through observation and interaction with those who have mastered the tenets of the COP (experts). These researchers also believe that learning may be offered to

members through discussion with colleagues. In the context of this study the academic environment is envisioned as a secure community for the non-South African French-speaking students and other students to learn via observation as their lecturers facilitate learning within the lecture halls and in the laboratory during experimentation. As the non-South African French-speaking students enter the campus community afresh, they are seen as novices or apprentices.

The campus community thus becomes a foundation for transacting knowledge between the non-South African French-speaking students, lecturers and other students, to mention but a few. The non-South African French-speaking students are conceptualized as learning from their lecturers and peers by observing and reproducing what they have learned in the ACOP, by inference from Li et al.(2009:3). The lecturers at the academic institution are taken to be experts in the community since they are the custodians and facilitators of knowledge construction. Similarly South African students as well as students from other African countries are taken as experts in their own fields, especially in terms of their cultures and the culture of the academic institution. The learning they (novices) have had, may depend on the length of time they spent at the academic institution as they observe experts in the ACOP. Therefore learning in the context of this study is not envisioned in terms of academic learning alone, but also in terms of the culture of the academic environment via interaction with well-informed community members. This outlook places responsibility on me to explore the serenity of the ACOP and its ambience to beginners whose track of learning hinges on observing and interacting with more knowledgeable others in an attempt to reach the relevant domain. Other non-academic learning envisaged at the ACOP includes life satisfaction, acculturation, sense of belonging to the ACOP, and taking their stance on identity. At this juncture it also becomes vital to look at the learning of the available indigenous languages spoken on the campus as non-academic learning.

Observation seems to be stimulated by the drive to become an expert in the community, whereas representation appears to be motivated by the propensity to replicate what is practised in the community in an attempt to attain a set identity. The scholarly work of Li et al. (2009) reiterates the importance of participants in the community, observing and interacting with those who have the expertise in the community. This is an important

perspective of learning by identifying with practices and rules, operating within the realm of the community until complete involvement is attained by novices.

In the context of this study non-South African French-speaking students, lecturers, South African students, French-speaking student advisors, heads of faculties and students from other countries are groups of people who come together with the aim of sharing expertise. They therefore learn and practise what they have learned in that domain. It is important to note that the groups formed in the ACOP cannot be controlled, drawing on the work of Merriam et al. (2003:171). To a certain extent what may be seen is an involvement that is circumscribed by the social vigour of their learning, according to Wenger (1998:96). Wenger (1998:96) reiterates that unlike more official types of executive structures, it is not so understandable where their learning starts and concludes. They do not have induction and release dates with respect to learning what is presented to them in the COP. However since the scope of my study spans from exploring French-speaking students from the pre-degree to the third-year programme, my inquiry would be specified within the possible terrain of inquiry detailed in the study. It becomes pertinent to propose an argument that in this study the induction dates of the French-speaking students are at the time they are admitted to the institution. Their release dates would, in the same vein be interpreted as the time they complete their studies. This argument does not propose to discard Wenger's proposition, it only defines the spectrum of inquiry as far as this study is concerned. I bear the context in which Wenger proposes his argument in mind because he explored a different category of individuals whose learning was in the continuum because they continued to learn in their chosen profession. I do not accept Wenger's argument that new entrants to the COP do not have induction and release dates. It is conceptualized that French-speaking students, in the context of this study have induction and release dates because their tenure of scholarship spans over a period of four years. In applying the description of Merriam et al. (2003) to the context of this study, it may be conceptualized that the non-South African French-speaking students are the new entrants to the academic community. They enter the HEI, and engage or disengage with the activities within the community. They eventually leave while the community continues to function as dictated by the prevailing forces in operation within the community. Therefore the ACOP is taken to comprise non-South African French-speaking students, South African students, students from other countries, lecturers, heads of faculties,

student advisors, etc. who have stipulated positions to occupy in the community for the common good of all participants.

As long as the educational institution continues to function, new entrants come in, and go out of the community with the evolution of appropriate learning. The evolved learning from the ACOP eventually becomes a symbol of identity, following on from the argument of Lave and Wenger (1991) as well as Wenger (1998). The key forces determining association or dissociation within the COP seem to be the level of interaction or non-interaction bordered by the associative or dissociative command of learning as suggested by the work of Tinto (1975). I observe that a measure of learning also emerges from disentangling from mastering the tenets in a COP. This is so because members in the community may choose to describe their identities by the things they refuse to engage in as suggested by Wenger (1998). Disentangling from the activities in the ACOP, as they affect this study, is not envisaged in the direction of the planned, enacted and assessed curricula. Rather it is envisaged in terms of the hidden curricula. For example the choice of French-speaking students in terms of not describing their identity with respect to the mainstream society seems to be in line with Wenger's argument. If they choose not to construct their identity around the South African perspective, they would be described as such, and recognized as taking their stance on identity. On the other hand when they disentangle from the planned, enacted and assessed curricula, it would imply that they are creating an identity around failure (dropout). Failure then becomes a constraint to reaching the domain.

2.3.4 Communities of practice as learning to work for a common good

Wenger (1998:74) suggests that the kind of association which brings about joint commitment in a COP involves doing work. Therefore the work involved in the preservation of a community is an inherent characteristic of the modus operandi of that practice. It is pictured that as the non-South African French-speaking students enter the COP, they will be sustained by working with other members for a common good. However, according to Wenger (1998), if they work against the concepts in the community they will be described as such. As I reiterated in section 2.3.3, this application is restricted to certain non-academic learning such as the description of identity. Wenger's theory presents an explanation of how the non-South African French-speaking students in this study are conceptualized to experience the academic institution with their dedication to work in it as consequential. Therefore the commitment of

non-South African French-speaking students in this study is primarily a process of negotiating meaning with other stakeholders for a common good to reach the relevant domain. Therefore the process of negotiating meaning is conceptualized as a work-related model. A notable example that comes to mind is community engagement. Work is done in a community engagement enterprise, a kind of practice stipulated by curriculum at the academic institution. In such engagement success may only be guaranteed through co-operation, participation and interaction, whether formally or informally as recommended by Bender, Daniels, Lazarus, Naude and Satter (2006).

2.3.5 Communities of practice as learning to comply with the tenets of the domain

Each community has the prerogative of defining its domain. I bring the concept proposed by Wenger (1998:108) into this discussion that in a COP, there are subsets of a bigger COP. For the French-speaking students to reach the domain, they have to comply with the tenets of the bigger COP by moving from one subset of COP to the other. They could be required to participate in oral presentation in the presence of peers to learn how to speak in the public. They may be required to belong to group discussions, seek consultation with lecturers and tutors, or visit the student advisors from time to time. These different units of facilities represent what is referred to as subsets of a bigger COP because they are all directed at assisting participants in the ACOP to reach the domain (earn degrees). A domain sifts events relating to the joint enterprise, reaching beyond events of a topic, scheduling how to thrash out subject matter (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002:28-32). In the case of French-speaking students in this study, the domain predisposes them to take advantage of the various offerings in the ACOP to reach the domain. For example there are modules required for all students at different academic levels and programmes. It becomes futile for a student studying Business Management to abandon statistics for Chemistry. It is therefore of relevance that the domain sifts the activities required of participants to engage in, by compelling participants to select and adhere to the curriculum of study related to the domain. It would therefore imply for example, that no matter how much affinity a Business Management student may have for Chemistry, such a student is bound to comply with the sifting that the domain had outlined. In the academic institution, stakeholders are stirred to contribute and participate in the COP as their learning is channelled and meaning is given to their accomplishment, drawing on the work of Wenger et al. (2002:28). It is taken that an understanding of the boundaries and the leading edge of the domain enables these listed

community stakeholders (non-South African French-speaking students, lecturers, students, etc.) to come to a decision of exactly what is important to share, how to pass across their ideas and which activities to follow for the common good of all stakeholders in the community.

As is the case in a tertiary education institution community, each student has his/her own area of operation, a space of interaction and/or non-interaction. This space seems to be defined by aspirations and future goals set to be accomplished (the domain). The non-South African French-speaking students studying a particular course with other students may have to share opinions, knowledge, submit assignments and projects conducted in group format. These may still occur even when there is no serious commitment to intentional interaction that may lead to attaining a static identity (by inference from Wenger's (1998) theory). What seems important in such a community is the subsequent accomplishment of learning concepts which they have been able to negotiate and acquire. Issues to examine in the study border on the effect that such decisions in the domains or spaces may have on the community in terms of the challenges confronting the interaction and integration required to sustain the realm of influence within that community.

A communal theory of learning integrates the basics that portray social participation as a process of learning within the tenets of the academic domain. The four core units relating to the social theory of learning involve the following (Wenger 1998:5):

- a) Meaning: an avenue to express a non-static competence personally and communally in order to know the existence and humanity as being significant.
- b) Practice: an opportunity for sharing past and communal resources capable of sustaining communal engagement.
- c) Community: an environment that fosters discussions on the communal set-ups where human endeavours are made clear as worth trailing and involvements are identifiable as proficiency.
- d) Identity: the path taken to discuss how learning transforms human personalities by creating individual chronologies leading to becoming a personality within the confines of the environment.

It follows that in social theory of learning, meaning involves learning as negotiated involvement; practice as learning by rehearsal; community as learning by fitting into a domain of influence; and identity as learning to attain a measure of uniqueness (Wenger, 1998:5). These dimensions of learning seem to be intertwined and dependent on one another in a COP. The learning that non-South African French-speaking students will negotiate is therefore taken to change their identity, and what they can accomplish because it is an incidence of their uniqueness. It therefore implies that the domain where stakeholders in the ACOP engage with one another can be taken as a learning curriculum. The learning curriculum may be taken as an arrangement of the set of laws existing in that realm of influence (Lave, 1997:27). The implication of this discourse seems to mean that learning:

is not just an accumulation of skills and information, but a process of becoming— to become a certain person or, conversely to avoid becoming a certain person. It is the information of an identity that learning can become a source of meaningfulness and of personal and social energy (Wenger, 1998:122).

Drawing on Wenger's (1998) scholarship, the negotiation of identities seems not to be restricted to "becoming" alone but to "not becoming". For example, the refusal of non-South African French-speaking students to attain a particular identity status is taken as their ploy not to belong to the ACOP or the mainstream society. This stance of not belonging may arise because identity negotiation is directly related to acculturation (Adebanji, 2010). The moment French-speaking students relinquish the idea of not belonging to the academic institution; it may imply that they have adopted a pedestal of negotiation, which signifies how they are identified. Based on Wenger's (1998:164) argument it becomes pertinent to reiterate that identities are constituted not only by what we are but also by what we are not. The reason for this is because what we refuse to be can even become a great part of how we would want to be identified. This implies that if the non-South African French-speaking students strongly attach recognition to their ethnic cultures, it is a demonstration of not becoming attached to the South African culture. The implication would be that they would be identified as such - a demonstration of "not becoming" South Africans. Consequently, refusal to participate in an ACOP is a source of uniqueness as participation (Wenger, 1998:164). Moreover, the association of non-South African French-speaking students with the ACOP could be taken to involve both involvement and abstention. Their identities are shaped by combinations of participation and non-participation in the ACOP. The production of cultural hybrids and an array of experiences which make up the territory of identity (Vandeyar, 2008:116) may be depicted in a unique manner. This description may be viewed by conceptualizing identity

negotiation among the non-South African French-speaking students as what they always negotiate and renegotiate as long as they are in the academic domain. Therefore thorough learning among non-South African French-speaking students in this context is taken to evolve when they associate and interact within the domain of a COP. Consequently the actions embarked upon by the French-speaking students would be regarded as efforts to comply with the tenets of the domain.

2.3.6 Communities of practice as learning to transform social and cultural configuration

Otten (2009:410), following on from the work of Wenger (1998) writes that learning takes place through participation and engagement. Learning is believed by Otten to take place through actions and interactions that reproduce and transform the social and cultural structure of a community. It is assumed that the French-speaking students participate and interact with other members of the institutional community that they have joined. It is further assumed that as they interact, they become engaged with the cultural tenets of that community. With the enhancement of their interaction, they experience a process of reproduction and transformation of their social and cultural configuration that may foster their learning. This process is conjectured to take place via the negotiation of their cultural tenets with that of the community members until cultural compromise is attained. Cultural compromise is used in the sense that the French-speaking students could lessen the extent to which their home country cultural injunctions influence their decisions in the ACOP. They are anticipated to accommodate the academic and non-academic cultural tenets in the ACOP in an attempt to reach the domain.

One can borrow from Gee (2000) and state that the understanding of thorough learning entails the non-South African French-speaking students obliging themselves to learning in the academic institution and seeing that they are capable of learning. Their learning may entail using and valuing the tenets of the academic domain. The identification of non-South African French-speaking students with the academic institution may augment efforts taken to initiate learning via the process of negotiation. Hence the concept of academic acculturation emerges because they are in constant view of the domain to earn degrees. This process of negotiation (e.g. academic acculturation attainment), according to Wenger (1998:197) is the ability, facility and legitimacy to contribute to, take responsibility for and shape the meanings that

matter within the academic institution as far as experiences of the curriculum are concerned. Learning, using and valuing the basic principles of the academic institution are taken as ingredients that propel the learning environment for deep and meaningful learning to take place (Gee, 2000). The learning experiences of non-South African French-speaking students are rooted in their ability to engage with other members who are more knowledgeable in the academic institution. The required academic dimension of learning may be attained as they aspire to become like members who have been in the academic institution for a period of time. Their learning is consolidated as they study and comprehend how things are undertaken within the academic community, drawing on the work of Serpell (2007:26). Their actions would be regarded as learning to transform the social and cultural configuration of the ACOP. These findings provide the opportunity to present the participation of French-speaking students in the ACOP as a research problem.

2.3.7 Communities of practice as learning to negotiate identities

Learning and identity negotiation can be conceptualized as related forces in a typical COP (Young & Kotze, 2009:129). The co-existence of French-speaking students in the ACOP is taken as the negotiation of identities, according to Wenger (1998:149). This is informed by the fact that negotiation of identities is one of the sociocultural factors that the non-South African French-speaking students should grapple with when their situation in the ACOP is weighed against the work of Chow (2006). This sociocultural factor (the negotiation of identities) is conceptualized in this study as a hidden curriculum issue. The argument underlying this is based on the notion that they are compelled to take decisions in line with the stipulations of the domain. They are envisioned to follow this path because necessity may predispose them to intermittently shift from one COP to the other to reach a set identity. In the academic institution, the non-South African French-speaking students are perceived as defining their identities according to how they interact with multifaceted trails of experiences. These diverse kinds of experiences in the academic institution are taken as tracks of learning which culminate in the definition of their identities.

Negotiation of identities, from Wenger's (1998:145) study, involves their capability and incapability to project the values that describe their community and practices of membership. Interaction and non-interaction therefore seem to be key elements of identity negotiation because of the domain. The key notion of identity among community members in the

academic institution acts as a fulcrum between the community and individuals that are present in the academic community. This could occur in order that a dialogue of accrued experiences may be fostered. It thus seems that there is a learning curriculum that is vital for identity negotiation, which predisposes the learners involved to agree or disagree with the tenets therein. As discussed earlier, the learning curriculum is a stipulation of trajectories of experiences capable of linking them to the domain. It is thus theorized that different stages of identity statuses may characterize their learning in the ACOP as they move from one subset of COP to the other. It could also imply that at each stage of interaction with other subsets of COP, identities are created. However it is speculated that at each subset in the COP the non-static nature of identity would lead them on, until they reach the domain.

For example there are outlined courses required to be taken by students in an academic institution. Each of the courses is seen as a COP that students must engage with. The identity status created at each COP would be necessary to take the students through other courses until they graduate. This phenomenon is regarded in this research as the creation of academic identity, drawing on Halic, Greenberg and Paulus (2009). In mathematical terms it is speculated that the summation of a number of activities in communities of practice would assist participants to reach the domain. At the domain a holistic identity is created (to become graduates). The holistic identity created at the domain is not independent of the individual identities created in the paths of students who initially had the goals to reach the domain. Consequently as long as their goals orbit around reaching the domain, academic identities would be created in manners that would sustain them to reach the domain.

Wenger (1998:155) believes in this regard, that it appears perchance more likely to contemplate the negotiation of identity with respect to the entire learning that ensues as entrants reach and settle in the COP. Therefore the mediation of identities among the French-speaking students in the midst of other stakeholders in the academic institution is conceptualized to consist of their learning trajectories. The academic identities of non-South African French-speaking students thus seem to be a construct that each of them has to develop before scholarly learning can take place. Agreement with the intended curriculum via the assessed curriculum, on their part may be a function of their capability to develop academic identities. Furthermore it is envisioned that academic achievement is a measure of

compliance with the intended and enacted curricula when students have been capable of developing the right academic identity that is required to guarantee success. A learning curriculum that is fit for these students may encompass the coordination of a trail of undertakings that navigate them as newcomers entering the community from a beginner status to participating effectively. Consequently the academic achievement among these students may be perceived as complete involvement, whereby individual members implement respected values within that territory. Strict adherence to these principles enables members to add what has been learned. Consequently an adjustment is made towards the joint actions taken. The aftermath may lead to a shift in community value system as suggested by O'Donnell and Tobbell (2007:315). The shift in community value system is seen as the creation of identity. The argument of O'Donnell and Tobbell (2007) seems relevant to this study because their study was based on the transition of adult students to higher education in a community of practice. A difference that has been figured out between this work and their study borders on the research sample. Their study was on adult learners precisely, but I borrow a few concepts from their work because it was designed to investigate a community of practice.

Learning among the non-South African French-speaking students may entail the mediation of importance attached to the group belief system (Merriam et al., 2003). But there is also a link between the mediation of identities and rudimentary principles in the community (Wenger, 1998:149). This link may appear in a manner that creates a sense of uniqueness among these students in relation to stakeholders. The link consists of negotiating the meanings of their individual experiences within the academic institution (Wenger, 1998:145). Identity is something that these students have to constantly negotiate during the course of their lives in the ACOP in an attempt to reach the domain. Identity negotiation among French-speaking students in this study may involve ascribing meaning to the events in their lives especially the curriculum at the academic institution. The mediation of meaning among the non-South African French-speaking students could comprise linguistic issues, and may go beyond it. It may also include their collective dealings, as dynamics embroiled in the mediation. It may not essentially include an exchange of ideas with legitimate members in the academic institution. The cycle seems to be an unending struggle as Wenger (1998:155) narrates:

The temporal dimension of identity is critical. Not only do we keep negotiating our identities, but they place our engagement in practice in this temporal context. We are always simultaneously dealing with specific situations, participating in the histories of certain

practices, and involved in becoming certain persons. As trajectories, our identities incorporate the past and the future in the very process of negotiating the present.

Similarly, O'Donnell and Tobbell (2007:315) concur that at each shift:

The notion of identity is in the foreground because the new and strange practices force reconsideration of practice and therefore shifts in identity trajectories. The nature of the individual trajectory is constructed through the interaction of the past, present, and perhaps future aspirations of the student.

Consequently the meanings attached by non-South African French-speaking students to the academic institution may influence their practices. These meanings may eventually influence their commitment to engaging or disengaging in the community. Meanings surrounding transition should then include an understanding of where the students come from (their historical meanings) and the present context.

When French-speaking students engage in developing their identities as legitimate members of the community, they become skilful in doing this due to their capacity to negotiate and re-negotiate their identities, drawing on Lave (1993). Therefore as they negotiate and renegotiate their identities, it is envisaged that an involvement of long-standing active associations between academic stakeholders and their status and involvement in the academic institution may ensue. In the context of this study, identity negotiation, which is a hidden curriculum issue, may tend to influence the perspectives of student learning. The magnitude of such influence may evolve such that their response to the curriculum may change with attendant experiences in the community. It therefore seems that when there are unfavourable events or threats in the community, the behaviour of community members in terms of the curriculum may be affected. It is furthermore conjectured that hidden curriculum issues within the ACOP may place the intended curriculum on the perpetual edge. An example is when students refuse to develop academic identity, which is vital to take ownership and responsibility for learning, such students would no longer become relevant in the core of activities designed in the curriculum. Consequently dropout may ensue and a negative identity is created.

As French-speaking students attempt to negotiate their identities in an academic institution, they may acquire the understanding capable of fostering their survival within the frontiers of the academic institution. This study therefore explores the relationship between learnership in the academic institution community and identity negotiation among the French-speaking

students. Wortham (2004:716) adds to this discourse by arguing that the process of learning does not mainly alter the knowledge of the learner, but the make-up of the learner. I identify the construct of Wortham (2004:716) as an emblem of identity. The moment the make-up of a learner is disentangled the possibility of reaching the domain becomes questionable. This suggests that at the point that these students in the academic community know who they are, their experience results in the acquisition of thorough understanding of the curriculum and their position as community members. Their attainment of comprehensive understanding in the academic community may involve recognizing that there is a certain link between how people learn and the way their identity is constructed. Among the non-South African French-speaking students in this study it may imply that effectiveness in learning is indistinguishably linked to their identity pathway. On a similar note their acquisition of knowledge in the academic institution is taken to imply a process of constructing meaning that is characteristic of the interaction between members in the community, drawing on the work of Merriam, Courtenay and Baumgartner (2003:172). In essence, learning and the development of identities among the non-South African French-speaking students can be conceptualized as related engagements within the academic community.

2.3.8 Communities of practice as the terrain for learning language and meaning negotiation

The language of communication is a vital tool for meaning negotiation in an ACOP, vital for the development of academic identity (Halic et al. 2009). According to Chow (2006), in a study of Vietnamese-Canadian university students' sociocultural and educational adaptation the language of communication is capable of disentangling the learning curriculum. The learning of concepts within the community by non-South African French-speaking students therefore depends on their ability to understand curriculum via the appropriate terrain of language. The meaning that French-speaking students ascribe to the curriculum may therefore depend on the continuous association between the prospects that language presents and the limitations that language enforces on them. This experience may also depend on their attempt to negotiate and renegotiate meaning within the academic institution. For example in a multicultural academic institution, the prospects that the LoLT may bring to the French-speaking students is expected to be in the form of granting proper understanding of the presented curriculum. A possible limitation to their comprehension of the curriculum may evolve as a result of the linguistic disparity in terms of the use of indigenous languages.

Predominant use of the indigenous languages on campus is predicted to delay the transition of French-speaking students to English. It is also predicted as being capable of delaying them from reaching the domain in record time. Indigenous languages are languages that are spoken apart from the English language. When there is persistence in the use of indigenous languages in the academic institution, marginalization of non-traditional languages may ensue because interaction may be limited. When interaction is limited it is predicted that the ability of French-speaking students to participate actively in subsets of communities of practice may become hampered. The importance of language in the community cannot be overemphasized. According to Yeh et al. (2008) it is a cultural bridge important for retrieving information within the community. The means of communication among non-South African French-speaking students in the academic institution therefore becomes important because it is the efficient means of negotiating with stakeholders in the COP.

2.4 Defining features of legitimate peripheral participation (LPP)

The concept of situated learning originated from Lave and Wenger (1991:29) in their exploration of learning as “situated activity”, which they named legitimate peripheral participation. Their exploration was in West Africa where they understudied Liberian tailors and marvelled at how they managed to learn without going through any academic path and assessments. This idea originated from them as they consider that people who are engaged in the learning process unavoidably find themselves in the midst of experts. They are of the mindset that skill in a particular field of knowledge necessitates beginners to take strides into far-reaching involvement within the confines of the sociocultural milieu of the community (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

The apprentice (newcomer) gains right of entry to the community by virtue of certain defining and eligibility factors stipulated in the community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Despite being marginally placed, the newcomer builds up a character or identity via considerable interaction in the community with advancement towards total membership for reasons relating to a shared or committed realism (Lave & Wenger, 2002:57). This framework applies to my study as I place French-speaking students in the pre-degree programme as new entrants, ready to be influenced by the curriculum of the ACOP and other stakeholders. The committed realism in the case of French-speaking students is to attain degrees (domain). Although the context in which Lave and Wenger (1991) conducted their study is totally

different from this study, I see the need to borrow a number of concepts to argue the experiences of French-speaking students with respect to issues cutting across the curriculum. Furthermore I predict that the French-speaking students are in the middle of the presented, enacted and assessed curricula, intertwined by the workplace curriculum. Workplace curriculum, according to Billett (2006) is an array of formal and informal stipulations on a daily basis that advance the workplace, which leads to productivity. Another prominent justification to use this theory, in addition to the COP theory aforementioned is centred on the notion that the LPP theory is appropriate in a multiculturally designed setting. Similarly, Lave and Wenger worked within the “sociocultural practices of a community” (1991:29). My study is also within the perspectives of sociocultural diversity. The fact that they did not use students to explore their study becomes a concern but this is not a conspicuous limitation to the use of the theory because communities of practice are ubiquitous (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

LPP is a symbol of being situated in the shared world of influence or a community such as the ACOP. It (LPP) offers the route to communicate the association between beginners and specialists, practices, definition of identity, and dimensions of knowledge within communities (Lave & Wenger, 1991:29). It is customary for actors or participants within the community to shift their positions and perceptions. Shifting positions are significant characteristics of participants’ learning trajectories, mediation of identities and perceptions of association (Lave & Wenger, 1991:36). I expect French-speaking students to shift from one level of understanding to the other by virtue of their participation in the COP. I see LPP as a tool that describes the arrival of French-speaking students to the COP. I also see their acceptance to study at the research site as the rights accorded them to lawfully participate in the activities of the community. In respect of the COP and LPP theories, I identify a meeting point between them. LPP is intricately connected to the COP principles. LPP helps to understand the arrival of novice (beginner) participants at the border of a COP and how the new entrants achieve learning through participation or non-participation. I recognize this meeting point as the point of convergence between the two interrelated theories. This synthesis arises because the LPP leads to active participation as long as newcomers shift position from the periphery of the COP to the core of activities. The meeting point between the two theories is suggested to be at the centre of participation as stakeholders interact at the periphery of the COP in a centripetal direction until they reach the domain. The defining characteristics of LPP are enumerated subsequently.

2.4.1 Legitimate peripheral participation as situated learning

Legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) is a theoretical framework that is based on situated or positioned learning. In terms of LPP learning takes place within a community with its opportunities and challenges (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The process of learning via enhanced involvement in communities of practice pertains to the entire person operating in the world of other people (Lave & Wenger, 1991:49). LPP is used to take the learning outcome of non-South African French-speaking students as being less manifest in terms of the course of retrieving facts and values. It is not the main prerogative of the beginner in a COP to learn from conversation as a replacement for legitimate peripheral participation. It involves learning to communicate as a focal point to legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991; 108-109). At this juncture I reflect on the claims made by Tennant to structure my argument as I look at the situation of the French-speaking students in this study. Tennant (1997:77) makes two claims concerning the LPP principle. First, that it is meaningless to communicate about knowledge out of context. This claim points my attention to specificity in terms of strictly looking at the specific context of this research. I therefore look at the circumstances surrounding the French-speaking students before claims are made. Second, novel knowledge and the process of learning are correctly perceived as being situated within the confines of communities of practice. This framework places responsibility on me to critically ensure that subsets of communities of practice are well monitored as identity shifts are made, and as the participants make their trip to the domain (to earn degrees). As I envisioned in the analysis of the COP model, I also see stakeholders as communities of practice in their own right as long as each of them has something to share, gain or lose. Furthermore, I see subsets of communities of practice in a bigger ACOP for the purpose of exploring this study. The bigger COP is identified as ACOP.

The process of LPP is more about being involved in shifting dimensions of involvement in communal and academic endeavours that they engage with. According to Merriam et al. (2003:172), in a study conducted on a marginalized COP, the theory of LPP describes how beginners grow into complete community members. It is the course of varying involvement and how the members in the community are identified. In this context the non-South African French-speaking students entering the pre-degree programme at a private tertiary institution are conceptualized as novices since they are new to the existing learning curriculum at the academic institution. The idea of non-South African French-speaking students being referred

to as novices may not only be in terms of academic engagement but also in terms of other experiences that are negotiated on the campus. These experiences may include acculturation, language use and identity mediation. My perception is supported by the notion that the LPP model is useful for exploring sociocultural perspectives. Consequently the application of the LPP model to issues ranging from language, acculturation and the description of identities among the French-speaking students in the COP becomes relevant by virtue of Chow's (2006) definition of sociocultural factors. Reyes (2007:625) posits:

Legitimate peripheral participation is a social-psychological construct that examines learning that occurs in interactions in communities with more knowledgeable others, or others who have knowledge of how to engage in a particular practice. When one is in the process of learning a particular field or acquiring skills, he or she begins to take on characteristics of those who are farther along the continuum within that sociocultural context of learning and development.

Consequently as the non-South African French-speaking students begin to learn in the COP, they will begin to acquire the relevant skills that culminate in learning as they make their journey to the core of activities in the ACOP.

2.4.2 Legitimate peripheral participation as the definition of meaning

The LPP concept is diagrammatically presented for lucidity (see Figure 2.1) to demonstrate how new entrants approach the ACOP. This diagrammatic representation showcases the trajectory of legitimate participation by newcomers (non-South African French-speaking students) to full participation. The three inscribed rectangular blocks represent terrains of the community. Novices are perceived to enter the new community with the attendant challenges and opportunities at the periphery of the first rectangular block as legitimate peripheral participants by virtue of their compliance with the admission policy of the tertiary institution. The non-South African French-speaking students are therefore conceptualized as apprentices in the new community as they are confronted by challenges having to learn from the curriculum of the new society which they now belong to. The ultimate objective laid down by the curriculum within the community is to produce learning which comes through full participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991). With deeper participation, as the novices move centripetally inwards (Lave & Wenger, 1991) through interaction with other stakeholders, they become more advanced in their participation within the community as shown in Figure 2.1 (see the second inscribed rectangular block).

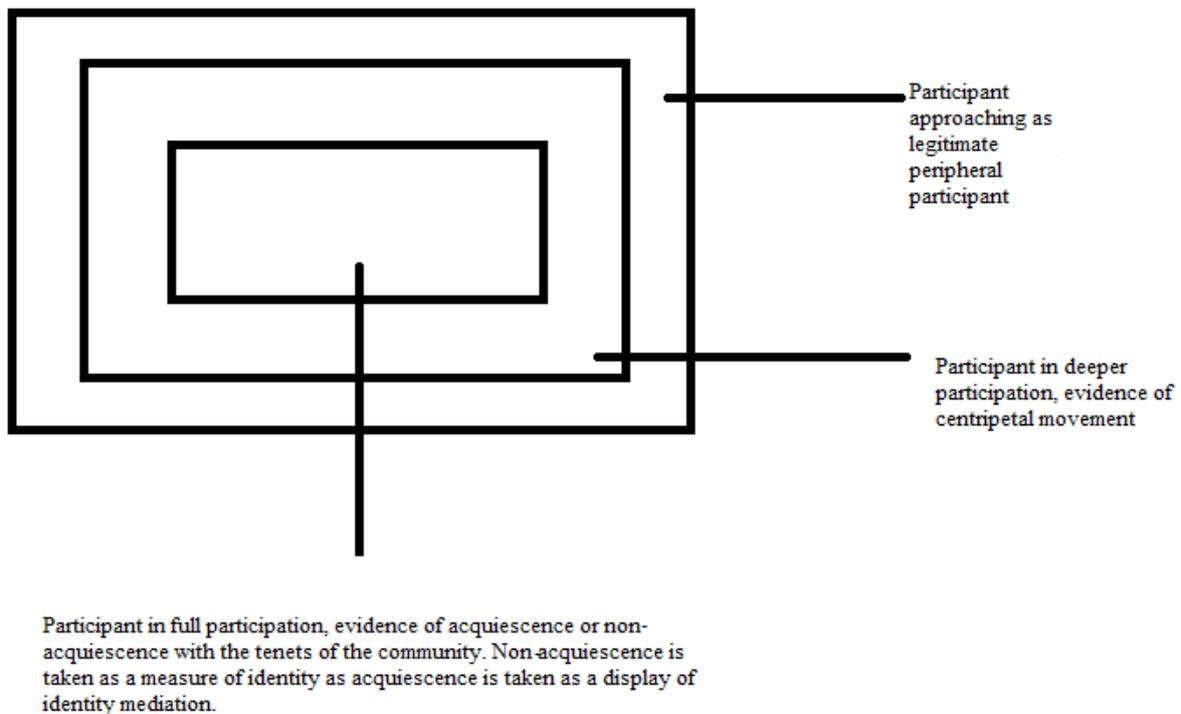


Figure 2.1: Depiction of new entrants in LPP at the periphery to full participation

Full participation of these students with the defined COP stakeholders leads to maximum engagement where learning is fostered through adherence or non-adherence to the learning curriculum stipulated by the community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Full participation is depicted by the third inscribed rectangular block. This is where the decisions to become full participants or not are made by the non-South African French-speaking students. This discourse seems to indicate that in a COP, new entrants are confronted with a number of unplanned tenets of operation which appear to be the underlying and latent principles of the community though unrecognized as planned and intended curriculum. Consequently, meaning is constructed by the French-speaking students with centripetal engagement as they negotiate with the recognized and unrecognized curricula of the community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In an instance where it seems as if learning has not taken place among non-South African French-speaking students in the community it is possible that they remain disconnected from the learning curriculum as a result of deficit in interaction with other stakeholders, drawing on Tinto (1975). The disconnection of non-South African French-speaking students is thus taken as their notion of identity because they will be recognized by their non-interaction with members of the academic community. Therefore it may be assumed that they have learned to be what they profess in the ACOP. This is a definition of

the meaning they have attached to their engagement with the ACOP. For example if they refuse to describe their identity in terms of the mainstream society experience, they would be recognized as such. Their disconnection from the mainstream society would not be regarded as a constraint to reaching the domain. If they stop attending lectures (a subset of the ACOP) they may not reach the domain. O'Donnell and Tobbell (2007:315) write:

On entry to a given community, learners are legitimate peripheral participants and with experience (may) become full participants with the attendant identity shifts. Thus, rather than being an individual event, learning becomes a process distributed across person, time, place, and activity. Given this position it is incumbent on education systems to pay attention to the wider practices in which student learning is embedded.

The latter portion of O'Donnell and Tobbell (2007:315) is of utmost importance to this study – incumbent on education systems and practices in which student learning is embedded. Such practices may include paying attention to both hidden and intended curriculum issues at the educational institution. Participation among the non-South African French-speaking students in the academic community seems to refer to a process of taking part and to the relations with other stakeholders. The achievement or an exhibition of compliance with the assessed curriculum among the non-South African French-speaking students in the ACOP can be thought of as full participation. Similarly at the end of their course if they refuse to identify with the culture of South Africa, they would be described as such and their participation is regarded as full. The distinction between the latter and the former is that the former is important to reaching the domain while the latter is not. It implies that individuals adopt and perform the valued practices of that community and in so doing contribute their own experience and modify practice and shift values via the entire meaning negotiation process.

2.4.3 Legitimate peripheral participation as the negotiation of identities

The compliance of non-South African French-speaking students with the assessed curriculum in the ACOP may emanate because connotations and their mediation are strongly linked to uniqueness (O'Donnell & Tobbell, 2007:315). This seems to indicate that when there is any form of success, not only in academic terms but in terms of positive schooling experiences, linguistic adjustment, acculturation and incorporation into the community mores and values, full participation has likely evolved in the community among its members. The situation that is explored by this study involves monitoring the trajectory of non-South African French-speaking students' curriculum experiences as they negotiate higher education from the pre-degree to the main degree programme. This may predict the phenomena involving identity

shifts if their participation in higher education is full. If their participation is full then a shift in identity has likely occurred via the course of engagement with well-informed participants, for example South African students and lecturers at the academic institution. On the other hand, non-participation among the non-South African French-speaking students in the ACOP may be taken as their stance on identity because they would be described by their refusal to participate. Wenger (1998:164) posits in this regard that the refusal of participants to interact and engage with the curriculum in a community of practice is a meaningful part of how they are recognized. However care would be taken to monitor the effects, if any, of disconnection from the presented, enacted or assessed curriculum. Disconnection from these aspects of the curriculum is envisaged to lead to another dimension of learning. The learning itself is taken as a shift in identity even if it leads them to academic failure.

2.4.4 Legitimate peripheral participation as a symbol of apprenticeship and expertise

The participation of the non-South African French-speaking students in the ACOP involves their location in the academic social environment with other stakeholders. These other stakeholders in the ACOP are taken to act as the dominant players because they are regarded as experts who are more informed about certain aspects of the curriculum of the community than the non-South African French-speaking students, by inference from Lave and Wenger (1991:36). The non-South African French-speaking students are bound to change positions and perceptions from the periphery of the community in order to negotiate their learning trajectories with experts in the community. By doing this they build their individualities and course of association (1991:36). The prominent actors of concern in this ACOP are the other stakeholders who come in direct contact with the non-South African French-speaking students. Reflecting on the scholarly work of Reyes (2007:625), I assume that the extent of participation and engagement among French-speaking students with the other stakeholders could depend on their conscientiousness in individually recognizing, characterizing and constructing a picture of previous events that they negotiated in their lives. This appears to be because their membership in the ACOP becomes the starting place of identity. It is predicted that a state could be reached when the non-South African French-speaking students would recognize the support derived from their participation with the other stakeholders. They are envisaged to become members of the same community by engaging in the process of negotiation to reach a compromise – a symbol of identity in the academic community as they engage with experts in the ACOP.

2.4.5 Legitimate peripheral participation as a battleground for conflict and harmony

Participation among the non-South African French-speaking students in an ACOP like the tertiary education institution environment may comprise all categories of associations. According to Wenger (1998:56) these associations may involve conflict and harmony, intimacy and politics, competition and cooperation. Therefore, as the non-South African French-speaking students approach the ACOP, it is assumed that they do so with the understanding that they are in possession of something to share, gain or lose. The association culminating from such participation is therefore not unintentional. It is rather defined by personal history, prior knowledge, elements of politics and ethnic preconception. Part of what this study investigates is the route to participation or non-participation of non-South African French-speaking students from peripheral participation level to full participation and the dynamics involved.

Cummins (1996) stipulates that the identities of participants are negotiated through their involvement in a community by increasing their ability to play their part in a learning scenario. The interactional relationship existing between non-South African French-speaking students and the other stakeholders in the academic environment may not be the main influence on their acquisition of knowledge. It may impact on the degree of how non-South African French-speaking students perceive themselves. Cummins (1996:2) elaborates on the significance of interactional level that can exist in a community by stating that:

When students' developing sense of self is affirmed and extended through their interactions with teachers, they are more likely to apply themselves to academic effort and participate actively in instruction. The consequent learning is the fuel that generates further academic effort.

It follows that as the French-speaking students reach the ACOP, they have to associate past the superficial terrains in an attempt to construct their identities as beginners entering the system. Identity shifts may require effort, motion and engagement with the dictates of the academic community curriculum for learning to ensue (Reyes, 2007). The whole essence of engagement and interaction in the ACOP is to avoid dropout from the stipulated curriculum.

2.5 Power relations in communities of practice and their significance in educational practice

In section 2.4.5 I discussed LPP as battleground for conflict and harmony. In a typical ACOP the situation is not simple. I take a critical look at the power dynamics operating in typical communities of practice and use the ideas to create an argument in terms of how the dynamics affect the coexistence of stakeholders, while not deviating from their roles in the COP. According to Lave and Wenger (1991:116) the idea of granting access to beginners with their own standpoints concerning the COP, is responsible for “all the tensions of the continuity-displacement contradiction”. The “continuity-displacement contradiction” appears during the stage of traineeship. At this transition stage the disparate avenues through which experts and novices construct and sustain their uniqueness clash and create conflicting standpoints on the practice and the development thereof (Lave & Wenger, 1991:115). A situation could arise that beginners are trapped in a predicament while at the same time are bound to participate in the practices’ enterprise, which has made a reputable impact in terms of learning the tenets of the community. At the same time the newcomers see themselves as having invested in the core of the activities in the COP. They perceive that their best has been invested to the extent that they create an identity around their involvement in practice because of upcoming prospects (Lave & Wenger, 1991:115). As long as the encounters through which the “continuity-displacement” conflict is displayed pertain to power show, which more often than not is the case - how the conflict is dealt with varies as power dynamics fluctuate (Lave & Wenger, 1991:115-116).

It is the opinion of Lave and Wenger (1991:116) that power dynamics between experts and novices ensue in the course of daily routines in the community. However joint involvement is the phase through which old timers and new, recognised and unrecognised, the reputable and the expectant, settle their dissimilarities and notice their shared aims, divulge their fright of one another, and ascertain their usefulness of one another. Participants in the community coerce the achievement of the other’s goal in the same way that it is significant to it. Disagreement is encountered and negotiated via a joint daily exercise through which opposing views and communal interests interact. What then is the means of counteracting the “continuity-displacement” conflicts? Lave and Wenger propose that these power relations may be subdued, although not snuffed, through the contrasts of power dynamics between the very experienced and beginners. As an avenue through which the associated power dynamics

are balanced out in practice, the LPP model surpasses the course of learning among new entrants. The LPP model is a mutually symbiotic enterprise between people and profession (Lave & Wenger, 1991:116).

Reacting to the abovementioned power dynamics, I foresee a scenario in which new entrants at the research site arrive at the periphery of the institution with their pre-constituted identity. They enter into interaction with more knowledgeable others in the COP. Lecturers operate in their positions as facilitators of learning. Students on the other hand perceive themselves as being in possession of an offering which, apart from their compliance with the admission policy of the institution could constitute a tool in their hands. The fact that they pay fees appears to be their fundamental right in their perception, and they could see this as their source of power which could guarantee their pursuit of reaching the domain. However students must not perceive that the payment of fees alone may not guarantee their journey to the domain to earn degrees. They are required to learn the curriculum of the community as they watch and listen to lecturers and tutors. These are part of their rights as bona fide members of the ACOP.

Similarly when they write tests and examinations, and fail, their attention could be drawn to the fact that the services they receive in the ACOP are not free. On the other hand lecturers are vested with the authority to plan assessments, enact and assess them. Students may see the role of lecturers in terms of being compelled to make them learn at all cost. When students fail to meet assessment criteria they could attribute the blame to lecturers. The power tussle is not limited to this realm alone. Academic institutions may also use the pass rate to assess the competence of lecturers, and as such when lecturers fail to meet these criteria the power dynamics shifts into the zone of complexity.

With time and experience students who hold on to the fact that they pay fees, soon begin to realise they also have a part to play as they interact with lecturers in the COP. The students' participation in the curriculum of the academic institution grants them the fortitude to learn that each member of the COP has a role to play and responsibility to carry. Applying the "continuity-displacement" dynamics to the situation between the perception of fee payers and lecturers provides a vivid understanding of the power dynamics and how it could be alleviated. From the understanding that I have gathered from Lave and Wenger (1991:116), I

realise that “the move of learners toward full participation in a community of practice does not take place in a static context”. It is a negotiation that takes place in perpetuity until the right dimension of understanding among stakeholders is reached.

I resort to analyse the scenario between lecturers and management in the COP by proposing that a time would come that management would reach the point of realisation that connecting competence and productivity to the pass rate of students could predispose lecturers to manipulate assessments. As suggested by Wenger (1998:108) that the ACOP comprises a smaller COP which works together for the common good of all stakeholders, newly appointed lecturers also fit into the dynamics of being labelled as new entrants to the ACOP. The power dynamics between the newly appointed lecturers and management could be perceived to revolve around linking their achievement profile to pass rate. Using the “continuity-displacement” dynamics it is envisaged that a time would come that management (experts) would realise that performance of lecturers may not be measurable by the yardstick of pass rate if academic transparency is desired. The issue of power dynamics in the field of education is a complex phenomenon which may be unravelled by time and experience among stakeholders. This proposition is based on the opinion of Lave and Wenger (1991:117) that as long as exploits and the contribution of persons associated with a practice, their awareness, and their viewpoints are jointly creative, transformation is the essential characteristic of communities of practice and their undertakings. In section 2.6 Durkheim’s (1961) theory is used to emphasize the phenomenon of interaction in an ACOP.

2.6 Durkheim’s (1961) theory of suicide as it relates to interaction and non-interaction in a COP

Durkheim (1961) proposed a hypothesis that when humans are not properly incorporated into society, the aftermath of this leads to suicide. Suicide is a termination process which has its origin and history in frustration through neglect (Durkheim, 1961). In this study an attempt is made to draw on Durkheim’s (1961) theory to explore what seems to occur in an ACOP through interaction or non-interaction by borrowing a few concepts. The likelihood of suicide in a community is linked to two types of deficiencies in incorporation, namely inadequate moral incorporation and inadequate group association (Cope, 1971). Utilizing the scholarly work of Lave (1997:27) a tertiary institution community symbolizes a type of community with its peculiar principles and practices otherwise known as the learning curriculum. When

there is inadequate or no interaction in the community a state of suicide or dropout from the curriculum of the community may ensue by inference from the work of Spady (1970) and Durkheim (1961).

Drawing on the research of Tinto (1975:92) with respect to school dropout, it is hypothesized in this research study that when there is lack of integration among the non-South African French-speaking students and the other stakeholders in the ACOP suicidal dropout from the ACOP may occur. Furthermore it is hypothesized that the spread of the so-called suicidal dropout may affect all the educational and sociocultural factors concerned with the overall survival of students in the ACOP. Consequently academic suicide, linguistic suicide, identity negotiation suicide, and acculturative suicide could occur. All of these traits of suicide refer to the termination of effort to learn, make meaning and co-exist within the community to achieve set goals of the curriculum.

As specified by Tinto (1975) when the right dimension of integration is not fostered, dropout may ensue. For example a student may become dysfunctional in the academic community if the lecturer does not present a favourable environment for interaction that is capable of guaranteeing academic achievement. If such dysfunctionality persists, the student, while still physically present because of constraints in the academic community, may remain within the community with his or her presence becoming inconsequential to the entire community. A shift in attention and focus of the non-South African French-speaking students as a result of certain imbalances in the community is thus conceptualized as a kind of dropout from the learning curriculum of the ACOP. This study therefore explores the three combinations of interlinked theories (COP, LLP and Durkheim's theory of suicide) to understand the curriculum experiences of non-South African French-speaking students in the private higher education institution. Another attempt is made in section 2.7 to formulate a theory that provides further understanding of the concepts involved in learning, in a sociocultural context within an ACOP.

2.7 Hybridization of sociocultural factors as a condition for learning, meaning and identity in an academic community of practice

Building on the work of Vandeyar (2008), Kohn (2002), Norton (2000), Wenger (1998), Lave and Wenger (1991) and Tinto (1975), the theory of hybridization of sociocultural factors is hypothesized. The negotiation of identities has been shown to be a relevant ingredient capable of fostering learning in a COP like the academic institution. According to the findings of Adebajji (2010) and Yeh et al. (2008), meaning is constructed through language, being a link to cultures, as language itself is cultural in nature. Based on the scholarship that the essential features of cross-cultural hybridity, vagueness, and diversity comprise the territory of identity negotiation (Vandeyar, 2008:116), it is thus hypothesized that for any form of learning to take place within the ACOP, a kind of equilibrium may have to be reached at the intersection of language, acculturation and identity negotiation within the tertiary education institution.

As the non-South African French-speaking students enter the ACOP (see Figure 2.2 below) they are exposed to learning the community's language which is the defining feature of the learning curriculum. If there is interaction and communication, new entrants to the community tend to adapt to the mores of the community through integration, drawing on Tinto (1975). The degree to which they acculturate and negotiate their identities in the ACOP is hypothesized to result in the formation of a hybrid at a point of intersection of language, acculturation and identity mediation. At such intersection (Figure 2.2), a hybrid is speculated to be formed by virtue of the concerted efforts of the novices and their extent of interaction and communication via the use of the language in the community with other stakeholders. Thus at the intersection of the three sociocultural factors, hybridization is assumed to have taken place with the resultant hybrid formed, constituting the investment or capital needed to initiate the learning of the participants in the community. At different stages of redress it is hypothesized that different magnitudes of learning would evolve depending on the investments made in terms of learning the LoLT, development of academic acculturation and academic identity.

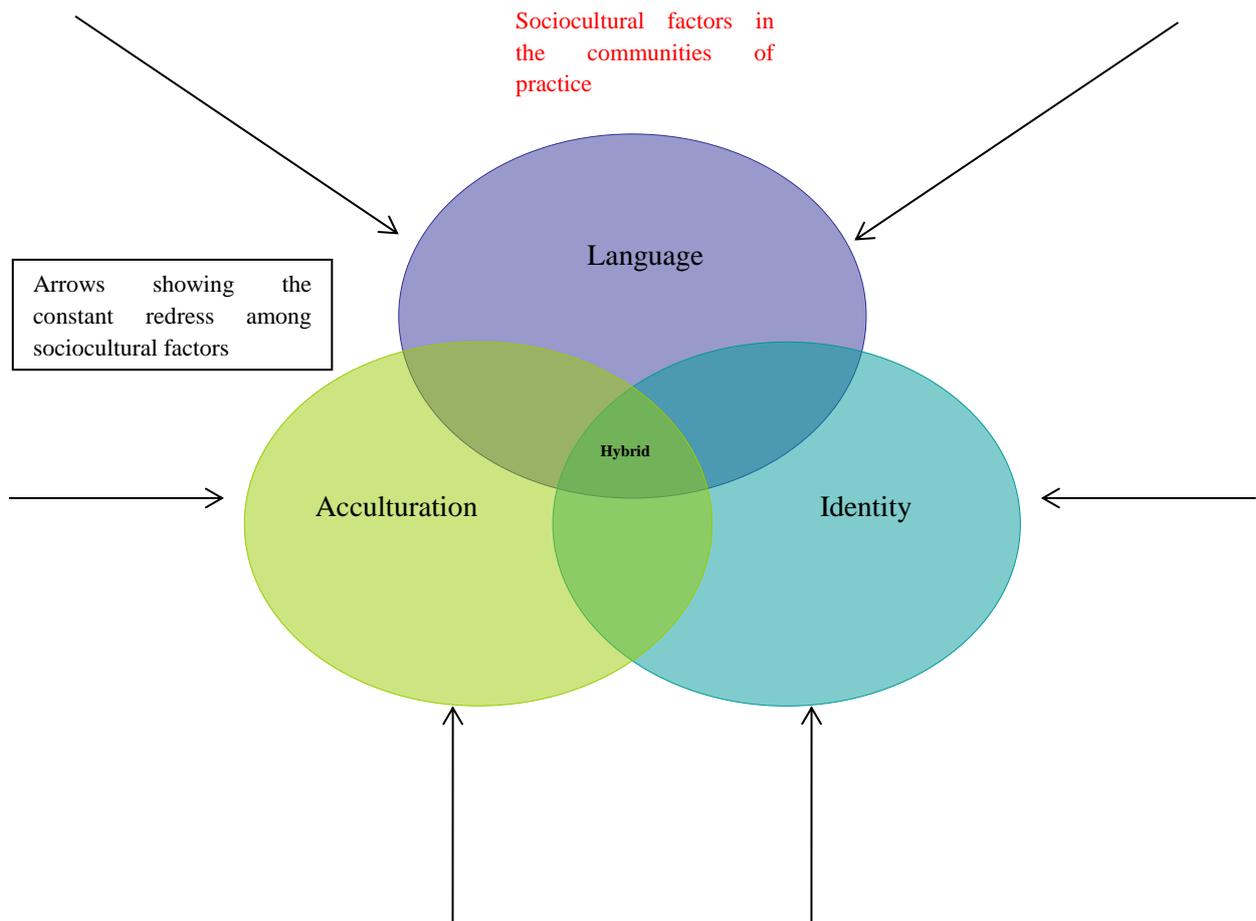


Figure 2.2: Conceptualization of hybridization of sociocultural factors in an ACOP

The conceptualized learning may not only emerge in academic terms but in every area that participants need to engage in learning as new entrants to the community with experts. When this happens, the aspects of the curriculum, namely the intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula may reach a realistic alignment. The learning that is envisaged to take place is theorized to occur in stages when entrants approach the community as legitimate peripheral participants with their linguistic capital, acculturative tendencies and identity shifts. Learning may continue until the newcomers are able to move towards the centre of activities. The envisaged movement, a significant display of identity, is speculated to take place through an interaction with the other stakeholders.

On the periphery of the community new entrants are novices while the already existing members of the community are regarded as experts, not in terms of academic learning per se, but in terms of the culture of the community. Language, being the foundation of negotiation, interaction and learning that takes place within the community, is said to constitute a shift in

identity from the understanding obtained from Lave and Wenger (1991). The negotiation of language, acculturation and identities is brought to bear because Norton (2000:11) suggests that “an investment in the target language is also an investment in a learner’s own identity”. In this study the main target language is the LoLT because it is the means of disseminating academic information. An investment in the LoLT is therefore taken as an investment in the French-speaking students’ academic identity. Another investment involves the indigenous languages spoken at the ACOP. An investment in the learning of the indigenous languages (e.g., Zulu and Sotho) spoken within the ACOP would therefore be seen as an investment in the mainstream identity.

Similarly, Yeh et al. (2008) present a link between acculturation and mediation of identities because mediation of identities and acculturation involve the ability of newcomers in a new environment to mature beyond their initial cultures. Kohn (2002:155) adds to the discourse by contending that the negotiation of identity “is all about choice, action and a multiplicity of experience and allegiance”. As long as the new entrants who are approaching the community choose to stay within the community and interact, identity negotiation may be fostered. This is because the involvement of participants in the COP is a composite course that amalgamates accountability, dialogue, philosophy, sentiment, and belongingness (Wenger, 1998:56). It may thus imply that negotiation of identities is an emblem of mindfulness and cultural negotiation in an ACOP.

When the French-speaking students enter the ACOP as legitimate peripheral participants with the prospective of becoming full participants as the necessary identity shifts turn out to be obvious, it is conceptualized that full participation may not commence until a hybrid of the three sociocultural factors (language, acculturation and identity) involved is formed at the intersection, through engagement (see Figure 2.2). This study seeks to explore the possibility of this hypothesis in an attempt to better understand the curriculum experiences of non-South African French-speaking students in the private tertiary education institution.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the mechanism of knowledge construction for the study by looking at the concepts involved in learning in an ACOP. It has presented the theories of COP and LPP in an attempt to explore the curriculum experiences of non-South African

French-speaking students in a socioculturally diverse ACOP. The conjectured theories are intended to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and to attempt to establish a coherence or divergence in concepts proposed before by a number of educational researchers. Issues concerning diversity are vast and inconclusive as a result of the dynamics involved and divergence in cultures from place to place. In an educational setting, these issues leave a particular clientele with rich experiences of the aspects of cultural interactions manifesting through intended or unintended curriculum. What may not be readily noticed is the impact that such issues may have on the clientele (students – in this study, non-South African French-speaking students). The chapter has also highlighted the presence of subsets of communities of practice in a bigger community of practice as suggested by Wenger (1998:108). The implication of this discovery is that within an institution, groups of people could constitute communities of practice by virtue of their attributes or what they possess. For example lecturers in an academic institution could be viewed as being in a community of practice with peers. Within the same academic institution, other stakeholders in their own right could constitute communities of practice. Finally the power relations among participants in a COP have been discussed. Chapter Three presents the second chapter on the review of literature.

CHAPTER THREE

APPRAISAL OF THE EXTANT LITERATURE

3.1 Introduction

The second chapter outlined the theoretical framework of the study with regard to the research problem and how it would be tackled in relation to the existing body of literature. This chapter presents a review of the nature and meaning of the research problem. It commences by considering the requirements of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) for students intending to negotiate the rigours of tertiary education. Standard entry requirements and the sustainability of students in the tertiary institutions are discussed to obtain an understanding of issues cutting across the curriculum. It highlights the discourses on the familiar and unfamiliar trends relating to curriculum experiences of students in Higher Education (HE) in South Africa and internationally. Issues that cut across curriculum are analyzed with the notion of carving out the challenges confronting students as they progress to HE. A summary of findings concludes the chapter.

3.2 Entry requirements as conditions for legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice and strategies for sustainability

As foreign students commence their journey to higher educational institutions in a novel nation, this arouses encounters that can have an influence not only on their total experience, but also educationally (Croese, 2011:388). On arrival in the new country foreign students experience first-hand rejection in terms of their previous academic qualifications acquired from home, taken through stringent scrutiny. At this juncture receiving nations specify their requirements for admission purposes, which point to the quality of students that are accepted to degree programmes, drawing on the findings of Moja (2004). The argument of Moja (2004) provides a basis for discussion in terms of the quality of students entering higher education in South Africa. A key point of inquiry needs to be initiated by looking at “the requirements of new kinds of” students who seek to traverse the rigours of tertiary education (Moja, 2004:34). The way to do this is by looking at certain curriculum issues in an attempt to explore such requirements. This kind of consideration becomes vital for access to the ACOP. The inquiry entails initiatives inclined in the direction of curriculum responsiveness,

development and implementation. Newly admitted students in this research study comprise non-South African French-speaking students aspiring to negotiate the rigours of higher education. They are international students by definition and not immigrants because their sojourn in South Africa is temporary. The likely reason for having to counteract this confrontation seems to be because of the general assumption that is made when students pass matriculation examination above the fifty per cent average mark, not to digress into the other extreme when they fall short of this set standard as proposed by Fraser and Killen (2003). These entry requirements therefore serve as conditions for the rightful membership of the French-speaking students in the ACOP. I see the relevance of entry requirements because they constitute the basis on which newcomers arrive at the periphery of the ACOP. The entry requirements give them the right to belong to the ACOP. Consequently, the French-speaking students qualify to be referred to as legitimate peripheral participants. As soon as the French-speaking students arrive at the periphery of the ACOP they are expected to commence negotiation with the existing curriculum by attending lectures, tutorials, group presentations, to mention but a few. They connect the curriculum at the pre-degree or foundation phase through to the third-year degree programme. At the pre-degree level their presence is felt in the ACOP because they begin to engage with the presented, enacted and assessed curricula. Similarly, it is projected that certain hidden curriculum experiences could challenge their capacity to engage with scholastic tenets in the ACOP. Consequently their arrival at the ACOP becomes a predicament for investigation on issues cutting across the curriculum. These issues comprise language, acculturation and how they mediate their identities in the ACOP as suggested by Chow (2006).

In South Africa the issue may not be limits to entry requirements alone, but the energy that is required to prevent students from eventual dropout. In a study conducted by van Schalkwyk, it was reported that “approximately one in every three students entering higher education in South Africa will have dropped out by the end of their first year of study” (2007:954). This finding provides a framework for exploring the dropout rate among the French-speaking students in the COP. Fraser and Killen (2003:254) are of the opinion that when students are admitted to a HEI they will be capable of successfully completing the course for which they are permitted to enrol. It is assumed that students who have demonstrated an above-average performance in their school matriculation assessment will be able to do well in the institution of HE.

The intellectual puzzle at this juncture is to explore another scenario, that is, if students fail to comply with the set standard of fifty percent mark. It is projected that students who perform below the standard are candidates fit for admission to the pre-degree programme. Such students become legitimate peripheral participants on admission to the pre-degree programme. Applying this hypothesis to the target audience of this study, non-South African French-speaking students are taken as legitimate peripheral participants via the access given to them by virtue of their compliance with the admission policy of the tertiary institution. The assumption that non-South African French-speaking students will be capable of attaining success at the academic institution to a large extent seems to depend on curriculum issues, drawing on the questions of curriculum raised by Dillon (2009). These curriculum issues may present themselves as intended, enacted, and assessed curricula as suggested by Kurz et al. (2010). Hidden curriculum experiences are also envisaged to challenge the three aspects of curriculum proposed by Kurz et al. (2010) – the planned, enacted and assessed curricula. According to Langhout and Mitchell (2008), hidden curriculum experiences are other unattended factors not directly manifest in the course of planning, enacting and assessing the curriculum. Kurz et al. (2010) studied the content of the planned and enacted eighth-grade mathematics curriculum for 18 general and special education teachers and the curricula's alignment to state standards via surveys of the enacted curriculum. The framework of Kurz et al. (2010) creates an avenue to explore the intended, enacted and assessed curricula at the ACOP in pursuance of intricate issues cutting across the curriculum. Although Kurz et al. (2010) explored the alignment of the intended, planned, and enacted curriculum in general and special education, the framework works well for this study. The identified gap in this study centres on exploring strategies that would create an alignment of the curriculum.

Fraser and Killen (2003) provide insight into the standard required for access to higher education via secondary education. Their work was based on factors affecting academic success or failure among first-year and senior university students. Since the scope of this study spans between the pre-degree to third-year degree programme, the study of Fraser and Killen (2003) becomes applicable. The intellectual puzzle borders on whether the students will survive and succeed at the tertiary institution. This discussion is of immense importance because the shift that students must embark upon in switching from high school to tertiary institution involves enormous tasks that deserve consideration (Goos et al., 2011:105). The

survival of students is an area which requires inquiry into issues cutting across the curriculum if they do not drop out of the tertiary institution.

However there seems to be a kind of deviation from the set norms when realities are weighed against presumptions. An aberration seems to occur as observed by Serpell (2007), who studied the possibilities of bridging between orthodox Western higher educational practices and an African sociocultural context. It is speculated that as the non-South African French-speaking students embark on the journey of higher education they advance with a view to adapting to a future world of which their lecturers have only restricted awareness and appreciation of their situation. This speculation ensues from the study conducted by Serpell (2007) that as students in an African sociocultural perspective transit to higher education, they do so with a view to adjusting to a future world of which their lecturers have diminished knowledge of circumstances surrounding their pursuit. This so-called restricted awareness and appreciation of their situation by lecturers may place the planned, intended and assessed curricula on edge. This claim is informed by a number of unrecognized issues which mitigate the presented, enacted and assessed curricula at the academic institution. These unrecognized issues, according to Langhout and Mitchell (2008), are known as hidden curriculum issues. Based on the COP principle, the lecturers are recognized as experts.

It is presumed that if lecturers have diminished understanding of circumstances surrounding the educational pursuits of their students, certain aspects of the hidden curriculum may be responsible. Another dimension to explore in such circumstance may be the effects of sociocultural factors (language, acculturation and identity) as proposed by Chow (2006). For example, if lecturers are oblivious of the requirement of French-speaking students to acculturate, create academic identity and master the language of the curriculum an imbalance may occur in their roles as experts in the COP. This kind of scenario may complicate the power dynamics in the COP because the role of lecturers in the COP may become thwarted to the extent that the French-speaking students' access to the domain may be delayed. I have drawn this line of thought from the argument of Wenger (1998:108) as explained in Chapter Two sections 2.2, 2.2.1, 2.2.3 and 2.3.5. Although certain aspects of power relations discussed by Wenger (1998) talk more about the dynamics involved in non-academic stances, my argument (see Chapter Two sections 2.2, 2.2.1, 2.2.3 and 2.3.5) in this regard also seems to be relevant in this study. Consequently, the awareness of lecturers of the events

surrounding the arrival of French-speaking students to the ACOP is problematized for investigation.

3.3 Curriculum responsiveness to the unseen and embattled forces in communities of practice

At this juncture the argument of Moja (2004) in section 3.2 gives rise to a more elaborate inquiry into the curriculum responsiveness of HEIs in terms of the unseen and embattled forces which have been described as hidden curriculum issues by Langhout and Mitchell (2008). Similarly I foresee issues of power relations in the ACOP as hidden curriculum experiences because they are passively addressed in the system as Lave and Wenger (1991:116) suggest that they cannot be extinguished but subdued with time. These initiatives and concerns are thus subsequently presented in relation to the ACOP.

3.3.1 Introduction of bridging modules as a measure of curriculum responsiveness

The idea of strengthening the academic potential of students before the commencement of the degree programme is not new worldwide. I presume that curricula issues need to be responsively considered in an attempt to prepare students for the rigours of higher education. It is speculated that the idea of introducing bridging modules as standard procedure to the non-South African French-speaking students may prove beneficial before the start of the degree programme. This idea stems from the research conducted by Winter and Dismore (2010:266). Winter and Dismore investigated the experiences of foundation degree students progressing to an honours degree. Their work is of particular interest to me because it tallies with the pre-degree programme to third-year degree programme at the research site. The major distinction borders on the fact that at the research site of this study my scope did not extend to the honours students. Furthermore, their work points in the direction that introducing bridging modules is capable of addressing issues related to curriculum and learning (2010:266).

The study conducted by Longden (2006:183) on an institutional response to changing student expectations and their impact on retention rates in the United Kingdom indicates the ubiquitousness of curriculum responsiveness in higher education. One out of the nine suggestions made as curriculum responsive measures was that new entrants to higher education had to negotiate the bridging programme in order to provide direction for the

forthcoming degree programme in their view. This initiative was aimed at preparing the new entrants for the rigours of higher education. It was found that assumptions were made that students could negotiate higher education based on pass rates at the secondary school level. The bridging programme initiative was found resourceful by inclining the focus of new entrants to the challenges of higher education in the United Kingdom. To explore the dynamics of inaugurating bridging modules before the commencement of the mainstream degree programme, I take a closer look at the work of Winter and Dismore. Winter and Dismore (2010:266) reiterate:

Delivering bridging modules across all faculties would ensure consistent support for all students, as well as provide more opportunity for addressing any knowledge gaps and queries relating to workload and assessment. More support may be required for those students less inclined towards autonomous learning and therefore most at risk of dropping out.

Winter and Dismore (2010) initiate a platform of discussion which suggests that the pre-degree programme (otherwise known as opportunity programme in their study) is remedial. It fills the gaps that were left out when students were at secondary school level. It prepares them for the rigours of higher education and attempts to protect them from eventual dropout. This initiative appears to be a kind of curriculum responsiveness to the unseen and embattled forces. Unseen and embattled forces in this study are presumed to revolve around sociocultural factors which have been suspected so far, capable of lengthening the time novices in the COP reach the domain. These scholars also point to the uncertainties in workload and assessment, two factors which seem to call for attention in this study. When there are uncertainties about workload without the adequate yardsticks of assessment, student learning may be truncated in the long run. Workload, as it is conceptualized in this study is taken to imply the role of the experts towards the novices. When experts in the COP become oblivious of their responsibilities towards novices, it is speculated that the goal of reaching the domain among novices may become problematic. It is conjectured that the expertise to assess the situation of novices by experts in the COP would assist them to reach the domain. Curriculum responsiveness may also be viewed in terms of the current concern for extended involvement in a globalizing world in which HEIs are constrained to become alert to the needs of non-conventional students, as suggested by Leibowitz (2009:261). International students such as the non-South African French-speaking students, also referred to as non-conventional students by Leibowitz (2009), most of whom derive sustenance from such designated programmes, remain the central focus of this study. The implication may be that the receiving HEIs should be equipped with the reality that curriculum responsive measures

are of paramount importance if withdrawal rates are to be minimized. It may be affirmed that the idea of establishing the pre-degree programme is a measure to achieve curriculum responsiveness. Consequently the curriculum responsiveness of the research site and the rationale for inaugurating the pre-degree programme are problematized for investigation. Once this is established it would indicate that the action to inaugurate the pre-degree programme is a measure of curriculum responsiveness to the unseen and embattled forces at work.

3.3.2 Identification of risk factors as curriculum responsive measure in the ACOP

Rowley (2005) in a study that looked at foundation degrees and the risks involved reports that the HEI offering foundation degree programmes may be confronted by issues relating to the withdrawal of students from the academic institution. Rowley explored the establishment of foundation programmes and reports that dropout was common among the students. Rowley predicts that withdrawal rate may be high if such students are occasional ones coming from backgrounds with little or no inclination to higher education. The implication of this finding is that the background experiences of students may directly or indirectly impact on their capability to excel at school. Bailey and Weininger (2000:14), whose focus was on socio-economic class and student accomplishment, argue that:

Immigrants who graduated from high school abroad arrive with a reasonably strong underlying level of education, but with language deficiencies. They then use the community college, to strengthen their language skills. Once that is achieved, they are able to accumulate credits and are more likely to earn degrees.

The distinction between the work of Bailey and Weininger (2000) and this study is that French-speaking students are not immigrant students, whereas in the study of Bailey and Weininger immigrants were the respondents of their study. However there are useful issues to explore from their work. The community college mentioned by Bailey and Weininger (2000) is synonymous with the pre-degree programme undertaken at this study site for remedial purposes before students embarked on the main degree programme. Using the work of Bailey and Weininger (2000) I find the opportunity to explore whether French-speaking students arrive with good education to the COP. It is speculated that if they arrive to the COP with good levels of education, they could also become experts in their own right as members of the COP, though they are regarded as novices. This would then be weighed side by side with the finding of Wenger (1998) which suggests that in a COP, there are subsets of other

communities of practice who work together for the common good of stakeholders. An analysis of the risk factors among French-speaking students before the commencement of their study becomes important. It implies if they arrive with good levels of education, their risk assessment has yielded good outcome. If the opposite happens then the faculty could be at an advantage to explore how to revamp their challenge.

Secondly, Bailey's and Weininger's (2000) report that the students arrive with low language skills but use the bridging programme to revamp their linguistic skills is informative as far as this study is concerned. Using the bridging programme to revamp their low linguistic skills is taken as evidence of active participation between experts and novices in the COP. I raise an inquiry at this juncture to reveal whether French-speaking students use the pre-degree programme to alleviate their linguistic concerns. The outcome of my inquiry at this point could reveal the conditions required for the retention of French-speaking students within the specified limits of the COP. This finding would then be weighed against the finding of Tinto (1975) that students who do not engage with other stakeholders would be at risk of dropping out of the institution. An assessment of risk factors could also guarantee the ease of students and other stakeholders in terms of reaching the domain, which is the ultimate goal of participants in the COP. Without an assessment of the risks involved, it would have been challenging to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of the students that were explored by Bailey and Weininger (2000). Consequently, I see the importance of key stakeholders conducting a risk assessment among French-speaking students in the ACOP. When this is done it would imply that the faculty engages in practicing curriculum responsiveness to the unseen and embattled forces in the ACOP. This would also serve as evidence of practice to recognize the unseen and embattled forces capable of preventing French-speaking students from reaching the domain.

Winograd and Tryon (2009:438), in a study which explored the counselling expectations among students in an opportunity programme, with respect to disposition and cultural influences contend that all students who begin college have to adjust to new schedules, academic requirements, greater independence, and the need to choose a potential career path. They argue that, among the strategies aimed at assisting these new students to adjust is the provision of opportunity programmes which are equivalent to bridging modules arranged for students with specialized needs before the commencement of the main degree programme.

Since the pre-degree programme is conceptualized as an ACOP, it is incumbent on me to explore whether the French-speaking students in this study are required to adjust to new schedules, exhibit greater independence, or required to choose a potential career path. Autonomous learning would not normally be expected in a COP if it is the sole responsibility of experts to facilitate the learning experience of novices in the COP. However, it is speculated that experts have times that they facilitate learning after which novices take responsibility for their subsequent learning in the COP. This provides the opportunity to explore the intermittence in learning among experts and novices in the COP. I therefore theorize that the effort of experts in the COP is not an endless one, but may involve the cognition of intervening at specified times in the affairs of novices until full participation is reached.

3.3.3 The relationship status between lecturers and students

The relationship status between lecturers and students is an important factor to consider in an attempt to explore curriculum responsiveness to the unseen and embattled forces in the COP. It is important to recall that a number of these unseen and embattled forces have a hidden identity, drawing on the ideas of Hume and Coll (2010). This explains why they are classified as hidden curriculum experiences. I speculate that care should be taken not to envision hidden curriculum experiences as insignificant, problematic and insubordinate forces. Rather, it is envisioned that there could be other salient hidden curriculum experiences in the COP capable of suggesting that faculty engages in practising curriculum responsiveness.

Leibowitz (2009:262) supports the importance of interaction between lecturers and students by contending that learning is coproduced by students and lecturers. Their coproduction of knowledge seems to be due to the notion that they both bring different perspectives to bear on teaching and learning. Leibowitz's work explains the collaboration between beginners and experts in the COP. Using Wenger's (1998:108) lens to analyse the scenario if French-speaking students and their lecturers would co-produce knowledge, it means there are responsibilities to fulfil among them in the COP. They are thus bound to respect their roles to keep the activities of the curriculum going. It implies that the issues of power relations between them need to be explored to see if they have identified and accepted each other's roles. For the purpose of exploring this issue of power relations further I present the power dynamics between lecturers and the French-speaking students as a research problem.

Teven and Hanson (2004:40), whose study was on teacher immediacy and perceived caring about teacher competence and trustworthiness, posit that a good facilitator of learning never embarrasses students or is verbally abusive towards them. Coercive relationship between lecturers and students in the light of the COP principles is capable of distorting the roles of experts to the novices in the COP. For example, if a lecturer is impatient it becomes challenging for students with academic challenges to seek consultation. Impatience on its own is a character trait capable of distorting the equilibrium of the COP. It is a hidden curriculum factor expressed in the workplace curriculum. This brings the idea of Billett (2006) to cognition as evidence that the workplace has its curriculum. The three aspects of curricula as specified by Kurz et al. (2010) are thus seen as randomized forces in the COP conflicting with the workplace curriculum. These ideas emerged from the findings that I made so far in the course of conducting this literature study (e.g. Langhout & Mitchell, 2008). Randomization seems to be brought about by their co-existence with the stipulations of the workplace curriculum. On the other hand, if the relationship between lecturers and students is welcoming it becomes a good curriculum experience for the recipients (students). Consequently, I raise an inquiry in respect of the relationship status of lecturers and students in the COP.

Severiens, Dam and Blom (2006:29) investigated the Dutch ethnic minority students' social and academic integration. They argue that an indication of formal academic integration of students involves their knack of asking questions in the classroom. When students are not confident to ask questions the lecturer-student relationship may be responsible. Shyness may predispose the French-speaking students to demonstrate lack of confidence to participate in the ACOP. Rubin, Coplan, Bowker and Menzer (2011), in their book entitled *Social withdrawal and shyness*, posit that there are many reasons why people may disengage from communal participation and diverse terms used to describe the different dimensions of loneliness. In an attempt to unravel the intricacies of loneliness, Rubin et al. (2011) employed "social withdrawal" to encapsulate the different reasons why someone may decide to detach from a community. In the context of this study, shyness is used as described by the other researchers like Nelson et al. (2008). These include unnecessary silence, less fluent and less outbound. Nelson and colleagues worked on associations between shyness and internalizing behaviours, externalizing behaviours, and relationships in emerging adulthood. According to Tackett et al. (2013), shyness may be associated with poor association between people. I

borrow the concept of Cowden (2005) in a study conducted on worry and the associated relationship to shyness. Cowden speculated that individuals who are shy may not possess interactional skills, could possess self-distrust, be encumbered by their nervousness, or display magnified feelings of biased assessment of themselves. As a result, shyness is problematized for investigation among the French-speaking students.

I believe that when students are bold enough to ask questions in the classroom a platform of interaction is fostered between experts and novices until the appropriate learning results. Boldness to ask questions in the classroom may thus be seen as the absence of shyness or minimal dimensions of shyness. Lecturers are seen as experts in the classroom, students are perceived as novices. The classroom is thus pictured as a dynamic environment where stakeholders contribute their quotas to achieve set goals of the curriculum. The classroom could also be viewed as the environment for the display of power relations, especially when certain students are not teachable and feel they know it all. Such students would not likely participate in the COP to the advantage of the other stakeholders in the COP.

Similarly, Whannell, Allen and Lynch (2010) are of the opinion that poor association between lecturers and students may eventually get in the way of their tertiary education progress. The implication of their scholarship for this study is that a poor lecturer-student relationship is capable of extending the tenure of French-speaking students in the COP. Under such circumstances students are perceived as being denied access to the planned and enacted curricula. If the poor association between them persists they may confront eventual dropout in the COP. This situation could arise because they have been partially disengaged from the curriculum which is fuelled by interaction with more knowledgeable others, see Wenger (1998) and Reyes (2007) who addressed the importance of novices interacting with experts who are more knowledgeable others in the COP. These findings present the opportunity to observe the French-speaking students during lecture sessions, in an attempt to explore whether they ask questions in class. Another option could be to inquire if they seek consultation with lecturers and tutors when confronted by academic challenges. Findings obtained from the observation sessions would be weighed against their responses and those of other stakeholders interviewed in the study to make informed judgments.

3.3.4 Internationalization of the ACOP

According to Lee and Rice (2007:384), a number of institutions have campaigned in favour of internationalizing the academic environment of higher education institutions. There are numerous perceptions and perspectives of the concept pertaining to internationalization of the campus, but the one that is relevant in the higher education context, as suggested by Lee and Rice (2007), is tied to the ideas of globalization. The ideas of globalization carry an undertone of intercultural transactions between parties involved. In this study I see intercultural transaction as the dynamics involved when two or more dissimilar cultures are in contact. This description applies to French-speaking students because they left their comfort zones to study in South Africa. The predictable dilemma seems to revolve around their acclimatization and coping mechanisms in a new environment (academic acculturation). I use the definition of Knight (2003:2) to intensify the discourse on internationalization of the campus. Knight (2003:2) defines internationalization as “the process integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions, or delivery of postsecondary education”. The purpose of internationalization was revealed by Knight and De Wit (1995:13). They assert that internationalization serves to comprehend, realise and clearly express the authenticity of symbiosis among parties concerned in an attempt to prepare stakeholders to operate “in an international and inter-cultural context”.

I speculate that the requirement to internationalize the ACOP seems important because it would give French-speaking students the feeling of living at home while they study in another country (academic identity). I also foresee that it is capable of giving them the dimensions of sense of belonging they require to function effectively in the academic institution (academic acculturation), which scholars like Crose (2011) recommend as useful. Beyond the notion of internationalizing the campus, I also find the idea of internationalizing the curriculum equally important. Drawing on the understanding gathered from Kurz et al. (2010) in terms of the three aspects of curriculum and the definition of the workplace curriculum as suggested by Billett (2006), it is conceptualized that the ACOP and the stipulations of the workplace curriculum need to reach a point of convergence for cross-cultural integration of the curriculum to be attained. It is further speculated that at this point novices would be capable of participating effectively in the activities of the ACOP to the extent that the domain would be reached. In terms of the relevance of this speculation to the current study, it would mean that French-speaking students have developed the correct

dimension of academic acculturation, and would have developed the needed dimension of academic identity to participate in the ACOP to full participation, drawing on Halic et al. (2009) and Vandeyar (2010). All of these measures, when explored would assist in making deductions to see if the ACOP is engaged in measures of curriculum responsiveness to the unseen and embattled forces.

Apart from the ideas of internationalizing the curriculum I speculate that a lot has to be done to prevent foreign students from having the feelings of homesickness. This is an area that has been very challenging as far as efforts to make them feel at home are concerned. It is envisaged in this study that homesickness is capable of shifting French-speaking students' focus from the activities of the ACOP. It could detach them from the ACOP to the extent that their participation may become diminished. Gu, Schweisfurth and Day (2009) explored the intercultural experiences of international students with respect to learning and thriving in another country. They reported that international students experienced homesickness despite being in regular communication with family members and associates through email, short message services, and telephone discussions. Their experience in terms of homesickness is further aggravated by the trend of host students not voluntarily communicating with them in their undertakings (Summers & Volet, 2008). When this situation persists, the involvement of French-speaking students in the ACOP becomes a dilemma. Homesickness is an emotional response to cross-cultural transition. It may result in a reduction in social participation and increased psychological suffering (Tartakovsky, 2007). It implies it is capable of affecting the participation of French-speaking students in the ACOP. Consequently homesickness among French-speaking students is presented as a research problem in this research.

3.4 Considerations for the design and implementation of curriculum

In an attempt to design the intended curriculum there are a number of considerations to embark upon. Dillon (2009) suggests that these considerations may include previous and present experiences of facilitators of learning. The considerations may also comprise challenges to the design and implementation of the curriculum. These considerations are aimed at fostering the wholeness and academic achievement of students (Dillon, 2009). Inadequate consideration of these salient issues may constitute the source of challenges to the successful design and implementation of the intended curriculum as suggested by Kurz et al.

(2010). The following section highlights salient benchmarks to consider in the design and implementation of the curriculum.

First, an understanding that the facilitator of learning has a major role to play is vital. The facilitator of learning's educational background, training, and qualifications are important. Furthermore his/her characteristic traits, personality and the role of ensuring that adequate and commensurate development of materials that would foster the total development of students' acumen to succeed has to be taken seriously (Dillon, 2009:345). In doing this, group deliberations among facilitators of learning on students' needs become vital (Brann, 1989). It thus implies that a judicious analysis of what is expected of students to demonstrate, and how this could be achieved are of paramount importance. Therefore facilitators of learning have major roles to play in terms of their ability to reflect, act, plan and make observations concerning what they have experienced in the curriculum. Their on-going experiences of stumbling blocks to the effectiveness of the design and enactment of the intended curriculum are also important (Dillon, 2009). In an attempt to explore these considerations, the educational backgrounds of facilitators of learning, their characteristic traits, training and experiences they have acquired over the years, would be explored at the ACOP. Another important factor to consider is the issue of lecturers' accents and how they affect the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students in the ACOP. These would assist in making the right judgment on their roles and commitment to the ACOP in terms of reaching the domain as suggested by Wenger (1998).

Second, a consideration of the category of students to be taught is vital. Reid (1999) proposes that critical consideration of the category of students to be taught and their readiness to learn should constitute the fulcrum of curriculum design, enactment and assessment. Other considerations may involve knowing things that enhance their learning, their learning styles, and certain other intricate issues concerning students that have to be taken into consideration. Such intricacies may involve the previous and current languages of instruction among stakeholders in the ACOP. It thus seems that if the previous language of instruction differs from the language in the current remedial plan, an appropriate action may become vital. An inquiry would be made in the ACOP in terms of the category that the French-speaking students belong to, their readiness to learn, and the learning styles that appeal to them.

Third, Reid (1999) recommends that the features of subject matter (i.e., what should be taught), its characteristics and nature of the content, instruments of instruction layout, and ability to single out important aspects that are aimed at facilitating knowledge production are important in curriculum design. An investigation would be carried out to analyse important documents that reflect subject matter, its characteristics and nature of content, to mention but a few. This approach is envisaged to give a contextual perspective of associated challenges capable of mitigating the French-speaking students from reaching the domain.

Fourth, Reid (1999) contends that the ambience, period, and arrangement of lecture halls are of paramount importance in the design and implementation of the curriculum. These are capable of constituting a hindrance to successful curriculum development initiatives. Similarly Dillon (2009) argues these salient points are insufficiently researched and minimally understood in aspects of curriculum development and implementation. Based on these findings by Reid (1999) and Dillon (2009) the ambience of the ACOP, period of lectures, and arrangement of the lecture halls would be explored.

Fifth, Dillon (2009) considers that facilitators of learning should have the end in mind during curriculum development. When the end is not conceptualized during curriculum development, curriculum effectiveness may be reduced. The end that facilitators of learning should have in mind as far as this study is concerned is the domain, the attainment of degrees by the French-speaking students in the ACOP, as suggested by Wenger (1998). As a result, an inquiry would be made in terms of the extent that the pre-degree programme goes in terms of preparing French-speaking students to navigate the pre-degree to the third-year programme. It is thus speculated that synergy is practised in the ACOP to achieve this aim. Synergy in this study is categorized as the action geared towards curriculum responsiveness to the unseen and embattled forces described earlier on in this chapter.

3.5 Curriculum and dynamics involved in academic communities of practice

Kurz et al. (2010) proposed that there should be an alignment between the planned, enacted and assessed curricula. The planned curriculum involves what students are supposed to know. It is the preconceived notion about what the programme entails. The enacted curriculum deals with the delivery/facilitation of content, whereas the assessed curriculum is a tool for judging

compliance with the intended/planned and enacted curricula. A major challenge to the implementation of curriculum in schools relates to the alignment of these three perspectives of curriculum as predicted by Kurz et al. (2010). The alignment of the three components of curriculum in the ACOP seems to be challenging because of the impact of sociocultural factors at work. The numerous issues surrounding the intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula are perceived to play important roles in the overall learning that evolves among stakeholders in the ACOP. A tentative speculation revolves around the language of communication as discussed earlier on in this chapter. The use of numerous languages in the ACOP is presumed to constitute a threat to the transition of French-speaking students in terms of reaching the domain as far as the commonly agreed language of communication in the ACOP is concerned.

Language is entrenched in culture as suggested by Yeh et al. (2008). I see language as a force that needs to be explored in this study because it is capable of delaying the transition of novices to the domain in the ACOP. Gopal (2011) explored the dynamics pertaining to preparing faculty to teach cross-culturally in the tertiary institution. In that study it was found that faculty is seldom formally prepared to teach cross-culturally and sensitivity to an international cohort varies. International cohorts are students who come to study from other countries in a novel one (Gopal, 2011). The finding of Gopal (2011) presents an opportunity for an intellectual inquiry in terms of the preparedness of faculty at the research site of this study to teach cross-culturally. The complicatedness of language use is presumed to challenge the ease with which French-speaking students would reach the domain as far as completing their studies is concerned. It is however borne in mind that the use of indigenous, non-formal language in the ACOP is categorized under the hidden curriculum issues. I predict that the use of informal languages in the ACOP could slow down the command of English among the French-speaking students.

Another sociocultural factor presumed to challenge the intended, enacted and assessed curriculum experiences of French-speaking students in the ACOP is acculturation. Acculturation is a broad terminology that describes the process through which necessary adjustments are made by people in a new environment (Yeh et al., 2008). I define a new dimension of acculturation that suits the situation of French-speaking students as academic acculturation. It is conceptualized in this study as the agreement of French-speaking students

with specified academic and cultural principles, which are at work to enhance their transition to the domain of the ACOP.

Vera and de los Santos (2005:104), in their assessment of Chicana identity mediation report that the negotiation of acculturation is linked to ethnic, racial, or cultural identity. Although their study was conducted on immigrant students, a few concepts may be borrowed in this study. The attachment of French-speaking students to ethnic, racial or cultural identity is thus problematized for investigation. The acculturation of immigrant students in the tertiary institution was reported by Gardner and MacIntyre (1993:159) to reflect their willingness and interest in social interaction with members of other groups within the school, especially in the use of a familiar language of communication. Consequently when the French-speaking students indicate their willingness to interact with members of other groups in the ACOP it could be interpreted that they are interested in the development of academic acculturation tendencies. Chow (2007), in a study that explored the sense of belonging among adolescent immigrants from Hong Kong to Canada, describes an important benchmark for identifying acculturative predispositions among them. He describes satisfaction with life as an indicator of acculturation to a new environment. Although the French-speaking students of this study are not immigrants per se, the idea I find useful in the work of Chow (2007) is that there are several dimensions of acculturation. In line with the scholarship of Chow (2007) I conceptualize the ACOP as an epitome of transactional events which facilitates the trail of participants to the domain. The capacity of French-speaking students to acculturate to the principles of the ACOP is speculated as a threat because of the diverse adjustments they would confront, especially in terms of the requirement to learn English.

The fabrication of identities is another concept that characterizes a multicultural environment as suggested by Vandeyar (2008). I refer to Vandeyar's scholarship in the ACOP because it addresses issues pertaining to the dynamics involved in settings where there are disparities in culture. It is reiterated at this juncture that an academic institution is a typical haven for cultural display in concert. Her work in this regard did not address communities of practice, but was vital, because it offers grounds on which the situation of people in novel multicultural settings operates. Vandeyar (2008:116) recommends that "hybridity" characterizes the topography of identity. I conceptualize that French-speaking students arrive at the periphery of the ACOP with their preconceived academic and social integration, which

they acquired before entering the ACOP. Based on Wenger's (1998) conceptualization I affirm that they came from a foreign COP to a novel COP, where they became legitimate peripheral participants on the periphery of the ACOP. This conceptualization is important because in the course of shaping identity, actors refer to the historical issues in their lives, drawing on Vandeyar (2008). It is thus hypothesized that the development of academic identity among French-speaking students is important if they want to survive the dynamics operating in the ACOP. I expect them to take responsibility for their academic and social learning in the ACOP if they would reach the domain as specified by the curriculum of the ACOP. Wenger (1998:163) maintains a stance that academic identity is a connection "of multi membership" because identity pools diverse kinds of association via a course of compromise from one subset of practice to another. It is predicted that the language of communication in the ACOP would predispose the French-speaking students to the points of developing academic identities. In the end the complicatedness of language, intricate issues of academic acculturation and the quest to take a stance on academic identity in the ACOP are problematized as research problems.

3.6 The dynamics of academic achievement among students in the ACOP

According to Chow (2006), educational achievement is of immense importance to immigrant students in the tertiary institution. Chow conducted his research in Canada on Vietnamese students who had succeeded in having hyphenated identities. A hyphenated identity is a depiction of integration of home cultural values with the culture of the mainstream society. For example Tuason, Taylor, Rollings, Harris, and Martin (2007:369), in a study entitled *Exploring the Filipino-American identity*, Filipinos were described in terms of how they had integrated into American society. They were thus referred to as Filipino-Americans because they defined their identity by incorporating the extent to which they had imbibed the American culture into their home grown culture. This explains why in Chow's study they were referred to as Vietnamese-Canadian immigrant students. Again I reflect on the notion that the French-speaking students of this study are not immigrants, but the fact that they temporarily left their usual countries of residence makes their situation similar to that of immigrants. The reality about their situation entails knowing that they would return to their countries of usual residence. However Chow (2006) offers me the prerogative of investigating the dynamics of French-speaking students' compliance with the curriculum in the ACOP. If academic achievement is important to French-speaking students, this would

imply that there are certain intricate factors to consider, predisposing them to comply with the curriculum. Furthermore it could imply that their association with other stakeholders in the ACOP is meaningful to the point that it produces results that push them to the domain, drawing on Wenger (1998). As a result, I problematize the academic experiences of French-speaking students in the ACOP.

Wang et al. (2009) contend that students from different backgrounds have diverse motives for aspiring to further their education. These researchers say that students may be motivated by the desire for wealth while others may be interested in the pursuit of knowledge. They reiterate that students' motivation to excel is based upon external or internal motivation and the positive and negative influences in their lives. I predict that the motivating factors among French-speaking students would assist them to engage with the curriculum of the ACOP in an attempt to reach the domain. For example it is envisaged that the motivation they possess would make them attend lectures, seek consultation with lecturers and tutors until they reach the stage of full participation which is the attainment of degrees.

Similarly, McCaslin (2009:143) investigated the co-regulation of student motivation and emergent identity. In that study it is posited that immigrant students view school as a place of resignation and social futility. McCaslin argues that the school may be perceived as a terrain where others do not care and do not help and self-reliance is the best shot that students have at their disposal. This particular mindset, according to McCaslin, may arise because of the circumstances of desperation to excel and overcome the challenges of immigration. This suggests that some of them may take things to the extreme as a result of the notion that they are on their own. Their innate tendency to be self-reliant appears to be a hidden curriculum perspective which predisposes them to comply with the assessed curriculum. It may also be as a result of other challenges exposing them to the end of a continuum that they have their destinies in their hands. Again, the French-speaking students of this study are not immigrants, but I seize the opportunity that this finding provides to make an inquiry. It becomes incumbent in this research study to explore whether French-speaking students also adopt the stance of viewing the ACOP as a place for resignation and social futility. Consequently, I problematize the motivation behind the aspirations of French-speaking students, in terms of reasons for belonging to the ACOP.

Wang et al. (2009:577) mention an important feature that is common among non-traditional students. The non-traditional students are reputed for their resiliency and persistence to overcome challenges. This doggedness to succeed among them is a significant demonstration of a strong culture of inherent discipline. Discipline can be regarded as a hidden curriculum virtue among students who demonstrate compliance with the curriculum, drawing on Durkheim (1925; 1961). It therefore may be postulated that compliance with the curriculum is dependent on the degree of discipline and toughness displayed by students in an ACOP. If French-speaking students are disciplined, it would imply that the pace at which they reach the domain is sufficient. The character of discipline would imply that they are able to engage other stakeholders in the ACOP to the extent that they learn concepts and principles, capable of making them reach full participation as suggested by Lave and Wenger (1991). In other words it would imply that they submit assignments when due, attend lectures promptly, write tests and examinations, to mention but a few. Therefore I present discipline and resilience among French-speaking students as predicaments.

Academic performance is an indication that learning has taken place among students. According to Kurz et al. (2010) it is a demonstration of compliance with the planned and enacted curricula. An important inquiry entails knowing how academic achievement is guaranteed in the ACOP. If this is the case as it applies to the ACOP, the indication is that lecturers are duty bound to act as actors and key players in fostering the positive environment for students to reach the domain of the ACOP. It may be because the culture of learning is not restricted to the heads of individuals but entails integrating dimensions of knowing, acting and being within an extensive assortment of practices (Dall'Alba & Bamacle, 2007:683). According to these perspectives it implies that the know-how of the facilitator of learning in terms of how to bequeath the capability to generate information that would lead to knowledge construction among students seems to be pivotal. The culture of learning and cognitive development may be conceptualized as being initially constructed as a result of social interaction between people and understood by the individual as a social construct before being internalized to become a personal construct, drawing on the work of Whannell et al. (2010:3). It thus seems as if academic achievement is a factor depending on the intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula within an academic institution. To follow up on these findings, the route of academic achievement among French-speaking students is presented as a dilemma.

Research has indicated the notion that non-traditional students frequently feel alienated within the lecture room and in social perspectives (e.g. Lee & Rice, 2007). Lee and Rice report that these students are sometimes the victims of obvious hostility from the general public. Alienation is a sign of loneliness, sometimes caused by an inability to communicate with other stakeholders in the COP, as a result of linguistic incompetence. According to Gibson, Gandara and Koyama (2004), a common sign of alienation is reticence (unnecessary silence). If French-speaking students are lonely, it may lead them to a state of incommunicado. When there is no communication, they may detach from the activities of the COP until academic failure ensues. Lee and Rice provide the opportunity to investigate whether French-speaking students experience noticeable hostility from stakeholders in the ACOP. If they do, it would imply that there is coercion, as suggested by Qin, Way and Rana (2008). Qin et al. investigated peer discrimination and harassment of Chinese-American immigrant youth, and found that they were discriminated against because of their small physiques. Language barriers, fights within their Chinese group members and academic competence were instrumental to their challenging experiences. When there is coercion novices may not interact effectively with experts, who serve the purpose of leading them to the domain of the COP. In the light of this study hostility is seen with the lens of power relations, drawing on the work of Lave and Wenger (1991). It is reasonable to look at the issue of hostility as exhibiting issues of power relations. This is because stakeholders who are hostile to beginners likely see that they are in control of what beginners are pursuing. Students who are seen as novices in the ACOP also want to exercise control because they are paying fees. Applying the lens proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991:115), the issue of discrimination, aroused by academic achievement, for example, is a demonstration of what Lave and Wenger (1991:115) term as the “continuity-displacement contradiction”. The moment French-speaking students excel academically this may predispose them to such threats among their peers. Lave and Wenger (1991) suggest that such power relations fade away with time but they are never extinguished. I find it to be of the utmost importance in this study to explore these dynamics by investigating the power relations among stakeholders in the ACOP.

Wooley and Brown (2007), in a study of supportive adults and the school engagement of middle class students in the United States of America found that engagement of students in the academic environment seems to be hinged on interest, sense of belonging, motivation, the

extent of communication and the commitment of students to attending lectures (Woolley & Bowen, 2007). It is conceptualized in this study that the effort of supportive adults, tallies with the role of experts in a COP. Wooley and Brown (2007) provide a framework for investigating the support mechanism available to French-speaking students in the ACOP. This would indicate the level of engagement between experts and novices in the ACOP.

The national research council and institute of medicine (2004), in a study conducted on the dynamics of fostering high school students' motivation to learn, found that engagement may be regarded as an avenue to restructure diminished levels of academic success, elevated levels of student weariness, isolation and high withdrawal rates from the academic institution. Among the French-speaking students, it is speculated that diminished levels of academic success, elevated levels of student weariness and high withdrawal rates may be caused by insufficient interaction with more knowledgeable others in the ACOP. Their work presents an avenue to investigate the role of engagement of French-speaking students with stakeholders, in terms of demonstrating academic achievement. It presents the fortitude to explore the causes of weariness, isolation and pronounced dropout, if any, from the ACOP. Consequently, it is speculated that French-speaking student's engagement at school may originate from diagnoses at the academic institution or lecture room for involvement with other stakeholders.

Finn and Rock (1997), whose research focus was on the academic achievement of students at risk on account of school failure observed resilience as a factor which aided academic integration. This factor was found to aid academic integration among students who lived with both biological parents and students who lived with a single parent with a higher degree of schooling. Resilience also aided students who lived in homes with high annual revenue as well as students whose parents had secure full-time jobs. Findings in this direction suggest that the hidden curriculum may not always be issues and confrontations that are detrimental to academic focus and achievement. Hidden factors such as living with biological parents, high educational attainment of single parents, and high socio-economic status of parents with fulltime jobs seemed to have assisted students to succeed in their studies. Therefore certain hidden curriculum factors may be vital to students' academic focus and learning. These hidden factors may be associated with authority figures in their lives. These authority figures, from the challenges confronting them, are able to forcefully make progress in their life

endeavours. It thus seems as if close association or engagements with such role models tend to initiate a legacy of the fortitude to become resilient in those students. These experiences seem to be connected with issues of identity, capable of steering students in the direction of wanting to become like their role models in the future. It is thus hypothesized that hidden curriculum issues may be related to the negotiation of identities where there are relevant role models to follow.

3.7 The impact of cultural values on the curriculum

From the work of Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), in a study entitled *Reproduction in education, society and culture*, I see cultural capital as a kind of hidden curriculum influence that is capable of adjusting human status in a community via definite and distinctive accomplishments. It is envisaged that French-speaking students arrive at the ACOP with their cultural endowments, which may be hidden initially, after a while begin to manifest, when engaged with new dimensions of culture. The cultural capitals of French speaking students, when engaged with other stakeholders may begin to influence the way they study, and contribute to discussions in the lecture halls. For example, when French-speaking students encounter new dimensions of teaching and learning styles they may have to adjust in order to engage with the curriculum. Another prominent example is the use of English. Diminished proficiency in English is hypothesized to slow the learning experiences of French-speaking students down. The reason is because language is embedded in culture as suggested by Yeh et al. (2008). When French-speaking students experience delayed transition from French to English their ability to interact with actors in the ACOP becomes a challenge. The ease at which they reach the domain may be hampered. Consequently disparity in cultural predispositions may cause the novices to experience delays in reaching the domain.

Pearce and Lin (2007:20), whose research focus was on Chinese-American tertiary success, used a cultural and structural analysis of obtained data to reach a valuable point of argument. Their argument gave an indication that both social and cultural factors play important roles in academic achievement and attainment. It should be borne in mind that social and cultural factors are hidden curriculum issues as far as this study is concerned. Pearce and Lin (2007) recognize cultural capital as parental educational accomplishment, parental educational anticipation, parental participation and method of parenting. Furthermore it has been argued that cultural capital plays an important and unique role in student achievement (Pearce & Lin,

2007:33). The high educational achievement of Chinese-Americans is entrenched in culture rather than achieved through assimilation into the dominant culture (Pearce & Lin, 2007:33). Social and cultural factors are what Chow (2006) refers to as sociocultural factors. These are features of the hidden curriculum that attract minimal attention when academic stakeholders engage in the design and implementation of the curriculum. Although many of these studies were based on immigrant students, their findings offer elucidation in terms of exploring the cultural dynamics influencing the decisions made by the French-speaking students of this study. Consequently parental educational accomplishment, parental educational anticipation, parental participation and method of parenting are problematized for investigation.

By inference from the above scholarship it is contended in this study that the intended, assessed and enacted curricula at the academic institution alone may not be sufficient to predict the academic outcome and social wellbeing of non-South African French-speaking students. Hidden curriculum issues also seem to play dominant roles. Such considerations may be categorized as the unattended aspects of the curriculum. This is a suggestion that sociocultural perspectives of students may also have to be looked into before delving into curriculum design, enactment and assessment. Sociocultural factors are conceptualized as hidden curriculum factors in this study, as they are factors which cut across the curriculum. The language of learning and teaching (one of the sociocultural factors) appears to be an intended curriculum factor because it is the means of disseminating the intended curriculum. The indigenous languages spoken within the campus community are taken to imply aspects of the hidden curriculum.

3.8 Social factors as basic ingredients and constraints of the curriculum

Another important factor that is capable of affecting the overall output of students in the academic institution is the degree of interaction among them. It is posited that when circumstances on campus for intergroup dealings are excellent and students have the occasion to network with different peers, optimistic learning and autonomous abilities can emerge. This idea was obtained from the work of Hurtado and Ponjuan (2005:236) in a study which focused on Latino and educational campus climate. Optimistic learning is seen as a sign of interaction with other stakeholders in the ACOP as far as French-speaking students are concerned. It symbolises an arena that has succeeded in extinguishing the “continuity-displacement contradiction” as suggested by Lave and Wenger (1991:115). From Lave and

Wenger's point of view, optimism is projected to result from stakeholders' skills to realize their roles in the ACOP. It is expected that when such a stage is reached in the ACOP their path to the domain would be guaranteed.

DeGarmo and Martinez (2006) propose a culturally informed model of academic well-being for Latino youth by exploring the importance of discriminatory experiences and social support among them. They argue that discrimination against immigrant students may be a source of academic underachievement. DeGarmo and Martinez reiterate that wherever there is discrimination, the level of interaction may be low for co-operative learning to take place. Although their investigation was on immigrant students, the findings from their study serve as leverage in terms of exploring whether there are acts of discrimination against the French-speaking students in the ACOP. Refusal to communicate among stakeholders because of difference in nationality can be taken as an act of discrimination. According to Tinto (1975:103), there is an indication that communication within the academic institution may be taken as a valuable predictor of academic performance or failure among university students. It is presumed that this can only occur if the communication between novices and experts in the ACOP is unscathed. Conversely Tinto (1975:92) cautions that a student can plausibly be incorporated into the communal environment of the academic institution and still withdraw because of inadequate incorporation into the school. Inadequate incorporation among the French-speaking students is taken to mean an inability to take responsibility for their learning, despite the fact that they are in the ACOP. When this persists it may be an indication that they have not been capable of establishing an identity which I refer to as academic identity. Academic identity construction is conceptualized to propel them to the core of activities in the ACOP. Care should be taken at this juncture because the development of academic identity is a learning process on its own. I speculate that French-speaking students may not establish academic identity until they look ahead to achieve the domain, which according to Wenger's (1998) description fits into their quest to attain degrees.

Viewing Tinto's argument with the lens of the *modus operandi* of the ACOP, it would imply that the kind of association that can translate into academic achievement among French-speaking students has to inculcate focus and dedication among them, to the point that socialization with stakeholders would translate to academic achievement. Socialization thus becomes a basic ingredient in the accomplishment of the curriculum if it is appropriately

directed. On the other hand if socialization is applied to the ACOP inappropriately, just for the aim of concentrating on non-academic ventures in the ACOP, it could become a constraint to the accomplishment of the curriculum. At this stage the French-speaking students may experience dropout. This so-called dropout may be due to low grades scored in modules taken at the HEI. Therefore incorporation of French-speaking students can be dual, namely social incorporation as a result of group contact and incorporation that is geared towards academic identity construction. Interaction and non-interaction are perceived in this context as part of the hidden curriculum capable of influencing the intended, enacted and assessed curricula. In the end, social factors are seen as basic ingredients and constraints of the curriculum.

3.9 Language, culture and interaction as the three sides of a triangle for communication in an ACOP

The idea that people create culture daily makes language, culture and interaction appear like the three sides of a triangle of communication. Language, culture and interaction are discussed because they are vital for the smooth running of the ACOP. In an academic institution the planned curriculum is enacted and assessed via an agreed language of communication. The inauguration of a definite language of communication is in itself taken in this study as a kind of culture, which is academic in nature. Communication is vital between cultures for any form of cultural negotiation to occur as suggested by Beltz (2002), in a study conducted on the impact that a second language plays as a representation of the multi-competent self. Cultural negotiation among the French-speaking students is grasped as a negotiated personal-consciousness as suggested by Savignon and Sysoyev (2002:510), in a study of sociocultural strategies for a dialogue of cultures in a multiculturally diverse milieu. Valdes (2001:147) posits, in a book entitled *Learning and Not Learning English: Latino Students in American Schools*, that when immigrants have limited prospects of interacting with indigenous peers, with the adopted language of communication in a community, they may be totally sidelined from key events. Although this book was focused on immigrant students in another culture, I find relevance in the suggestion of Valdes to explore the possibility of learning English among the French-speaking students of this study. Finally, interaction is fostered through a language of communication. If French-speaking students are to succeed in reaching the domain an analysis of these three dynamics is important. The following are discussed in line with these three perspectives of conceptualization.

3.9.1 The dynamics at work in a multiculturally diverse academic institution

The environment of the tertiary institution is perceived in this study as a cultural domain in which cultural negotiation takes place. It is important to note that language is a tool for cultural negotiation (Yeh et al., 2008). The academic environment is also viewed as a community with certain specified mores and norms that are fit for practice, drawing on Wenger's (1998) theory. Similarly, Gonzalez (2002:193), in a study of campus culture and the experiences of Chicano students in a predominantly White University argues that culture in an institution of learning has its elucidation as a communally created situation. This assertion about culture is probably because of the enormous display of cultural tenets coming from host and foreign students and their co-existence within the same educational institution, language being the dominant tool of expression.

Ramburuth and Tani (2009), in a study that explored the impact of culture on learning argue that when students of different language backgrounds are brought together in the multiculturally diverse classroom language barriers become prevalent. It implies that language not only influences the capacity to learn, but it can also culminate in diminished self-assurance in students. It is obvious from the evidence so far that culture and language are inseparable. The implication of this finding on the current study is that an evaluation of the classroom with French-speaking students should be conducted. This gives rise to the opportunity to explore whether French-speaking students are capable of communicating with peers. Their communication with peers becomes an indication that they are in a situation where cultural dialogue is taking place. It also presents the opportunity to establish their levels of self-confidence. If they are self-confident it would imply that the association between them and the other stakeholders in the ACOP is yielding results, capable of leading them to full participation.

Halic, Greenberg, and Paulus (2009), in a phenomenological investigation of international students at a large public research institution posit that foreign students recognized language as an important feature in determining their understanding of concepts and values necessary for survival. The issue of accents was also revealed as a major source of challenge to foreign students who could hardly understand what was being taught in the classroom. Halic et al. (2009) open a platform of inquiry to discover the states of mind of French-speaking students with respect to the language of teaching and their aims of reaching the domain. If language

incompetence affects the degree of understanding of French-speaking students as Halic et al. (2009) found in their research, then the survival of French-speaking students in the ACOP is problematized. The issue of accents is also a major point of inquiry among French-speaking students to match findings from this study with the findings of Halic et al. (2009). It would imply that when unfamiliar accents are used in a COP learning may become dysfunctional. Consequently stakeholders would not be able to effectively communicate with one another. The different languages spoken at the academic institution thus become pockets of communities of practice and a struggle to create an academic identity among the French-speaking students as suggested by Halic et al. (2009). It is envisaged that at such instances, the expert-novice obligation becomes inconsequential until the linguistic issues are attended to.

In a study conducted by Chow among Vietnamese-Canadian university students in Regina, on their sociocultural and educational adaptation, it is reported that English language aptitude is a cogent contemplation in the requirement, briskness and convenience with which foreign students in a novel sociocultural milieu adjust to an environment that is dominated by English. Chow argues that English is vital for exchanging ideas and gaining access regarding an unusual culture (2006:109). If language is so central to the survival of foreign students in a disparate multicultural setting it implies that it is capable of determining their appreciation of the presented, enacted and assessed curricula. It is also speculated that language incompetence is capable of delaying the rate at which students reach the domain of the ACOP. These findings provide leverage for conducting an investigation.

Su (2008:379), in a study on promoting cross-cultural consciousness and understanding in English as Foreign Language (EFL) among Taiwanese students asserts that a negotiation of cultures can occur wherever cultures are in contact. I see language as the currency of culture. From the available evidence it is indispensable in a multiculturally diverse setting. This argument suits the scenario at the academic institution where diverse cultures are encountered. Its importance among French-speaking students becomes an issue that needs to be carefully investigated, because without it their presence in the ACOP becomes questionable.

Saville-Troike (2003:6), who focused on extending communicative concepts in the second language curriculum, presents an important argument. The argument points to the notion that any effort to learn the tenets of different cultures, customs, principles and attitudes in the new community without intermingling with the members of that new culture would make the learning of language become an academic routine. Such learning would therefore not produce the desired outcome of cultural negotiation. This finding would lead to an investigation of the depth to which French-speaking students reach in matters pertaining to the issue of cultures. The cultural learning of relevance to this study involves the learning of academic culture. The learning of academic culture is presumed in this study to predispose the French-speaking students to the extent of developing academic acculturation, which is an adjustment process to take responsibility for their learning. It is also speculated that learning academic culture would predispose them to the development of academic identity which is also necessary to enable them to take responsibility for their learning. A link is therefore established among sociocultural factors as discussed by Chow (2006) in his definition of sociocultural factors as salient points to consider in the educational and sociocultural experiences of students in the tertiary institution.

Brown (1994:164), whose book centres on the curricula and programmes for international and immigrant students is of the opinion that language and culture are intricately interwoven. Brown posits that one cannot separate the two (language and culture) without losing the significance of either language or culture. Interaction between the non-South African French-speaking students and other stakeholders in the ACOP is perceived in this study to be the central negotiation of cultures, achieved through the use of a language. Brown (1994) provides evidence on the seamlessness between language and culture, making the arguments used so far important for consideration. This provides the opportunity to explore the boundary between language and culture among French-speaking students in the ACOP. This inquiry cannot be done in isolation of other stakeholders in the ACOP. The influence of other stakeholders in the ACOP is vital because they also bring their cultural disposition to the ACOP.

Gray, Rolph and Melamid (1996) and McDonald, Rosellia and Clifford (1997) argue that the attainment of language may be taken as a vital sign of adaptation to a novel society. Consequently it would imply that any attempt taken by French-speaking students to learn the

indigenous languages in the mainstream society would indicate their course of acculturating to South Africa. I see cultural dialogue again in terms of the power dynamics discussed by Lave and Wenger (1991:115). It seems as if cultural dialogue is a tussle, packaged with the propensity to gain preeminence among people who exercise it. The fact that French-speaking students aspire to learn the LOLT at the academic institution is seen as evidence of power relations. The reason is because they are compelled to allow another culture into their cultural domain which in this case is a kind of cultural compromise.

It is taken as evidence of the “continuity-displacement contradiction” that pertains to the quest to continuously displace a subjugated culture, which in this case is important for French-speaking students to attain degrees. I see the requirement of French-speaking students to learn English, as an act to subjugate their culture via demands placed on them by the curriculum. This is an example of my conceptualization in Chapter Two in which I discussed communities of practice as learning to comply with the tenets of the curriculum. The compulsion I refer to here is not duress but a kind of compulsion that is goal oriented. Although it is compulsory for French-speaking students to learn English, this is speculated as an epitome of power relations. When they learn English, it would be taken in this study as an avenue to relegate their home language to take on another. It would therefore imply that the activity of French-speaking students in the ACOP involves sacrifice to attain an identity, which is their quest to reach the domain of the ACOP. Consequently Brown’s argument that culture and language are interwoven becomes useful for exploration.

Language, culture and interaction are conceptualized in this study as the quest to attain an identity among stakeholders. This explains why I seem to have become metaphorical in my argument on the issue. I use the scholarly work of Norton to support my conceptualization on this issue. In Norton’s book entitled *Identity and language learning: gender, ethnicity and educational change*, it is suggested that a conscious effort towards the learning of a target language in a community symbolizes an investment in the learner’s definition of identity (Norton, 2000:11). Consequently I explore Norton (2000:11) further by presenting a concise discourse on a conceptualized process of academic identity construction. I see the value of concepts involved in the development of identity, especially in the light of what suits the participation of French-speaking students in activities relating to the curriculum. It is

envisioned that the development of academic identity that French-speaking students require, is dependent on their capacity to learn English. This is because the medium of interacting with the curriculum is via English. I therefore speculate that the development of academic identity is dependent on the acquisition of the language of communication in the ACOP.

The literature perused has given an indication that language, culture, and interaction may be conceptualized as the three sides of a triangle for communication in an ACOP. It may thus be relevant to visualize that in curriculum development, language, culture and interaction be made the fulcrum of considerations if student learning and achievement is to constitute the priority of the educational institution. To be more specific, since we are in a globalized age, English language seems to be pivotal to the curriculum experiences negotiated in the academic institution by students. At this juncture I postulate that French-speaking students come to study in South Africa because of their goals of becoming bilingual. Becoming bilingual is also an act of attaining an identity.

Language seems to oscillate between the analyzed realms of curriculum issues, namely the planned, enacted and assessed curricula. These three aspects are symbols of academic culture, expressed through the tool of language. The planned, enacted and assessed curricula are disseminated through language. In this study I conceptualize language as academic cultural intervention in action. Consequently language, culture and interaction are described as the three sides of a triangle for communicating with the curriculum.

3.10 Synopsis of conceptualized ideas from the extant literature

In Figure 3.1 I use the diverse understanding I have gained from the extant literature to put forward a conceptualization of the scenario at hand. This conceptualization provides a vivid perception of the interplay of forces in an academic community, with the non-South African French-speaking students as new entrants to the community. The equilateral triangle presents the conceptualized scenario with language; culture and interaction at each of the tips of the triangle (see Figure 3.1). A perpendicular line that is drawn from the apex where language is situated, lands at the mid-point of the base connecting culture and interaction. The apparent implication of this intersection seems to be that language is important in culture, and needed for interaction in the community. Therefore, the concept of language in an ACOP is seen as cultural display in action. Secondly, a perpendicular line that is drawn from the base of the

triangle where culture is located, lands at the mid-point of the line connecting language to interaction. This seems to symbolize the versatility of culture in language, and that cultural negotiation is vital for interaction and communication in a community. I define this relationship by proposing that culture is a depiction of specified language, expressed via interaction in the ACOP. Lastly, the perpendicular line that is drawn from the base of the triangle where interaction is positioned, lands at the base of the line joining culture and language. I propose an implication regarding this scenario. The implication is that interaction in the ACOP is fostered through the seamless connection of language and culture. It is thus conceptualized in this study that when there is interaction cultural negotiation takes place via the tool of language. The successful implementation of the curriculum in an academic institution seems to depend on the extent of negotiation between language, culture and interaction with stakeholders. Hence, for any form of learning to take place, one argues that a measure of equilibrium may have to take place between language, culture and interaction. In this case, learning is hypothesized to take place likely at the midpoint of the intersection between the perpendicular lines drawn from each of the tips of the triangle in Figure 3.1. Similarly, in response to the work of Lave and Wenger (1991:115) on the issue of power relations in an academic institution, I propose that the power dynamics in an ACOP may be extinguished at the midpoint of the lines of intersection of the diagonals in Figure 3.1. This is taken to be the point of leverage where stakeholders in the ACOP recognize their stakes in the community, at times due to the strong forces at play in the “continuity-displacement contradiction” discourse.

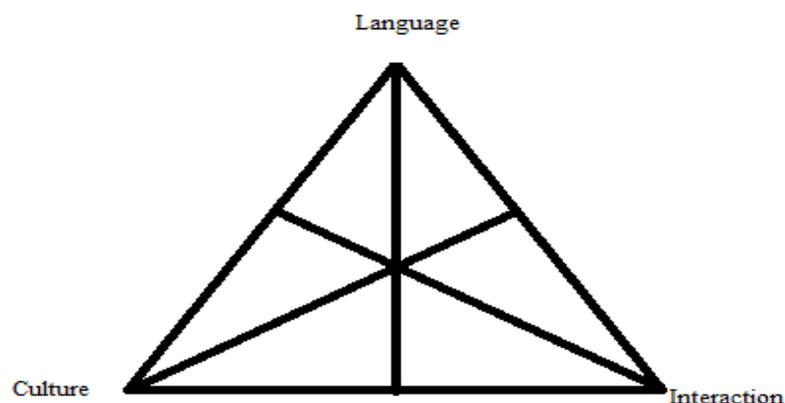


Figure 3.1: A representation of the interplay of forces in the community

3.11 Life satisfaction and a sense of belonging in academic communities of practice

According to the work of Chow (2007) life satisfaction in the host society is a measure of the acculturation and identity negotiation experienced by people in an unusual community. Chow (2007) explored sense of belonging and life satisfaction among Hong Kong adolescent immigrants in Canada. Although immigrants were the focus of his study, I borrow a few insights to present a case in terms of the concept of life satisfaction. Factors which reflected life satisfaction in Chow's (2007) study were positive indication of friendship with indigenous peers, commendable academic experience and absence of prejudice. Thus, I problematize these issues in this study by exploring the extent of friendship between the French-speaking students and other stakeholders in the ACOP. The idea of "belonging" as described by Capra and Steindl-Rast (1991:14) is significant:

Belonging has a double sense. When I say, 'This belongs to me', I mean that I possess something. But when I say, 'I belong', I don't mean that something possesses me, but that I take part in, am intimately involved with a reality greater than myself, whether it's a love relationship, a community, a religion or the whole universe. So 'I belong' means 'Here I find my place', 'That is it' and at the same time, 'Here I am'.

The aspects of Capra and Steindl-Rast's (1991:14) definition that catch attention involve the following. First, that "belonging" is an indication of participation in a venture that surpasses personality. It is conjectured that having to learn English, acculturate and define their identities surpass their personalities. Consequently the sense of belonging of French-speaking students would be explored by looking at their interests and the things they participate in. The second aspect entails exploring whether they are "intimately involved with a reality greater than" what they envisaged. I speculate that learning English is a reality they would be confronting in the course of their academic endeavours in the ACOP. It is also speculated that the requirement to learn English constitutes a challenge to them. The third part of the definition is "community". I shall be investigating whether they are pleased to study and live in the halls of residence, or even around the campus. To stretch the inquiry to the mainstream society, I shall be looking at their stance on the South African community as a whole in order to make an informed judgment. Fourth, French-speaking students would be asked if they find their place in the ACOP. Fifth, their availability is of the utmost importance in determining their sense of belonging to the ACOP. If they are not available, the other stakeholders would be confronted by an inability to reach them with the curriculum specifications.

Therefore the unbiased account of the French-speaking students, in terms of their perception of life satisfaction and sense of belonging to the campus environment becomes valuable in determining their acceptance of the academic institution. Consequently, as they make their decisions known on such matters, the possibility of knowing their stance on academic acculturation and academic identity becomes plausible. Their participation in the ACOP with other stakeholders thus becomes unambiguous to explore. Life satisfaction and sense of belonging among the French-speaking students in this study are presented as hidden curriculum issues to be explored.

3.12 Conceptualized relationship between acculturation, identity, language and cultural negotiation

Based on findings in literature I therefore present a diagrammatic conceptualization of the relationship between acculturation, mediation of identities, language and cultural negotiation among the non-South African French-speaking students under study as hidden curriculum experiences that they may confront within the academic institution.

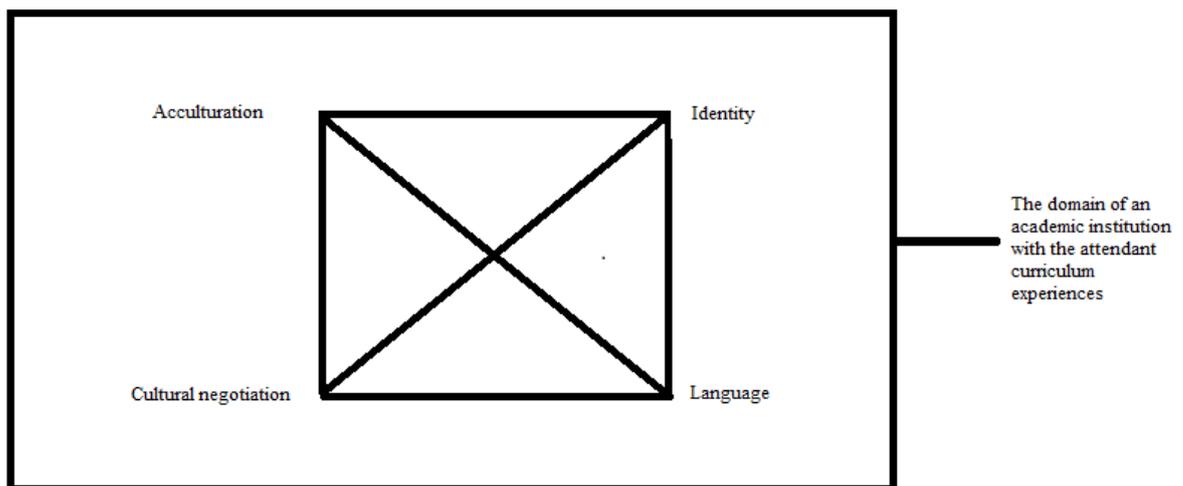


Figure 3.2: Relationship between acculturation, mediation of identities, cultural negotiation and language

In Figure 3.2 the large rectangular block represents the academic domain with the attendant curricula. The smaller and inscribed rectangle typifies the different forces that immigrant students tend to negotiate at the four different corners of the rectangle, namely acculturation, identity negotiation, cultural negotiation and language. Acculturation, negotiation of identities, cultural dialogue and language are interrelated because they are issues that students

confront as hidden curriculum experiences. Although these concepts basically emerged in studies relating to immigrant students, they have been adapted to suit this study. Acculturation is dependent on language; and the mediation of identities is hinged on cultural negotiation. Acculturation is reliant on the ability to enter into cultural dialogue, and the language of communication within the community is useful for the expression of identities. There is no special order for any of these issues to be set in motion in a community such as the academic institution. Spontaneity of reaction to the prevailing power relations is proposed to initiate decisions that are made by the non-South African French-speaking students within the academic domain. The important thing seems to be the predisposition of the members of the community to forces that trigger their determination to negotiate and intermingle with the forces within the ACOP. The diagonal lines of the inscribed rectangle elucidate the interrelatedness among the concepts. This conceptualization presents a pedestal of discussion for Chapter Seven in which the findings of this chapter are weighed against what has been found in the empirical investigation.

3.13 Conclusion

This chapter has presented issues of the curriculum with respect to foreign students studying in novel countries and intricate phenomena relating to their retention and goals of reaching the domain of the ACOP. The language of communication has appeared as a strong force which serves as a fulcrum for other sociocultural factors (acculturation, identity and cultural dialogue) which are seen as hidden curriculum issues. Language thus becomes an important consideration in the development of academic identity among the French-speaking students of this study. Current speculations relating to power dynamics in academic institutions have been discussed as proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991). It was found that the issues of “continuity-displacement contradiction” are complex to manage in education. Lave and Wenger (1991) recommend that issues of power relations in communities of practice are extinguished in the process of time when stakeholders know and exercise their roles. A relevant conceptualization was proposed to describe the concepts of acculturation and identity. Academic acculturation has been proposed to describe the necessary adjustments French-speaking students have to make to scholarly issues in the ACOP. It is envisioned to make them take responsibility for their learning of the curriculum. The concept of sense of belonging is related to acculturation. It is a tool capable of predicting the place of students in the academic institution.

Academic identity is defined in the chapter to indicate the posture of French-speaking students with respect to the academic dictates of the campus. It is a tool for predicting the extent of scholastic cultural negotiations and the stance taken in terms of self-esteem to take responsibility for academic learning. Halic et al. (2009), Wenger (1998:163) and Vandeyar (2010) provide a basis for anchoring the development of academic identity among foreign students in a novel and multiculturally disparate milieu by emphasizing the significance of a language of communication in academic communities of practice. Life satisfaction was another prominent feature, a prediction of how students acculturate and describe their identity. Chapter Four presents the methodology employed in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The third chapter of this study entails an appraisal of the extant literature in an attempt to understand the intricate issues of the curriculum in the private higher education institution. This chapter presents the methodology of the research study. The meta-theoretical and methodological paradigms in qualitative research are discussed. The concepts of narrative inquiry, case study, the design of the study, data collection methods and data analysis employed during the research are enumerated. Discussions of the chapter include a description of how the trustworthiness of the study was ensured, and ethical considerations. In Table 4.1 (below) a sketch of the research strategy is presented for ease of navigation and focus.

Table 4.1: The research strategy for the study

PARADIGMATIC SUPPOSITIONS	
Epistemological models	Constructivism and Interpretivism
Methodological models	Qualitative study approach
RESEARCH DESIGN	
Qualitative research using narrative inquiry and case study	
SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS	
Purposeful sampling	Selection of 28 French-speaking students. Another data set was introduced for triangulation purposes by interviewing 5 lecturers at the private tertiary institution, the manager of pre-degree programme, the Dean of IT Faculty, 6 South African students and 5 French-speaking student advisors.
DATA COLLECTION	
Data collection methods	Semistructured interviews, focus group interviews, documentary analysis, field notes, institutional policy documents, academic records, to verify French-speaking students' academic performance and researcher's observational journal.
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	
Content analysis (Elo & Kyngas, 2008) and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006): coding, formation of meaning units, condensed meaning units, categories and themes (Krippendorff, 1980; Mayring, 2000) and document analysis.	

QUALITY CRITERIA OF THE RESEARCH Credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF THE RESEARCH Informed consent, anonymity, safety considerations, confidentiality and reliance.
CONCLUSIONS

Adapted from Adebajji (2010).

4.2 Paradigmatic assumptions

4.2.1 Epistemological models

In this research study I assumed the role of an interpretivist, bordered by the constructivist line of reasoning which perceives reality in a distinctive perspective (Bryman, 2008). This role was adopted to comply with the suggestion of Burden (1997:242) that researchers have to embrace new patterns of ideas and writing that make a plea for speaking expressively for further intricate ways of perceiving the world. In this research study, epistemology was perceived as an area of thinking bordered by questions relating to the definition of knowledge and how knowledge is validated (Gottlieb, 2007:5-6).

In an attempt to comprehend the route taken by non-South African French-speaking students in the acquisition, evaluation, and validation of knowledge, I had to identify with what they regarded as knowledge fabrication (Gottlieb, 2007:5-6). This placed a measure of responsibility on me as I was interested in obtaining information from French-speaking students and other respondents of the study (representatives of the private higher education). Consequently the need to become an interpretivist was created.

4.2.2 Interpretivism

Interpretivism is a multidimensional paradigm which focuses on ascribing meanings to diverse experiences of humans (Bryman, 2008; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Pouliot, 2007). The notion of interpretivism in this study was premised on the reality that people are always negotiating and giving meaning to the dynamics of their world. Consequently investigators who employ the interpretivist way of reasoning are of the view that the world is fabricated by humans, making it dissimilar from the natural world (Williamson, 2002a). There seems to be a likelihood of lapsing into subjectivity during the interpretation of obtained data.

However the prescription of Pouliot was helpful in guarding against subjectivity because through interpretation, biased meanings become expressed in a concrete form as part of an intersubjective milieu (Pouliot, 2007:366).

The interpretivist paradigm was used in this research study because it supports research in its natural scenario by employing an inductive style of reasoning and giving emphasis to qualitative data (Williamson, 2006:84). The private higher education institution where this research study was conducted is an example of a natural scenario with students, lecturers, staff members and other people concerned operating as community members. As a result of the notion that qualitative research is interpretive in nature as discussed by Denzin and Lincoln (2003:3), I used interpretivism as my epistemological model. Furthermore, I used interpretivism because qualitative research is an arena of investigation in its own jurisdiction, cutting across subject areas, disciplines, and topics of interest (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003:3). Interpretivism can be classified under constructivism as demonstrated in the next section.

4.2.3 Constructivism

According to Williamson (2006:85), constructivism is an aspect of many interpretivist models which relates to how humans fabricate experiences around their world. Consequently I was given access into the lives of the research respondents of this study. I was thus able to understand how they have been able to construct and ascribe meanings to the experiences of their lives in the tertiary institution. Constructivism was employed in this study because it is a conjecture of knowledge which takes the concept of interpretation as an inherent branch of social studies (Adler, 2005:12). Adler (2005) gave me a clear appreciation of the seamless connection between constructivism and interpretivism as valuable concepts that can assist an understanding of phenomena or concepts of interest. Hacking (1982) gave a helpful logical ascription to constructivism by saying that it is a technique of interpretation. A style of reasoning is bordered by a novel realm of objects to investigate (ontology), a new manner of facts and circumstances (an epistemology), and its laid down principles of evidence as well as expression (a methodology) (Hacking 2002b:4).

As a constructivist researcher I was able to investigate constructions or meanings of broad concepts such as cultural ideals, or more specific issues or ideas that led to the elucidation of the unknown concepts of the study. Consequently I involved myself as a constructivist

researcher by investigating constructions or meanings ascribed by my respondents in this study to happenings and events within the private higher education community. This research study therefore focused on individual and personal fabrications of the research respondents in an attempt to decipher the intricate issues of the curriculum that were being investigated (Williamson, 2006:85).

Drawing on the ideology of Kelly (1955), a prominent feature in personal construct theory, it was assumed that the respondents of this research study ascribe meaning to their space on an individual basis, an indication of personal constructs reality. The work of Guba and Lincoln (1981, 1982, 1989, 1994) and Lincoln & Guba (1985) further illuminated my understanding of constructivism that it opts to carry out investigations in natural situations. The objective of constructivism was further expounded in this research study because it comprehends the diverse kinds of fabrications that humans engage in. It also endeavours to gain some agreement of meaning, rapt alertness to novel accounts with the advantage of experience and enhanced information (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Stringer gave a vivid description to the construction of meanings. I was thus able to see the construction of meanings ascribed by the research respondents of this study as shaped realities with meaning-making depiction of their lived experiences (Stringer, 1996:41). The assertion of Stringer gave me the privilege of generating realities that I was able to capture of the experiences of my respondents in terms of issues crosscutting the planned, enacted and assessed curricula at the private higher education institution where this study was conducted. With elapsed time, the respondent and investigator constructions became established and comprehensible as suggested by Guba and Lincoln (1994). The benefit of this progression was that the constructions of respondents and researcher enabled the explanation and meaning making of experiences under exploration. Appleton and King (2002:644) gave an important constructivist consideration which enhanced my access to the research field more than a year before the commencement of data collection by stating that:

A constructivist methodology encourages the inquirer to discuss topics or issues prior to their investigation with fellow practitioners as this helps to refine the inquirer's thinking before contemplating access to the field. In the initial stages of a constructivist inquiry the researcher is more likely to gain access to the study sites and achieve a purposive sample by sustaining a process of interaction and discussion with potential participants.

The suggestion of Appleton and King (2002:644) became an invaluable asset as my presence, more than a year ahead of the data collection at the research site gave me the opportunity to enter into dialogue with colleagues and staff. This early access to the research site gave me the opportunity to become a participant observer, as I was always present at the research site to explore the nomenclature of the private higher education institution. I was granted permission to understand the principles operating within the institution, being a staff member at the academic institution where this study was conducted. I perused and understood policy documents and the planned/intended, enacted and assessed curricula from the Foundation Phase Course (pre-degree) to third year of study. This access culminated in gaining an understanding of certain vital issues cutting across the curriculum at the research site of this study.

As suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985:100), I had to take advantage of the platform of interaction which was basic to the discovery of the diverse perceptions of reality on the ground. A platform of negotiation, discussion and familiarization with the research site was thus given in advance, which paved the way for a purposive selection of the research participants.

4.3 Methodological models

4.3.1 Qualitative study approach

This study adopted a qualitative route to explore the non-South African French-speaking students' experiences of curriculum at a private higher education institution. The definition that was given to qualitative research by Denzin and Lincoln (2005:3) as "a situated activity that locates the observer in the world" became the starting point of enquiry about the route to navigate this study. I took advantage of the scholarship that qualitative research comprises an assortment of interpretive, logical practices that make the globe perceptible to explore this research study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:3).

The notion that qualitative techniques transform the world of participants in order to know the details of events happening at designated places paved the way for navigating this study in this path (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Therefore the world of this study's respondents was transformed into a succession of accounts, including notes taken in the research field, interviews, and discussions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:3). At this level it implies that

qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This suggests that qualitative researchers study things in their usual scenery by attempting to make sense of the experiences of respondents. They (qualitative researchers) may also understand occurrences in terms of the meaning ascribed by respondents to such experiences. The qualitative approach was used because it focuses on human actions, outlook and mindset (Polit & Hungler, 2003).

According to the suggestion of Garbers (1996) the aim of qualitative research entails promoting personalized comprehension that is capable of enhancing insight into the situation of humans. As a qualitative investigator I attempted to understand the avenue that the research respondents utilized, and to make sense of their experiences, through descriptive means. This study produced the opportunity to explore the challenges confronting non-South African French-speaking students in the tertiary institution with respect to issues cutting across the curriculum. This study was therefore exploratory because in the South African perspective not much has been reported on this topic. It was my passionate desire to obtain data from the participants of this study, to construct an understanding of the meanings ascribed to their curriculum experiences out of which the challenges confronting them emerged. I adhered to the advice of Cresswell (2003) that in a qualitative research context the researcher always makes knowledge claims premised on the ability to construct knowledge with the ultimate aim of building a theory or model.

Consequently, I gathered the views and perspectives of non-South African French-speaking students, lecturers who taught them, French-speaking student advisors who were involved with the day-to-day counselling of the non-South African French-speaking students and the Dean of the IT faculty. The inquiry was directed at deciphering what the respondents of this research study believed, said, and did at the time of the study. This was achieved by probing the respondents intensely to capture the curriculum experiences of non-South African French-speaking students of the HEI.

4.3.2 The design of the study

In an attempt to generate insights into the perspectives of the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students and other stakeholders at Montana College, a qualitative research design was employed. A combination of strategies that were selected to obtain reliable data included a review of the literature to capture an appropriate understanding of the research trajectory and to relate previous studies to the topic under exploration (McMillan, 1992:43). Other strategies were data collection methods (e.g. semistructured interviews, field notes and researcher's observation journal), narrative inquiry, case study and ethnography (Cresswell, 2007).

4.3.3 Decisions taken in conducting this study

The research design of this study was the precise process and dimension of data collection, arrangement and breakdown of obtained data, aimed at arriving at the goals and objectives of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The research design of this study was based on the premise that it referred to the gathering and investigation of wide-ranging account of the research respondents. This approach was chosen in an attempt to obtain elucidation on the issues of curriculum, which may be impossible via the use of other research methods (Ngobeli, 2001:50). The first part of Ngobeli's (2001:50) study struck a point that motivated my interest to collect data using narrative inquiry. This striking notion came from Ngobeli's reference to the gathering and breakdown of broad descriptive data. It dawned on me that I needed to employ narrative inquiry to explore the situation at hand in order to obtain unbiased data from the research respondents. The second part of Ngobeli's (2001:50) study presented a pedestal for using the case study approach. The reason is that case study refers to a scenario of importance that typifies a particular case to be explored.

The different methods employed to conduct the study are subsequently addressed.

4.3.4 Narrative inquiry

To initiate this discussion the understanding of a narrative becomes important. The tool for narrative is storytelling. This tool is important because stories are equally connected to one another, and symbolize how people are identified (Savin-Badin & Van Niekerk, 2007:463). This seems to be a symbolism of the track of events in the story teller's life, which invariably becomes an emblem of identity because of the meanings attached to such stories. I took the

counsel that utmost in the inquisition of occurrences is the asking of relevant and reliable research questions (Hendry, 2010:73). I was thus confident to ask questions from the respondents of this research study in an attempt to get rid of uncertainties conceived at the onset of the study as suggested by Hendry (2010). The narratives obtained from this study produced data concerning issues that were unanticipated (Bruner, 1996:121). The obtained narratives elucidated the unevenness that was facilitated by inquisition, actual incidents of peoples' lives, or puzzling events, drawing on Hendry (2007:73). These steps were negotiated because the responses that were given to posed questions and uncertainties, in other words, the route traversed to systematize and make meaning, have the undertone of narrative accounts (Hendry, 2010:73). The argument of Josselson (2003:4) that narrative research is "up close and personal in that" it entails a comprehensive account of chosen "individuals in social context and in time" was useful in this study. I also realized that narrative inquiry entails an extremely prepared and self-pondering investigator instead of an array of unbiased and objective expertise to tackle any intellectual puzzle (2003:4). All these findings on narrative inquiry gave me the impetus of compiling the vocal description of life experiences with respect to issues cutting across the curriculum in storied format (Parker & Shotter, 1990). The stories of the research respondents were told in sequential fashions as dictated by their readiness to divulge information as long as they were comfortable to narrate their experiences of the salient issues concerning the curriculum (Shacklock & Thorp, 2005). During the data collection process I saw myself as an efficient listener and the research respondents as storytellers instead of mere participants (Savin-Badin & Van Niekerk, 2007:464).

True-life stories are typically mixed up accounts of facts, fabricated on narratives. It is stressed that any real story has the undertone of the storyteller's perception which cannot be taken to be the real version of reality (Lauritzen & Jager, 1997). This anomaly was taken into consideration in the process of the study because I took a stance on reflexivity so that the trustworthiness of the study would be ensured. Conle explains the concept of narrative inquiry, arguing that there are two voices involved in narrative inquiry. These are the voice of the narrator and that of the researcher. I was thus able to benefit from a theoretical understanding of the process of data collection by lending my ears to pragmatic evidence from the research respondents (Conle, 2000b:194). In this study story of the non-South African French-speaking students, lecturers who taught them, the head of foundation phase

course (pre-degree), the Dean of the IT faculty, and French-speaking student advisors were used as data sources. The reason for this is because the idea of narrative involves the collection of stories as an avenue of comprehending experiences as negotiated and reported. The stories of French-speaking students and the other stakeholders were put in the picture via exploration and perusal of the extant literature (Savin-Badin & Van Niekert, 2007:459). The narratives obtained from each respondent of the study constituted the meaning-making foundation for the study. The impetus to embark on narrative inquiry was further furnished by the understanding proposed by Connelly and Clandinin (2006:477):

People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. Narrative inquiry, the study of experience as story, then, is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience. Narrative inquiry as a methodology entails a view of the phenomenon. To use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt a particular view of experience as phenomenon under study.

4.3.5 Case study

The appropriate method chosen is case study since this research “revolves around the in-depth study of a single event or a series of linked cases over a defined period of time” (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995:317). A case study research design is a qualitative approach that can be used for conducting research because it guarantees exhaustive data-gathering as well as profound understanding of the selected cases that are characteristic of other comparable cases (Mouton, 2001; Plat, 2006; Schwandt, 2007). As suggested by Yin (2003) that in case study research a single data collection method may not suffice. Multiple sources of data became expedient in the course of conducting this research study. This was done to obtain deeper understanding of the phenomenon being investigated by gathering diverse sources of data on the French-speaking students’ experiences of the curriculum. The aim was to unite several dimensions of viewpoints in order to create a reinforced version of their stories, instead of merely accomplishing harmony or substantiation (Barusch, Gringeri & George, 2011:12-13). As this study was a case study of non-South African French-speaking students’ curriculum experiences in the private higher education institution, a number of instruments in qualitative dimensions were employed.

The following section describes the research setting and the data collection methods.

4.3.6 Research sample and sampling method relevant to the study

Sampling denotes the procedure employed to choose a percentage of the population for research (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:5) in an attempt to draw conclusions from the entire population (Zikmund, 2000:338). As specified by Creswell (2007:37) qualitative investigators are prone to gather data in the site where respondents negotiate the issue or problem under investigation. The study sample was drawn from a private provider of higher education in the Johannesburg area of South Africa. Since the research was to explore the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students, 28 French-speaking students were purposively drawn from the pre-degree programme to the third-year degree programme. These comprised citizens of Cameroon, Gabon, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Chad Republic and Benin Republic in West Africa. Separate semistructured interviews were conducted with 5 lecturers who taught them, 5 French-speaking student advisors, the head of the Foundation Phase Course (pre-degree) and the Dean of the IT Faculty. The French-speaking students taught by me were observed during normal lecture hours, free periods and on their way home to obtain the natural context of their environment. They were also observed in order to match their responses during the interview sessions with what was seen as they attended lectures and interacted with peers. During classroom observation sessions the mode of facilitation of lecturers, accents, energy invested by lecturers during facilitation exercises, interaction among class members with French-speaking students, to mention but a few were observed. I could not observe all the French-speaking students, especially those who were not my students for practical reasons. However, I did observe a few of them when they were doing group work in my class.

As a lecturer on the research site, it was easy to identify the respondents of the study who were French-speaking students, lecturers who taught them, French-speaking academic advisors, head of Foundation Phase Course (pre-degree) and the Dean of the IT faculty. The other deans were not interviewed because they did not have much to say about the French-speaking students. According to Creswell (2002) purposive sampling technique was used in this qualitative research since it allowed the autonomy to choose respondents that were capable of participating in the study. Purposive sampling was used in this investigation because I was required to pick particular essentials from that same population which had to be representative or enlightening about the research study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:175).

Consequently, I had to decisively pick the research respondents. The choice of participants was not done haphazardly but with the premonition of securing the respondents that could give detailed information on the phenomenon under scrutiny (Merriam & Associates, 2002:179). This was because they exhibited traits of interest to me (Merriam & Associates, 2002:179). Lemmer and van Wyk (2004) write in support of this claim by specifying that decisive sampling is apposite where there are restricted respondents to sample from, as was the case with the non-South African French-speaking students and the other respondents on the study site. For this reason the purposeful sampling technique was used to select the research site and participants of the study (Lemmer & van Wyk, 2004; Merriam & Associates, 2002; McMillan & Schummacher, 2006; Silverman, 2005). Purposive sampling is about intensity rather than the stretch of obtained data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). The sampling strategy in this qualitative research did not aim at attaining statistical illustrativeness. It reflected the diversity present within the confines of the population studied (Popay, Rogers & Williams, 1998) and the theoretical underpinning of the study (Johnson & Waterfield, 2004). The sampling strategy was based on the study's research question, scope and the kind of information desired (Sandelowski, 1995).

I identified the French-speaking students who participated in this study by contacting colleagues at the research site on the purpose of my study. I was given access to introduce this study to students from French-speaking countries that were willing to participate in the study during lecture periods. There were times that I spotted French-speaking students during observation sessions on campus as they communicated with one another in the medium of French. Some of the French-speaking students previously interviewed introduced their classmates who were also from French-speaking countries to participate in the study. The majority of French-speaking students contacted were not interested in participating in the study, thus limiting the participating number to 28.

Apart from the lecturers of Montana College that were interviewed in 2012, additional interviews were conducted with each of the 5 lecturers that were interviewed because I found that the previous interviews did not cover enough ground as far as my literature study was concerned. I went back to the findings in the literature, grouped the findings together and made comments in terms of areas that were left out. Similarly, the previously interviewed French-speaking student advisors were also revisited to collect more data because some

questions were still unanswered. I was fortunate that 5 of them were still in the employ of Montana College.

4.3.7 Data collection methods

a) The initiation of data collection

The process of data collection was a very challenging exercise. After obtaining ethical clearance from the Research Committee of Montana College I embarked on making an effort to initiate discussions with respondents. Despite being a staff member it was not an easy task. Respondents wanted to know the aims of the study. Lecturers were curious and wanted to know whether I was monitoring their practice. It took time to persuade them that I was investigating French-speaking students from the perspectives of how they interacted with peers and responded to questions and the lectures they received from lecturers.

Many of the French-speaking students contacted declined to participate in the study. Some of them gave excuses that they could not fluently speak English. A number of them said they were shy because they lacked communicative abilities. The manager of the pre-degree programme was very supportive. She granted me formal and informal interviews on reasons for inaugurating the pre-degree programme, strengths and weaknesses of the programme, and the achievements so far. She showed me important documentation such as the pass rate for the past 3 years. From the academic report I made notes, especially on the pass rate of French-speaking students, their issues with the LoLT and attitudes.

b) Analysis of documents

Documentary information is regarded as a key source of substantiation utilized in case studies (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh and Sorensen, 2006). The strong point of documents as a data source is entrenched in the fact that they are already available in the situation and rooted in the setting, do not interfere with or amend the situations in avenues that the presence of the researcher could; nor are they reliant on the impulses of people whose collaboration is vital for gathering data, for instance, through interviews and observation (Merriam, 2002:13). Furthermore, documents are resources that can be used to complement the interviews and motivate the investigator's philosophy regarding ideas evolving from the data (Merriam, 2001). Documentary data are mostly good sources for qualitative case studies, since they base an inquiry in the perspective of the problem being explored (Merriam, 2001:126).

The policy documents of Montana College were perused. These institutional documents served as secondary source of data and were utilized mainly to augment the interview and observation data. It was a requirement of the research committee that I needed to know the rules and responsibilities involved in conducting research at the institution. I was afforded this opportunity of gaining access to documents because I was a staff member. I contacted the registrar who assisted in providing me with vital information as to where to make enquiries and obtain documents that I needed in my study of Montana College. I was granted access to the admission policy of Montana College. I found that French-speaking students had to achieve a minimum of 40% in each subject they had taken at secondary school level before they were admitted to the pre-degree programme. They had to attend English classes for at least 8 months with a minimum of a 50% pass mark before being admitted to the pre-degree programme. Towards the end of 2012 an English learning centre was instituted at Montana College to cater for the English proficiency of first-time non-English speaking students in preparation for the pre-degree programme. I came across a documentation which insisted on ensuring that non-English speaking students needed to take additional modules known as *Bridging English*. Although this module was a requirement for all pre-degree students as well because from the information gathered at Montana College, South African students also had linguistic challenges in the LoLT. I gained access to the academic records of French-speaking students from year-one through to the third-year degree programme. This was done in an attempt to explore their academic performance because Chow (2006) proposes that educational experience entails an exploration of academic performance and schooling experience.

Other formal documents perused were the Montana College policy on learning and teaching, lecturer's Handbook and the calendar which stipulates the arrangement of events and lecture programmes. I studied the academic calendar in an attempt to know when to commence my data capture. I ensured that data capture did not tamper with examination and test periods. Consequently, I made adequate efforts to reach my respondents before they became unavailable.

c) Interviews

I examined the suggestion of Patton (2002:341) that it is not possible to look at how individuals have succeeded in organizing the world and the meaning ascribed to the

happenings of the world. Consequently I had to ask my respondents questions regarding the intellectual puzzle of this study. Interviews are generally employed as a technique of data collection in qualitative research (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delpont, 2005). Interview data in qualitative research enables the investigator to obtain the viewpoints, involvements, outlooks, understanding and sentiments of participants and others who are knowledgeable about the concerns of the investigator (Patton, 1990). Interviews were conducted with an interview guide because of its indispensability in the course of exploring the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students at Montana College. The interview guides contain an array of preestimated questions aimed at unveiling cogent issues under exploration. The obtained data consisted of precise extracts with adequate context to provide the basis for interpretation.

A mixture of the interview guide and consistent open-ended inquiry approach was utilized. In consonance with this approach questions were constructed before the interviews to enable each research respondent gain access to the same questions. It also assisted me to probe when I realized the need to dig deeper into areas of concern that were not anticipated in the course of formulating the interview questions (Patton, 2002). Because of the fact that I was the only interviewer, I knew what the literature said about the curriculum experiences of students. This gave me the privilege of minimizing the risk of variance in the technique of interviewing respondents compared to the procedure when multiple interviewers are employed. The interview guide assisted me in adhering to time constraints. It provided the opportunity of establishing rapport with my respondents, while at the same time ensuring commitment to the focus of the study (Patton, 2002).

The interviews were conducted with each French-speaking student in separate lecture halls when they had free periods. Interviews were conducted with lecturers, the manager of the pre-degree programme, student advisors and the Dean of the IT Faculty in their respective offices. Before the commencement of each interview, the research respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. I obtained their consent before conducting the interviews and using the video recorder. The video recording sessions enabled an analysis of each interview to detect body language, expressions and other clues that assisted in analysing the data. It provided another basis for observation when analysing the data. Interview questions posed to French-speaking students are provided in Appendix B.

d) Focus groups

A focus group, similarly known as group interviewing, is basically a qualitative technique (Babbie, 2007). According to Breen (2006), 4-6 participants are sufficient in focus group interviews. Contingent “on the complexity of the phenomenon under investigation, theoretical saturation is normally reached after 10–12 interviews” for both focus group and semistructured interviews (Breen, 2006:466). In a focus group interview the insights, practices and knowledge of a group of people who have some experience in common regarding a state of affairs are explored (Kumar, 2005). I used focus group interviews to interview the French-speaking students of this study because I needed their perceptions as a group as suggested by Patton (2002). The French-speaking students shared and compared information in non-aggravating environments on their perceptions and experiences pertaining to issues cutting across the curriculum such as the language of learning and teaching, academic acculturation, academic identity and life satisfaction, to mention but a few. This action was taken to adhere to the suggestions of De Vos et al. (2005) and Seale, Gobo, Gubrium and Silverman (2007). My goal was to listen and collect data from them in a welcoming and courteous setting. As suggested by Cooper and Schindler (2000), I found the idea of communicating with French-speaking students in groups informative because I was able to make the right judgments on intricate issues of the curriculum and the academic community of practice. The French-speaking students were more comfortable sharing their experiences with one another and stating how they felt about Montana College. I followed the stipulations of Seale et al. (2007) in an attempt to obtain informed consent from the focus groups by explaining the procedures and aims of the study to them. They were assured that the information divulged would be held in strict confidence after obtaining consent from them before using the video recorder. I used an interview guide to control questioning in the focus group interviews (see Appendix C). The French-speaking students interviewed were chosen from the pre-degree to the third year degree programme. There were 4 different sets of focus group interviews with 6 students in each category from pre-degree to third-year.

A major drawback of the focus group interviews was the creation of rapport with the French-speaking students. As far as Focus Group 1 was concerned they were not initially relaxed but I used my experience as a lecturer to break the ice by allowing them to get to know one another. They were relatively new students and had not yet settled into the activities of the campus, being pre-degree students. Focus Group 2 respondents were more relaxed than Focus

Group 1 respondents because they had found peers from other African French-speaking countries who were in communication with them. Focus group 3 was an exciting one. They spoke articulately on the issues raised during the interview session. However, I assured them that the interview sessions were going to be precise. According to Babbie (2007) and De Vos et al. (2005), one or two members of the group may dominate the conversation. I was aware of this occurrence by deliberately involving all the members of each group in the inquiry process, in an attempt to obtain concrete findings.

e) Observation

Observation is a resolute, methodical and careful way of observing and paying attention to a communication in an on-going manner (Kumar, 2005). It involves the methodical observing and recording of happenings, conducts, and objects in the communal setting (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Observation is one of the ways that can be used to gather primary data because it offers first-hand evidence (Kumar, 2005). Two types of observation techniques are found namely participant observation and non-participant observation (Kumar, 2005). The participant observation technique was mainly used to collect data in this study. I did not get involved in the undertakings that took place in the lecture rooms but I was a passive observer, viewing and paying attention to the lectures from which conclusions were drawn on the French-speaking students in terms of their interactional capacities with peers (Kumar, 2005:120). The other students did not know that I was observing the French-speaking students during those sessions.

In documenting the observations a narrative technique was engaged in which I captured a description of the interaction between French-speaking students and peers in my words. I made brief notes while observing the communication and shortly after the observation, the notes were made in a more detailed layout. The benefit of this pattern of recording according to Kumar (2005:121) was that it offers a deeper perception into the interaction. Observation as a tool of data collection has been described to suffer from a number of challenges. When people are conscious that they are targets of the observation process they may alter their conduct (Kumar, 2005). This may lead to misrepresentation, not demonstrating the usual behaviour of persons being observed. It is also likely that the individual that is being observed may be influenced to the extent that the reality being explored may be lost. I attempted to control this anomaly by watching the video recordings of participants as the data

were being transcribed. This idea provided the opportunity to match what I saw in the classroom observations with their actions as they answered questions that were posed to them. I observed the following at the school and during the facilitation of learning sessions:

- Serenity of the school;
- Sanitation;
- Laboratory and library facilities;
- Teaching equipment (e.g. projectors, laptops, video-clips);
- Mode of teaching;
- Pronunciation of words by lecturers during teaching/facilitation exercises;
- Eloquence of lecturers during teaching sessions;
- Energy displayed by lecturers during teaching/facilitation;
- Group work strategy/role of lecturers during group work;
- Environmental conditions of classes;
- Question and answer sessions;
- Oral presentation sessions;
- Response of lecturers to questions;
- Participation of students during lectures;
- Lecture room management styles of lecturers; and
- Class-sizes.

These perspectives of observation assisted in making the seemingly correct judgment of the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students, and were matched with data from the interviews. An example of observation protocol is in Appendix D.

f) Field notes and researcher's observation journal

Field notes are notes taken during the interview process in an attempt to capture what would assist the researcher in recollecting and reflecting on salient issues during the interview sessions (Hittleman & Simon, 1997; Mulhall, 2003). Consequently all that could not be video-taped during the interview sessions were handwritten to aid data analysis and interpretation of transcribed data. The field notes taken during the research assisted in analysing the data.

g) Recording of data

Data retrieved from the interviews were recorded by means of a video recorder. I did not record the observation sessions with a video-recorder in order not to alert and distract the other students in the lecture rooms. Other students were not aware that I was observing the French-speaking students. The interviews were transcribed as the data capture was being conducted. An example of a transcribed interview is attached as Appendix E.

4.3.8 Data analysis

According to Mcmillan and Schumacher (2010:367) most qualitative analysis is a comparatively methodical course of coding, sorting data to provide enlightenment of a single occurrence of interest. The data from the field interviews were coded according to the following themes, namely language, academic acculturation, academic identity, sense of belonging, intended curriculum, enacted curriculum, assessed curriculum and hidden curriculum experiences. Other codes assigned were academic experiences, campus experiences and power dynamics. Furthermore, since there is no particular and irreplaceable set of procedures recommended for data analysis (Mcmillan and Schumacher, 2010:367), the data analysis of this research contains versions of the literature and previous studies, to show how the codes created from the field work in this study substantiate or oppose prior studies (Cresswell, 2008:258). In practical terms analysis of the data was done by means of thematic analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2006:3) thematic analysis is a technique for recognizing, investigating, and reporting observed trends (themes) within obtained data. Before I embarked on the analysis of the data, the transcriptions of the interviews were thoroughly perused in an attempt to gain an overview of the data. The observation notes and the video recordings were intermittently reconsidered whenever I was unclear about the real meanings attached to statements made by the respondents of the study. As analysis was being done I bore the study's research questions in mind.

As I read through the transcribed interviews, I gave attention to emerging themes by enlisting them in the margin. Themes were identified in the study as I concentrated on statements that captured vital aspects of the obtained data. This was done with respect to the research questions as I judged the versatility of the identified themes, drawing on the suggestions of Braun and Clarke (2006). Eventually as the transcribed interviews were analysed, the main themes relating to the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students in an ACOP at a

private tertiary institution emerged. I checked for essential resemblances between the emerging themes as I read and re-read the interview transcripts, observation and field notes that were taken. My action to embark on this route was in compliance with the advice of Schurink (2004b). The idea of Merriam (1998:158) that evolving perceptions, premonitions and tentative suppositions lead the subsequent stage of collected data, which sequentially culminates in the improvement or construction of questions, became valuable. Consequently I took a step further to refine the themes, which resulted in the discovery of subthemes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In Chapter Five the major themes and subthemes are discussed.

The course of data analysis was performed repeatedly in a non-linear process. Before I commenced data analysis I took time to document them. The interview data were transcribed and document analysis and observations were put in place for easy comprehension. The extracted rich data were contextually documented (curriculum experiences of French-speaking students in a community of practice) prior to being converted into text in preparation for analysis. The documentation path involved three stages, namely the recording of obtained data, transcribing of the obtained data and the production of the novel actuality created by the text.

The abovementioned methods supplement the stages of analysis route detailed by Merriam (1998). The first stage of data analysis that was employed is the *descriptive account*. This enabled me to compact and connect data avenues that provided meaning. This was followed by the *category construction* stage which concentrates on the production of frequent pointers from the existing literature. I yielded to the suggestion of Anafara Jr., Brown and Mangione (2002:28-38) that the categories are usually made-up via a constant technique of data analysis involving the sorting of units of data into groupings with certain things in common. Since this research was a case study conducted in a single context involving French-speaking students and the other stakeholders, data collected were analysed based on the French-speaking students' narratives and then juxtaposed with those of the other stakeholders in an attempt to triangulate data before claims were made. How quality in terms of validity and reliability for the research was ensured is subsequently detailed.

4.4 Quality criteria of the research

4.4.1 Validity and Reliability

The consideration of quality criteria in qualitative research is a measure of a study's validity and reliability. Researchers employ different ways to ascertain and improve a study's validity. In this study validity was the degree to which a story precisely depicted the societal occurrence to which it referred (Hammersley, 1990:57). Validity was also ascertained by considering whether the research questions measured what they were set out to measure (Cohen & Manion, 1994). Reliability, in contrast, is a function of the scope to which research findings can be simulated, if a different investigator embarks on the study (Guba, 1981; Krefting, 1991). Krefting (1991) refers to it as a measure of the consistency of research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) are of the opinion that a measure that is devoid of reliability would not be valid. In this study a mixture of approaches was used to enhance the validity and reliability of the collected data from the research respondents at the study site. These included:

- The use of different research instruments to give room for triangulation.
- Verbatim transcription of research interviews with the assistance of video-tape recorder. Researcher's observation journal was an advantage which reduced bias. This was achieved by documenting my personal reflections, challenges and observed variations while conducting the research, and intermittently cross-checking them during data analysis to avoid subjectivity.
- Not giving prior details of what the research study was measuring during the observation sessions at the lecture halls.
- Making allowance for the voices of the participants to be heard by not pre-empting and completing incomplete statements made by them on their behalf when collecting data.

4.4.2 Debate on validity and reliability as quantitative measures for quality

Lincoln and Guba (1985) present a platform of argument that usual trustworthiness criteria such as validity and reliability are incompatible with the sayings and measures of qualitative research. They recommend that these be replaced with novel sayings and measures to establish the trustworthiness of qualitative research. In more specific terms, the most commonly used terminology for quality assurance in qualitative research is trustworthiness (McGloin, 2008). It is a measure of investigating the extent to which a study has complied

with what it was originally intended to measure (Cresswell, 2005). Guba and Lincoln (1989) propose four criteria for evaluating a study's trustworthiness. These are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

4.4.3 Credibility

Credibility means enhancing the confidence in the fact value of the findings in qualitative research. It provides details that all transcripts are confined within a territorial border of interpretation. It also emphasizes that all investigators become immersed in the text with reality having restricted value (Anfara, Brown & Mangione, 2002; Kincheloe, 2001; Saukko, 2005). It is premised on the principle that a comprehensive description showing the complexities of variables and interactions will be so embedded with data derived from the setting that it cannot help but be valid. The subjective standpoints of all the research participants were taken into consideration by carefully framing the research questions in ways that elicited unbiased responses (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delpont, 2005). I yielded to the advice of Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) that peer debriefing assists in ascertaining the trustworthiness of qualitative research by allowing participants to go through a few of the interview transcripts and the research report. This was an attempt to ensure that there was nothing like subjectivity or misconstrual of divulged information by participants in the study. Similarly Barusch, Gringeri and George (2011:13) recommend that the research respondents may peruse transcribed data of their dialogue with the researcher and make comments on correctness or lapses. I responded to the advice of Fade (2003:142) that respondents may be afforded the opportunity of confirming the transcribed data for correctness and to converse whether they are of the opinion that the results contain their own expressions (Fade, 2003:142). This is referred to as member checking. Peers were requested to attend a summit to appraise the results and reflect on a synopsis of my track of interpretation. (Fade, 2003:142). This attempt is known as peer debriefing. I kept a full account of the justification for the study's breakdown in order to guarantee that peers could map out the appraisal track of the research study (Fade, 2003:142). This was made possible "by writing memos" and sketching illustrations that divulged the commonsense behind each judgment made in the research study (Fade, 2003:142).

The narrative route of inquiry (Bryman, 2008) was used to enhance the credibility of the research study, as the research participants personally divulged information that were video-

taped and transcribed. Recorded interviews with the research respondents were set aside with transcripts that were prepared by me instead of employing the services of a third party (Fade, 2003). This is because the way in which information is divulged is also as vital as what has been said (Fade, 2003:142). I took note of the participant's tone "of voice, emotional state or body language wherever this" was applicable to further enhance the study's credibility (Fade, 2003:142). A thorough consideration and analysis of the video-recorded interviews assisted in doing this to a satisfactory dimension. The rigorous attempt of my supervisor assisted in ensuring the study's trustworthiness by monitoring the evidence of the study.

4.4.4 Transferability

This is a means of foretelling and ascertaining the external validity or the degree to which findings of a study are generalizable. Fade (2003:140) recommends:

It is important to understand that qualitative research does not offer generalizable proofs in the statistical sense. Some qualitative researchers choose not to make any attempt to generalize beyond the specific context of their research. However, qualitative research findings are often applicable to a wide range of settings not just the specific research context.

However, I do not claim that the findings of this study are transferable to other studies since the concept of a qualitative study has the prerogative of inviting the reader to consider whether their own experience has any commonality with the findings of other studies (Fade, 2003:140). This shows the level of responsibility placed on any researcher who may want to extend the frontiers of a research study by borrowing from another context which appears to be congruent with the context of the study being undertaken. However, in qualitative research the idea of generalization is often problematic because of the limited research sample involved and the practice of exploring a scenario (De Vos et al., 2005). However since the aim of qualitative research is not to achieve transferability, interested researchers may have to determine the level to which this study's findings may be applicable to theirs.

4.4.5 Dependability

The attempt taken to ensure dependability in this study entailed engaging in member checking, peer debriefing, triangulation, prolonged engagement at the research site, and the keeping of the researcher's observation journal (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Since a small sample was used in this study, deviating from the concept of quantitative research which involves many respondents, the idea of dependability seems

controversial (Bellefeuille et al., 2005). Koch argues that one of the avenues that can be adopted to show that a research study is dependable entails an appraisal of its course (Koch, 2006:92). Sandelowski (1986) contends that a research and its results can be audited when a different investigator can visibly navigate the path chosen by the researcher in the study. Besides, another investigator could obtain the same or similar but not opposing summary with the investigator's data, viewpoint and context. These ideas paved the way for making provisions for auditable research to enhance the study's dependability by keeping track of events pursued in the study for any other interested researcher to explore.

4.4.6 Confirmability

Confirmability deals with the notion that the findings of the study are the outcome of the objective of the study and devoid of the personal prejudice of the researcher (Mouton, 2001). However, considering the recommendation of Anfara et al. (2002) concerning an audit trail that a record of the research proceedings, reflections and the rigours encountered may serve as audit trail, the research record has been kept and perused over and over to meet this criterion. Kock (2006) suggests that confirmability entails demonstrating how interpretations made in a research study have been arrived at. The attempt made to divulge the trajectory of data analysis and interpretation in this research study supports the confirmability of the study. Guba and Lincoln (1989) believe that confirmability can be ascertained by means of achieving credibility, transferability and dependability. Koch (2006) pointed out that decisions made during the study should be made available while the entire research functions as an investigative appraisal. This study followed a transparent path to foster its confirmability by showing the avenue through which the analysis and interpretation of data were achieved (see Figure 4.2).

4.4.7 Triangulation

To achieve triangulation I used a number of data collection methods ranging from semi-structured interviews, field notes and a researcher's observation journal to provide supporting evidence (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990). Barusch et al. (2011:12-13) state that triangulation is a strategy to ascertain a study's credibility:

The purpose of triangulation is to deepen understanding by collecting a variety of data on the same topic or problem with the aim of combining multiple views or perspectives and producing a stronger account rather than simply achieving consensus or corroboration.

The multilevel approach of interviewing different respondents ranging from the non-South African French-speaking students, the Dean of the IT faculty, lecturers who taught these students, the head of the Foundation Phase Course and the French-speaking student advisors served as a triangulation appraisal of the study. The observation of the non-South African French-speaking students during lecture periods, free periods in their natural sitting positions with their associates, and on their way to the residence corroborated the triangulation exercise for the study. Field notes written during the research also served as support in the triangulation of research instruments (Mulhall, 2003). The triangulation approach was used in the study since the strong point of every available technique is applicable to promote, not mainly more comprehensive findings, but also findings that confirm validity (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

4.4.8 Reflexivity

The idea of being reflexive during the course of the study occurred when I realized that a way of ensuring reflexivity was for the researcher to keep a reflective diary throughout the research process as suggested by Fade (2003:141). This consciousness initiated the quest to begin to question my usual ways of thinking and doing, which opened up new alternatives of reasoning disparate from the concept of subjectivity, drawing on Lit and Shek (2007:362). This led to initiating the perusal of transcribed interviews by respondents to avoid improper interpretation and judgment, in an attempt to yield to the suggestion of Golafshani (2003).

4.5 Ethical considerations

To comply with the ethical regulations of the University of South Africa, the collection of data did not commence until ethical clearance had been obtained. At the research site, ethical clearance was also sought and granted. Permission was sought and granted to view the academic records of students. As soon as the research respondents were identified and selected their consent for getting involved in the study was sought. Free and informed consent is beneficial to the researcher and respondents since it facilitates full awareness of the two parties in terms of their rights, limits and expectations (CPA, 1991; Smith & Murray, 2000). Prior to conducting the study, respondents were aware of their responsibilities as well as the associated risks. They were also accorded the freedom to discontinue at any stage of the study should any unpleasant issue spring up, especially in the direction of an infringement on their rights, safety considerations and freedom of expression. The research respondents

were also assured that the divulged information would not be handed over to any third party capable of misusing the information in the study. In writing the research report, the research participants were assured that in no way would their identities be revealed. Consequently the real names of the respondents were not used to write the thesis. They were assured that pseudonyms would be used in place of their real names. Before the commencement of the study I was fully aware that I had to earn the trust of my research respondents in the course of the study. Erickson (1990:14) states that assurance and relationship during data collection are not merely issues of likability and that a non-resistive, reciprocally worthwhile rapport with research respondents is vital if the investigator is to capture legitimate understanding of the respondent's viewpoint.

4.6 Conclusion

The path taken to collect and analyze data in this research study has been outlined. This course was taken as a result of the aim and objectives of the study detailed in Chapter One. The thematic analysis route was taken to recognize, analyse and report observed patterns in the transcribed interviews as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006:3). Chapter Five presents a discussion of the findings of the study after the collection, transcription and analysis of data.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION OF EMERGING THEMES AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY (PHASE 1)

5.1 Introduction

The fourth chapter highlighted the research strategy and methodology employed in the study. This chapter narratively outlines the first phase of emerging themes and findings of the study in an articulate perspective to aid discussion in chapter seven. Stories of the non-South African French-speaking students who participated in the study are written using pseudonyms to protect their confidentiality. In all 28 French-speaking students were interviewed. Out of the 28 French-speaking students that were interviewed 13 were engaged in two different focus group interview sessions (see Focus Groups 1 and 2). Additional interviews were also conducted with 5 lecturers and 5 student advisors to further clarify issues raised in the literature on their roles as stakeholders at Montana College. An individual semistructured interview session was conducted with a French-speaking student in 2013 (see Elijah in Table 5.1). Table 5.1 showcases Phase 1 respondents (Students of Montana College) who participated in this research study.

Table 5.1: Phase 1 respondents (non-South African French-speaking students interviewed)

Programme of study	Sex	Country of origin	Pseudonym	Year of study
Psychology	Female	Gabon	Felicia	Pre-degree
Biomedicine	Male	Benin	Bradley	Pre-degree
Biomedicine	Female	DRC	Miriam	Pre-degree
Biomedicine	Female	Gabon	Erika	Pre-degree
Biomedicine	Female	DRC	Belinda	First year
Tourism	Female	Gabon	Zelda	First year
Accounting	Female	Gabon	Marilyn	First year
Biomedicine	Female	Cameroon	Beatrice	First year
Business	Female	Gabon	Ornella	Second year

Programme of study	Sex	Country of origin	Pseudonym	Year of study
Administration				
B.Com Marketing	Male	DRC	Elijah	Second year
Biomedicine	Female	DRC	Candy	Third year
Information Technology	Female	Gabon	Amanda	Third year
Biomedicine	Male	Gabon	Andre	Third year
Biomedicine	Female	Cameroon	Precious	Third year
Public relations	Male	DRC	Brandon	Third-year

5.2 Felicia: “When the lecturer is teaching, sometimes I don’t understand”

5.2.1 Biographical information

Felicia was a female Gabonese at Montana College and a pre-degree student at the time of the study. She enrolled to study psychology after completing the pre-degree programme. She had the ordinary level school certificate which she obtained from Gabon. She studied English at school in Gabon before she came to South Africa. She had to study English for an additional period of 9 months in South Africa before she enrolled as a pre-degree student. She spoke French fluently and did not speak any of the indigenous languages of Gabon. She had only lived in South Africa for nine months at the time of this study. She was introduced to the college by her sister who went through the pre-degree programme for one year, and later went to a public university in South Africa to continue her studies. A prominent feature in her narrative pointed to her linguistic challenges, being a French speaker just learning the English language: “When the lecturer is teaching, sometimes I don’t understand”. Felicia’s statement is reflected as an intended curriculum issue indicating that French-speaking students had linguistic challenge in the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT). Felicia spoke on her linguistic incapability:

In mathematics when I came the first time to this institution it was difficult to understand the subject because I couldn’t understand the English.

5.3 Curriculum experiences of Felicia

5.3.1 Linguistic transition as curriculum issue in the academic community of practice

a) Word problems in mathematics

Transition from the high school to the tertiary institution was a two-in-one challenge for Felicia. Her struggle was magnified by her French-speaking background which had to be

transacted with the learning of English language at Montana College. Felicia's initial linguistic challenge was heightened to the point that she could not interpret the module outline to know when she needed to write tests and assignments. She could not solve word problems in mathematics because of the linguistic challenge that she had. This situation was an example of what linguistic challenges in the LoLT could cause to a non-English-speaking student. Felicia's academic performance was not too good as a result of her linguistic challenge, but her academic performance began to improve as she understood more of the English:

When I first came here it was new to me because it was my first time to attend university, I had to learn English and it was not easy. I also didn't know when I had to write a test, so I was not doing well at school. I could not interpret word problems in mathematics because of my English which was bad.

A vivid consideration of her narrative pointed to the fact that she could not interpret information pertaining to subject didactics. This finding presented the fact that linguistic incompetence among French-speaking students is a matter to be considered in the design and implementation of the curriculum. However, Felicia's ability to comprehend English began to improve as she began to interact with more knowledgeable others. She speaks, "My South African friends are assisting me to improve my English, so I can now understand my modules gradually. Now I am learning very well in English and I can understand what the lecturers are saying in the class". During the observation session in the lecture room I saw Felicia actively engaging with her South African peers as they explained concepts to her. Felicia's association with her South African peers was an indication that Montana College functioned as an academic community of practice with her as a beginner and her South African peers acting like experts in their own rights.

5.3.2 Attachment to academic institution as a symbol of academic acculturation and academic identity

Felicia responded to a question aimed at exploring her level of attachment and acculturation to the academic institution. She responded that when she was a student in Gabon, mathematics was difficult. In South Africa she identified a marked distinction in terms of the presentation of the intended curriculum in mathematics. A marked distinction which she identified was the approach of presenting the mathematics curriculum in South Africa, a strategy which she identified as helpful. Furthermore, she saw herself learning new words which were absent in French. Her experience indicated a seamless barrier between the

intended and hidden curriculum issues at the academic institution. Academic acculturation and identity seemed to have emerged as curriculum experiences she negotiated. These narratives revealed her opinion:

This institution is meeting my needs, for example in Gabon, mathematics is more difficult. But here in South Africa, mathematics is easier for me. In Gabon, I studied in French and there are certain figures of speech in English that are not in French, but here in English I am learning them. I am happy to be a student of this institution.

a) Identity description

The description of identity was a symbol of mainstream cultural acceptance to Felicia. Felicia could not negotiate her French culture with the cultures of mainstream South Africa. She did not mind to study in South Africa, but preferred to maintain the strong Gabonese identity. This experience seemed to be a strong adherence to cultural tenets from the country of origin (Gabon). Strict adherence to home cultural ethics was a hidden curriculum experience to Felicia. She explained in her words:

I cannot change my identity. I am Gabonese. I am here to study because I want to learn in English. My friends are very helpful because they do not discriminate against me. They welcome me into their groups. I like this institution.

5.3.3 Sense of belonging to academic institution as a symbol of commitment to participate in the ACOP

Felicia's sense of belonging to Montana College was discovered when she was asked to describe her relationship with South African students and peers from other African countries to explore whether she was accepted into their groups. She responded to my questions in the following manner:

Yes they welcome me into their groups. I think they are welcoming. For example I don't speak English very well. They try their best to understand me and teach me English. I thought they would laugh at me but they did not.

The fact that Felicia was accepted into the groups of South African students seemed to have given her a sense of belonging to interact with the curriculum of Montana College.

a) The secret of academic success

Felicia believes that "the secret of academic success is to work hard". This philosophy is presented as an emblem that was instrumental in her development of a sense of belonging to Montana College.

5.3.4 Intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula

a) Proactivity

Proactivity was a strategy employed by Felicia for survival in the intended curriculum. Felicia pursued a remedy to alleviate her curriculum challenges at the institution. She consistently studied ahead of every lecture in an attempt to cope with her modules. This was a self-regulatory device to ensure that she understood her lectures, an indication that French-speaking students bring an array of personalized resources to South Africa with the determination to achieve. This tenacity appeared to have evolved due to her linguistic challenge as can be deciphered through her words:

If I don't study ahead of time, it means I will lag behind in my studies and it will be more difficult to understand my studies.

This character was a demonstration of Felicia's innate capacity to proactively experience the curriculum before experiencing the enacted curriculum. It therefore seems that an important idea that helps French-speaking students at Montana College involved personal and prior presentation of what they were expected to learn before the actual period of curriculum enactment by the lecturers. The proactivity of Felicia was therefore taken as a hidden curriculum experience aimed at bolstering the forthcoming intended curriculum experience. Felicia's response to my question on things that aroused her interest at Montana College provided evidence that small class sizes assisted her to engage with the curriculum. She responded thus:

I enjoy all things, especially in my studies. For example in class, we are not many whereas in Gabon we are so many and the lecturer gives us attention here. In Gabon, when the teacher explains to the class and we don't understand, they ignore us. Here, they attend to our academic needs.

b) Group work and individual presentation

These were the tactics used by lecturers to instil the skill of boldness to communicate among students. This community spirit was engineered through the use of group work and individual presentation. Each student was given a few minutes to present some work in class, as part of the intended curriculum. The student skills lecturer ensured that French-speaking students also participated, despite their linguistic incompetence. This was an attempt which was aimed at revamping the linguistic challenge of the French-speaking students and other students. This shows that the curriculum was designed in a way that prepared each student to communicate with others in an expressive and convincing manner, Felicia narrated her experience:

The student skills lecturer told us to be in groups of 4 or 5 students. So he chose my group and told me to present on behalf of my group. I was afraid because it was my first experience at the university and because I knew my English was not very good.

Group work and individual presentation seemed to be instruments assigned to address lapses of the intended curriculum, and were therefore taken as an intended curriculum experience of non-South African French-speaking students at Montana College. Felicia's experience confirms that Montana College had stakeholders who were willing to share concerns to meet the needs of the other stakeholders in the community.

The hidden curriculum experiences of Felicia were exposed when I asked her to mention the challenges she confronted at Montana College. She mentioned the use of Zulu by South African students and homesickness:

Generally we speak English but South African students speak Zulu. This idea limits my interaction with them especially when they are carried away by their South African friends. Again, I miss home. I have been away from my family members for 9 months; I wish I can see them now.

c) The fear of losing French as a language of communication

This was identified as a hidden curriculum issue. Felicia cited the case of her brother who had associated and integrated into the South African community after staying in South Africa for up to 6 years as an example. She did not want to lose her French-speaking ability:

I don't want to forget French because I think it is a good language. For example, my brother has been in South Africa for 6 years. Today, when he speaks French, he makes a lot of mistakes, because he has really associated with the people here.

Consequently, the threat of losing the French language was a hidden curriculum experience of Felicia because she tenaciously held on to it as a medium of communication despite her interest in learning English.

d) Premonition and anticipation

Premonition and anticipation in terms of curriculum delivery became hidden curriculum experiences of Felicia. Out of the many latent considerations not taken into account, when designing the curriculum at the tertiary level is the opinion of parents and students before students are admitted to particular programmes of study. A hidden curriculum issue that emerged in the course of interviewing Felicia involved the presentiment that personalized attention was going to be received at the academic institution. Obviously Felicia's parents

had the experience that most public tertiary institutions in Gabon were overcrowded, and were devoid of personalized attention towards students. It was a good opportunity to explore the authenticity of Felicia's parents' belief system. Personalized attention given to students at Montana College placed the college at an advantage to receive students from different sociocultural terrains. Personalized attention, given to students seemed to be an opportunity to the school management in terms of uninterrupted revenue. The fact that Felicia did not receive this attention at home seemed to have driven her beyond the Gabonese borders to South Africa. She opined:

My parents told me that if I come here, when I don't understand a topic in class, I can ask my lecturer because the classes are not overcrowded. We are not many here, and the lecturer gives us attention. In Gabon, when the teacher explains to the class and we don't understand, he ignores us.

e) The motivation to obtain a degree

It was found that the motivation to obtain a degree could be familial at times. Felicia was asked to reveal her source of motivation for aspiring to go to the university. This was in response to the finding in the literature that students may be motivated by the internal and external motivations in their lives to obtain academic degrees. She said: "Everybody in my family has been to the university before. I also want to have a degree so that I can have a good job like every member of my family".

f) Satisfaction with life on campus

Satisfaction with academic life, experienced by Felicia and her relationship status with other students were instrumental to her quick acculturation and definition of academic identity. Felicia gave a vital indication that she was satisfied with life on campus, another hidden curriculum perspective capable of influencing the survival of students within an academic institution. She compared the French lifestyle to the South African lifestyle. She concluded that on the campus, she was satisfied with the level of interaction with other students. She experienced a sense of belonging at the school. This could be responsible for tenacity and low dropout rate of French-speaking students, despite their linguistic challenge. She narrated her experience with the following words:

I think South Africans are very welcoming. Among the French speakers, people do not care about you. You face your problems alone in my country.

5.3.5 Educational experiences

These have been categorized into academic experiences, campus experiences and power relations. Consultation with lecturers and allies was an educational/academic experience of Felicia. It was taken as remedy for lapses in the intended curriculum. Felicia's linguistic incapability revolved around lack of confidence to express her views and opinions. This inadequacy spanned to her inability to ask questions boldly during lecture hours. She booked for consultation to see lecturers after lecture hours to clarify unclear concepts. Her trusted friends were also instrumental to alleviating her linguistic challenges. Her linguistic challenge had degenerated into reticence and lack of boldness to communicate and freely express herself in the English. Consultation with the lecturers and allies at the campus seemed to be a support mechanism for weak and linguistically challenged French-speaking students at Montana College. Shyness, arising from linguistic challenge is taken as a hidden curriculum feature. She recounts her experience:

Whenever I don't understand a concept, I prefer asking the lecturer after the class or my friend because I am shy. I don't like to talk where there are many people. I am an introvert and I prefer to do things secretly. I am afraid because other students will laugh when I am speaking English.

Another educational support created for French-speaking students revolved around seeking advice from student advisors, lecturers and her South African friends:

I go to my student advisor when I have challenges with the curriculum. When I am with my friends, I understand how they think and live. If I don't understand any lesson, they help me as well as the lecturers.

Felicia's campus experience was in terms of the reception accorded her on arrival to the campus by South African students and other students at Montana College. She expresses her views:

South African students and other students welcome me into their groups. I think they are welcoming. For example I don't speak English very well. They try their best to understand me and teach me.

There were no issues that pointed to circumstances of power relations in Felicia's storyline, probably because she had not stayed for too long at Montana College.

5.3.6 Observation conducted on Felicia/field note

When it was time for Felicia to attend the mathematics class I came into the class before she did and stayed at a strategic location in the lecture room. The lecture room was designed to

accommodate between 60-80 students. She sat in the midst of her friends from French-speaking countries and South African students and engaged them in group discussion. She was very free with her friends, an indication that she was acclimatizing. The lecture room was air-conditioned, suitable for learning in a favourable environment. The mathematics lecturer had a strategy which he used. He separated the weak students and placed them in the midst of students who were competent so that they could assist the weak students. He gave the students class work after dividing them into groups and went from group to group. He monitored their learning as he moved around the lecture hall. Felicia listened attentively to her friends and asked them questions. After a while the lecturer went back to the white board to provide answers to the problems that had been assigned to the students. I listened attentively to his accents. He was a Nigerian lecturer with a strong Nigerian accent. I wondered whether all the students could pick-up his strong accent. The facilitation exercise was with the right amount of energy to engage the attention of the students. Throughout my stay Felicia did not ask questions from the lecturer, whereas other South African students did. This observation gave me the idea that indeed she preferred to seek consultation privately with the lecturer and other students that were friendly to her in the class. The lecture ended and I allowed all the students to move out without Felicia noticing that I was in the lecture room, although I asked for permission from the lecturer before conducting the observation. I was a passive observer throughout the lecture period.

5.4 Empirical evidence of hybridization of language, academic acculturation and academic identity

In an attempt to point to the conceptualization of hybridization of sociocultural factors in an ACOP, I present evidence from the narrative account of Felicia to highlight the importance of language, academic acculturation and academic identity construction in an ACOP. I refer to section 5.3.1 of this chapter where she said, “My South African friends are assisting me to improve my English, so I can now understand my modules gradually”. Furthermore she said “Now I am learning very well in English and I can understand what the lecturers are saying in the class” (section 5.3.1). These were indications that the learning of English was encouraging Felicia to participate and interact with stakeholders and the curriculum. In section 5.3.2, she said:

This institution is meeting my needs, for example in Gabon, mathematics is more difficult. But here in South Africa, mathematics is easier for me. In Gabon, I studied in French and there are

certain figures of speech in English that are not in French, but here in English I am learning them. I am happy to be a student of this institution.

The fact that she was happy with the situation at Montana College and the learning experience, are regarded as symbols of academic acculturation and academic identity. She pointed to the ease with which she understood mathematics as evidence of her acceptance of Montana College's line of actions to engage students' learning experiences. It is therefore presented from the available evidence obtained from Felicia's narratives that a combination of learning the English, her acceptance of the academic institution in terms of adjusting to its academic dictates, and the unswerving elements of a sense of belonging which unequivocally revealed that she had academic acculturation and academic identity were vital for her learning at Montana College.

5.5 Bradley: “My parents decided that I should come to a developed country”

5.5.1 Biographical information

Bradley (male) was a pre-degree student from the Republic of Benin, a French-speaking country in West Africa. His educational qualification before starting the pre-degree programme was the ordinary level school leaving certificate referred to as the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) certificate. WAEC was rated a step lower than the South African matric certificate. He basically spoke French while in Benin. He was at Montana College to study Biomedicine. He had only stayed in South Africa for three months at the time of this study. At Montana College, there were only three students from Benin at the time of this study in 2012. It was very rewarding to have had the opportunity of interviewing a West African French-speaking student. Bradley was a focused student who scored 100% in mathematics tests and examination. As with the other Francophone (French-speaking) students, he was struggling with the English language. He studied English in Ghana for two months before he arrived in South Africa. His prominent narrative pointed to the control and motivation from his parents to come to South Africa to study in English, an attempt to be bilingual. Secondly, the infrastructural development in South Africa seemed to be a drawback for French-speaking students from West Africa, and this was seen as a hidden curriculum experience:

Because South Africa is more developed than Benin, after my secondary school education, my parents decided that I should come to a developed country to pursue my studies. Before I came here, I went to Ghana, spent about two months to learn English.

5.6 Curriculum experiences of Bradley

5.6.1 Linguistic transition as a curriculum issue in the academic community of practice

Association with English-speaking students paved the way for Bradley's quick understanding of English within three months of arrival in South Africa. This was taken as his path of linguistic transition from French to English. At the entry level to South Africa he only had a limited vocabulary which was brought from Benin and Ghana. As he began to integrate into the academic system, his vocabulary and speaking ability began to improve. Bradley's association with South African students and other students at Montana College seemed to have accelerated his comprehension of English. His association with other stakeholders is taken as one of the advantages of interacting with more knowledgeable others in an academic community of practice. Consequently his linguistic transition is taken as an intended curriculum experience because it was targeted at assisting him to gain the required dimension of understanding of academic matters. Similarly he developed a culture of reading English books on a steadfast basis. He narrated his path to learning English thus:

I did have problems with English but now I am trying to do my best. I engage with South Africans and other friends to speak English. This is possible because by nature, I am an extrovert. I go out of my way to associate with people who can help me. If you're not from an English-speaking country and you always keep quiet it would not help. You have to read English books.

Another evidence of linguistic transition via interaction and association with English speaking friends was seen in Bradley. His association with English-speakers at the school assisted him to stop converting English to French before he could understand academic contexts. He initially formed the habit of thinking in French before understanding English. This was conspicuous whenever he was asked questions during lecture periods. It previously took him time to respond because he had to understand the English questions in French before he could respond in English. His experience gave an indication that it was a different issue to study academic English, and to learn how to speak English. Consequently Bradley's inability to briskly process the English language to foster understanding was taken as a hidden curriculum experience. Bradley spoke on this issue:

My friends help me to understand English and not to think in French. At the beginning, I used to convert from French to English and it took time for me to speak but now I am better. When I spoke English, I was a bit slow. In Benin, while in high school, I did English but it was only grammar that I did. I did not learn how to speak it.

5.6.2 Attachment to academic institution as a symbol of academic acculturation and academic identity

Bradley saw the pre-degree programme as a bridging programme that could assist him to cope with first year modules. He mentioned the English module he did at Montana College as an advantage to reinforce his linguistic aptitude. His character of extroversion also seemed to have assisted him to learn. His acceptance of Montana College's pre-degree programme was seen as evidence of academic acculturation. Freedom of expression during lectures was cited by Bradley as an advantage at the school, seen in this study as a hidden curriculum experience and a symbol of academic identity. Attention from lecturers and freedom to ask questions were not the same in Benin. Bradley pointed to having friends at the institution as a yardstick for satisfaction with life. Socialization with peers was thus seen as a hidden curriculum experience capable of advancing learning. These factors seemed to have created the fortitude to belong to Montana College in Bradley's mind:

Pre-degree courses are essential courses that would help me cope with first year modules. I am doing English, which is an advantage to me. I've got South African, Ghanaian friends and so on. I socialize with other people. Here we are allowed to ask questions when we are not happy with a particular topic. In Benin lecturers don't give so much attention to students.

a) Identity description

Bradley was asked if he got a job in South Africa after completing his studies, he would take it. This question was posed to decipher his acculturative stance in South Africa. He frankly replied that he would go back to Benin. He reiterated that he was interested in developing his own country. He was not ready to trade the love of his country for anything. He retorted that he had a responsibility to contribute his own quota to the development of his country. His stance depicted lack of mainstream acculturation, but an acceptance of the academic community for set goals. He declared his identity by saying he is from Benin. This seemed to imply that he did not want to be affiliated with the South African society at large. Based on these facts, truncated mainstream acculturation and identity mediation of the French-speaking students is declared a hidden curriculum experience. Bradley opines:

I want to go back to get a job in Benin. I want to help my country to develop. If we have the opportunity to go overseas, we must go back to develop our country. Nobody would develop our country for us. I am from Benin.

5.6.3 Sense of belonging to academic institution as a symbol of commitment to participate in the ACOP

Bradley's sense of belonging to Montana College became obvious as a result of the association he had with lecturers and tutors. I asked him whether his lecturers and tutors were always patient with him during lecture periods and tutorials in an attempt to decipher how connected he was to them. These stakeholders seemed to have created a positive impression of Montana College in his imagination especially because he said earlier on that, "In Benin our lecturers do not really have patience with us". The rapport between Bradley and the lecturers and tutors of Montana College seemed like the relationship between experts and novices as suggested by Lave and Wenger (1991). His experience with them appears to be the development of a sense of belonging to Montana College, taken as a symbol of commitment to participate in the ACOP. Bradley relates his experience:

I am enjoying this school because my lecturers are patient, because they know that I am from a French-speaking country. If they are teaching fast, they point to me to ask if I am fine with what they are teaching. If I am not fine, I ask them to come again or to repeat the area I didn't get. They always care about my welfare. Everyone is helping me. I am content with this environment.

I asked him whether he was always afraid when his lecturers and tutors came to teach. He said, "not at all, I am always happy to see them". His response was in line with an expectant student who was willing to participate in the lectures. Furthermore I asked him another question to reveal his level of confidence to ask questions in the midst of his peers, despite his linguistic issues. Bradley responded:

I always do, even apart from the questions that I ask; the lecturers also ask me questions. When there are no students to solve a problem, I always raise my hands to solve problems in class.

b) The secret of academic success

Bradley had a philosophy that "hard work is the key to success in life". It became obvious that Bradley's philosophy in terms of a strong work ethic likely gave him a sense of belonging to Montana College.

5.6.4 Intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula

a) Use of dictionary

"At the very first beginning, I did have problems with English but now I am trying to do my best. I use the English dictionary to learn new words". Bradley's initial concerns reveal the state of a novice just entering the ACOP. His experience in this regard indicated the struggle

encountered when a beginner is about to begin legitimate peripheral participation in the ACOP. This suggests that newcomers experience linguistic concerns and may be hindered from participating in the activities of the ACOP.

In an attempt to explore Bradley's intended curriculum experiences further, he was asked how diminished comprehension of English affected him as far as the presented curriculum was concerned. I found out that he was doing very well in mathematics as I observed his academic report. However, I was interested in knowing the effects that diminished understanding had on his comprehension of the other modules which he took at Montana College. I present the response of Bradley to my inquiry subsequently:

In other modules, English affects me a little bit. The point is that when I am writing in English, I don't have problems. It is only when I am speaking the English that I am a little bit slow.

Bradley's experience of the intended curriculum was such that he had the ability to write his modules in English. His challenge was an inability to communicate effectively.

Another evidence of Bradley's engagement with the intended curriculum was that he took advantage of the opportunity to seek consultation with lecturers to clarify unclear aspects of the curriculum. He said, "I always go to my lecturers if there are some things that are not clear to me". By doing this Bradley demonstrated that the relationship between lecturers and students at Montana College was cordial to the extent that students could engage with lecturers in an attempt to reach their goals. Student-lecturer relationship is seen as evidence of comradeship between beginners and experts in an academic community of practice.

b) Group work and individual presentation

Bradley's connectedness with the South African students was symbolic because he had a goal of learning English and the other modules in association with them. He engaged with the South African students during group work and assignments given to his group and the other students. It seems that his action in this regard was deliberate as he said in the course of this interview that, "it is difficult to speak in English when in the midst of other French-speaking students". Consequently, group work was seen as a strategy embarked upon by the experts of the ACOP to engage all the students in the process of interaction with peers. Similarly, it seems lecturers have adjusted to the situation of non-English speakers. The student skills lecturer seemed to have employed the strategy of beginners, learning via the route of observation, as seen through the lens of Wenger (1998). Consequently, group work strategy

and presentation are seen as intended curriculum strategies which revealed Montana College as an ACOP. I present the rationale from Bradley's statement:

I engage in group work with South African students because of the opportunity to learn English from them. During the time of presentation, in the student skills module, my lecturer didn't allow me to be the first presenter. So I always attended to see how the South African students that presented before me introduced themselves before presenting the topics. This idea has helped me to learn how to make presentations in class. It gives me pleasure that I have other students to learn from.

c) The fear of losing French as a language of communication

Parental influence on the language of their children has been revealed as an important factor because of cultural reasons. Bradley was asked if he minded losing command of French as a language. He said he did not want to lose French because his parents would not consent to this. Secondly he also did not want to lose French as a language. At the same time he wanted to keep English. His situation tended towards the quest for bilingualism. Bradley explains sternly:

No, my parents won't want me to lose the command of French. I can't lose French because it is natural for me to speak it. I want to also learn English because it would become an advantage to me in the future.

d) Premonition and anticipation

The evidence of premonition and anticipation emerged from my inquiry about reasons why Bradley came to study in South Africa. He pointed to the infrastructural development in South Africa as an important reason. This presentiment evolved from his parents' premonition that South Africa was a more developed country than Benin. Secondly, his quest to learn in English was taken as an anticipatory move to contribute his own quota to the development of Benin. However, he needed Montana College to achieve his ideals. The anticipatory move to use Montana College to achieve his ideals is seen as a hidden curriculum experience. I indicate his response:

I came to study here because South Africa is a country that is more developed than Benin. So after my secondary school education in Benin, my parents decided that I should come to a developed country to pursue my studies. I want to learn in English here so that I can go to my country and help my people.

e) The motivation to obtain a degree

Motivation is of immense importance when considering the tenacity of students to pursue a degree. Bradley was asked to reveal his source of motivation to obtain a degree in an attempt to explore one of the findings in the literature that students are motivated to study in higher education as a result of positive and negative influences on their lives. Motivation to obtain a degree was a hidden curriculum issue which seemed to focus his attention on learning at the ACOP. He mentioned his parents and a mentor who called him regularly from Italy to motivate him as positive influences in his career path:

My parents encourage me to earn a degree. I also have a mentor in Italy and he is a reverend father. He calls me regularly from Italy to encourage me to persevere.

f) Satisfaction with life on campus

Bradley's indices of life satisfaction pointed to two directions, academic and social. He was satisfied with the academic life at Montana College because he got help in terms of learning English by association with his friends. The social aspect of his satisfaction with life on campus was in terms of the friends he had from different African countries. They communicated in English because it was a unifying language as far as communicating in a multiculturally diverse environment was concerned. Evidence is now provided:

This institution is helping me, for instance, I am doing English which is an advantage to me. I am not an English speaker but a French speaker. Pre-degree courses are essential courses that would help me to cope with first year modules. It is like a foundation course. I've got South African and Ghanaian friends and so on, so I feel at home here to study. My friends speak English to me and it helps me a lot to understand English.

g) Homesickness

Bradley cited homesickness as one of the challenges he faced at Montana College. He claimed that it was normal for him to miss home because of his status as a foreigner in South Africa. Homesickness was thus seen as a hidden curriculum issue, although he claimed that it was an issue he could manage so that it would not affect his academic activity. This was his response to my question on other challenges he faced at Montana College:

Apart from the English, the problem I face is homesickness. As a foreigner, I always miss home. Since I came here it is normal for me to miss home.

5.6.5 Educational experiences

I followed this route of inquiry based on Chow's (2006) definition of educational experience as academic performance and schooling experiences. Bradley was one of the examples of

achieving students in the pre-degree programme. He passed all the modules that he took in the first semester. He was a focused and disciplined student. During the interview session I asked him how many modules he failed because I wanted to be sure that his linguistic challenge was not detrimental to his academic pursuit. He said “I am not planning to fail any module and I will not fail any”. Bradley’s response to my question was an indication that he came to Montana College with a determination to succeed. His academic performance was cross-checked with what he had said during the documentary analysis stage as I looked through his academic record. I discovered that he had given the correct information. The DP was out of 50 in each subject. Bradley responded to my inquiry on his academic performance:

I just checked my DP (Due Performance) and I passed all my modules. I had more than 30 in my DP’s and 48 in maths. I got 35 in student skills. I got 40 in human development. I passed computer skills because we are not taking exams in it. It was because of my English that I am doing pre-degree.

His experience further reveals that the enacted curriculum was a success at Montana College because he showed how academically expectant he was at school by saying, “I am always eager to answer questions in the class when the lecturer asks questions or when other students are not willing to solve problems”. He was found to take the lead as he engaged with other students in the mathematics class during the observation session that I conducted on him. I particularly chose to observe him during the mathematics class because mathematics was sufficient to reveal his degree of connectedness and integration to the ACOP. He was not afraid of the fact that his communicative ability was not yet perfect. When I asked him how he felt whenever he made grammatical mistakes in the class, he said, “my classmates don’t even discriminate against me when I make grammatical mistakes, they are so supportive”.

My curiosity was aroused to verify what he had said about presentation in the student skills module. It was however a different scenario because he was not the expert in the class but a listener among his peers and the lecturer. When other students were presenting he watched them intently during the observation session and began to learn from them. At this juncture I saw that the roles played by actors in the ACOP are subject to circumstantial changes. Bradley became a learner rather than an actor in the student skills module presentation exercise. Students were given a topic on which they had to research before presenting their findings to the other students. The presentation exercise was aimed at giving them the skill to boldly present their arguments so that other students could learn from them. This gave me the

understanding of what the literature says about actors and experts in the COP as suggested by Wenger (1998) that in a COP, there are subsets of other communities of practice that are interreliant.

a) Accent

Bradley commented on the pronunciation of certain lecturers. The pronunciation of lecturers appeared to be a curriculum issue, as the way lecturers pronounced English words could determine the academic survival of students. It seemed French-speaking students quickly adjusted to this challenge by training their ears to pick-up lecturers' accents as they spoke during lecture periods. This challenge of intonation was prominent among the white lecturers. Pronunciation of English words during lecture periods seemed to be a curriculum experience of non-South African French-speaking students at Montana College. Bradley lamented:

I have a white lecturer, teaching student skills. At the beginning I couldn't hear what she was saying because she has a way of pronouncing words. It took me about 1 month to understand her accent. I always looked at the way she was pronouncing the words by looking at her mouth, but today I don't have that problem anymore.

5.7 Empirical evidence of hybridization of language, academic acculturation and academic identity

Bradley demonstrated that he was determined to learn and speak English at Montana College. He acculturated academically via the evidence of the sense of belonging which he displayed at Montana College. He displayed the features which pointed to the fact that he had academic acculturation, which gave him the right academic identity to survive the threats of language. Bradley gradually used the power of English language learning to progress into the core of activities at Montana College. He used the learning of English to adjust to the culture of Montana College until he acquired the fortitude to identify with Montana College by taking the initiative to be associated with the academic culture of the ACOP. These experiences are presented as pointers to the creation of different stages of amalgamation between language, acculturation and identity. Consequently the three sociocultural factors were responsible for his academic achievement when they were in states of constant redress.

5.8 Miriam: “I was taught how to greet and speak in the restaurant or in the street. But they didn’t teach me the academic aspect of English”

5.8.1 Biographical information

Miriam was a female pre-degree student from the DRC, namely Kinshasa. She held a secondary school exit level certificate qualification usually rated a step lower than the South African matric result. She took English as a subject while still in the DRC, but it was insufficient to assist her to earn a degree in South Africa. She said, “I was taught how to greet and speak in the restaurant or in the street. But they didn’t teach us the academic aspect of English”. This was the prominent narrative which has been used to uniquely describe her story in this study. Miriam attended an English school for 10 months when she arrived in South Africa. She had lived and studied at Montana College as at the time of this interview for a year and a half. She was an outgoing person as I observed her during the interview. I saw tendencies of extroversion in her character because she was very free with me during the interview in that she did not reserve words but spoke frankly and plainly. I did not have to probe her too much before she responded to my questions. Miriam was from a family of 11. I taught her Mathematics in the pre-degree stage and this gave me the opportunity to observe her for a whole semester after which I conducted an interview with her. She did not know that I was going to ask her to be one of my respondents until after the end of the semester. This gave me the assurance that bias was out of the picture. Her home language was French and she was learning English as a student via specialized English modules and through interaction with other English-speaking peers at Montana College. Miriam was a very intelligent student with a special interest in Mathematics.

5.9 Curriculum experiences of Miriam

5.9.1 Linguistic transition as a curriculum issue in the academic community of practice

a) Use of the dictionary

“Sometimes when I go to study in the library, I do have problems with the books. I read the books and used a dictionary so I can understand some words”, says Miriam. Her words gave the impression that she had issues with crossing the boundary from French to English which was the language of instruction at Montana College. Miriam did not hide her feelings when she was told to reveal the challenges which she confronted at Montana College. She said:

I am a French-speaking person; the language is already difficult for me. So going back and starting to learn with the other students in English is a problem. When I come to school in the

morning and I walk with them, they have this habit of speaking in their own language because in South Africa, the people don't only speak in English. They speak Zulu, so when you are in their groups, they speak other languages. This makes me uncomfortable in class; it is like I am excluded because I don't understand what they are saying.

Her narrative suggests that French-speaking students negotiated challenging transition from French to English at Montana College. However she “did have some notion of English, but not perfectly”. Furthermore the use of Zulu by the indigenous South African students at Montana College was a challenge to her transition from French to English. Being a sociable person, because she said, “It is not difficult for me to socialize with anybody, even if you are a Chinese”. However, her sociability seemed to have been checkmated by exclusion during discussion sessions with South African students who used Zulu to communicate with other South African students whenever she was in their midst during lecture periods.

5.9.2 Attachment to academic institution as a symbol of academic acculturation and academic identity

Miriam seemed to have embraced the new society in which she found herself. She was satisfied with the academic environment of Montana College. A prominent issue that was found to have given her academic acculturation and academic identity was the fact that the students whom she met at Montana College were kind to her. She thus began to acculturate to the new academic environment. Secondly, the fact that she found friends who assisted her to learn English seemed to have given her a sense of belonging to Montana College. She speaks thus:

I find that here, life is a bit easier than in my country. Life is very expensive in my country. I have met people who are very kind so I can fit into the society here. The people are helping me and my English is getting better and better everyday

b) Identity description

Miriam's identity trajectory was found to revolve around the learning of Zulu. She wanted to learn Zulu because it was similar to one of the languages of the DRC. This was taken as a symbol of identity, a point of connection between her culture and the culture of South Africa. She responded to my question which was directed at knowing the major languages which she spoke at the school, hostel and at home. This is what she said, “Zulu is like one of the languages of my country, and it's kind of interesting to me”. When I asked how Miriam

would describe her identity she said, “I am a Congolese, I do like this country but I love my country. I cannot change my identity”.

5.9.3 Sense of belonging to academic institution as a symbol of commitment to participate in the ACOP

Miriam’s sense of belonging was explored when I asked her whether her quest to learn English and the love she had for South Africa could help her achieve her academic aims at Montana College. She said:

If I am not comfortable at a place, I can’t really concentrate and focus on my studies. The reason is that when I am comfortable, I would feel free to approach someone who would help me. It’s like here at this campus, everyone is equal and they don’t care about your colour.

From what I gathered from her response, her love for Montana College and the freedom she had to seek help from the other stakeholders of the ACOP seemed to have given her the sense of belonging that she needed to integrate into the ACOP.

Cultural similarities seemed to have created the opportunity for Miriam to develop a sense of belonging to the environment of Montana College. She stated that the South African and the DRC cultures had certain similarities. She was excited in saying this:

The South African culture reminds of my country because our cultures are almost the same. We dress almost the same way, and also the music is the same. I feel at home because I am seeing Africa (laughing).

c) The secret of success

Miriam sees hard work as an important philosophy to emulate as a student. She reiterates that, “for any student to succeed, it is important to work hard”. This philosophy was likely responsible for her development of a sense of belonging to Montana College.

5.9.4 Intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula

a) Word problems

Miriam was challenged in terms of an inability to interpret word problems in Mathematics. This was an intended curriculum issue because her diminished comprehension of the English language that was used to communicate the curriculum to her was a major issue. Consequently, it could affect the enacted curriculum because it could reach a point where she might not be able to answer questions due to diminished comprehension of English.

My biggest challenge is the English language. I remember when we were doing maths; I didn't know what I was supposed to do because it was a word problem. When such happens in the examination, I just omit the question involving word problems because there is nothing that I can do. If it is during class lessons, I ask one of my classmates to explain to me.

b) Translation of curriculum content from English to French and back to English

Miriam engaged in translating words in English to French and back to English in an attempt to understand academic concepts. She spoke thus:

Sometimes, I do translate words from English to French, and back to English when it is too difficult to understand the words in English, I try to understand it in French. It is slowing my learning experience down a lot, but I have to do that for now until I improve. It is easier to write in English than to speak in English because I am shy in case I make mistakes.

c) Compliance with the assessed curriculum

Miriam was asked in an attempt to explore her experiences with respect to the assessed curriculum, whether she had ever failed any of the modules she registered for. She said, "Never in my life, and I won't fail (screaming)". During the documentary analysis session that I conducted I found that she did not fail any test or examination. Miriam's case was another example of focus and success despite the linguistic challenges that she was confronted with at Montana College.

d) Symbiotic relationship with the other stakeholders in the ACOP

Miriam revealed her interest in learning Zulu or Xhosa. She spoke English at Montana College, but also tried to teach South African students how to speak French. These are hidden curriculum experiences mixed with planned curriculum. Miriam's quest to learn English complied with the intentions of the pre-degree programme. Her desire to learn Zulu or Xhosa tallied with the tenets of the hidden curriculum, an expression of attainment of an identity. I provide evidence to this claim in Miriam's own words:

I love languages, because they are like one of the languages of my country, so they are interesting to me. At school, I speak English but I try to teach my South African friends how to speak French, while they also teach me Zulu or Xhosa.

e) Homesickness

The issue of homesickness emerged from Miriam's interview when I probed her to explore other challenges that she faced at Montana College. She pointed out the fact that the South African system was different when compared with the European system that she knew while

in the DRC. Furthermore, she said she was always homesick and that she missed her country and her people. Empirical evidence is provided:

We're using the European kind of system. There are some things that they do here that I don't understand, and I am sometimes homesick.

f) Student-lecturer relationship and the issue of accents

Miriam seemed to have had a good relationship with her lecturers. According to her, they were friendly and reachable when she needed consultation. However, the issue of accents was a point of distraction to her. She did not allow me to record the idea that her lecturer had issues with pronunciation. Her narrative is presented on student-lecturer relationship at Montana College and the issue of accent:

I like all of my lecturers because they are very friendly, but some of them are very funny because of the way they explain to us (This was about how some of the lecturers pronounced words, she did not want to be rude, so she preferred not to have this session recorded. I didn't record this aspect).

g) Boldness to ask questions

Miriam was competent at asking questions in the class. She asked questions when she had challenges. She said she did not want to lose track of her studies by keeping quiet when she needed to pose questions to the lecturers during lecture periods. She spoke thus:

Only when I need to understand something better, then I ask questions in class. Our lecturers speak up to the point that everyone at the back can hear what they are saying. I am here to learn, they are here to teach me. I know what I want to do in life and I don't want to be lost by being afraid to ask questions.

h) Group work, individual presentation and shyness

Miriam did not have issues with participating in group work with the other students in her class except in terms of distance because she lived off campus. However, because she was compelled by the policy of Montana College she had to do student skills presentation and also bridging English presentations. Evidence is provided:

In some courses I participate in group assignments; and in some courses, I don't. We did presentation in student skills and English. I felt a bit weird. The reason is because I live far from the other students, and to go back to explain to the other members of my group is not easy. I don't like standing in front of many people because I am a shy person. I learn from hardworking students who are presenting in class.

i) The fear of losing French as a language of communication

In 2012 I did not remember asking Miriam whether she would not mind to lose French as a language. At the beginning of the first semester of 2013, I arranged a short interview with her to explore whether she did not mind losing French as a language. She said, “Why would I lose French? The fact that I want to learn other languages does not mean I want to lose French as a language. I would rather prefer to be multilingual than lose my home language”

j) The motivation to obtain a degree, premonition and anticipation

These three factors are combined together in the interview of Miriam. She was admitted to study Biomedicine at Montana College. She responded to my question which was targeted at inquiring why she came to South Africa. She said, “I came here to study because in my country they value international degrees”. She said again, “When you come here to study and return to the DRC, they value the degree that you have obtained”. This was taken as the motivating factor that seemed to have enhanced her ability to learn. Furthermore she said, “I want to be an independent woman, I don’t want to be a woman who is totally dependent on the husband”. These were the two key motivating factors that were revealed from her narrative account. They were also taken as her presentiment and anticipatory move.

k) Satisfaction with life on campus

Miriam’s index of life satisfaction was found to revolve around academic advantage in terms of the benefit she had to learn English at Montana College from more knowledgeable others. She pointed to a very important attribute which has been found to assist learning in an ACOP. She saw the other stakeholders in the ACOP as agents of socialization in terms of learning the academic language of Montana College. Consequently she experienced life satisfaction at Montana College because she was able to ascribe an identity to the learning of the LOLT which is salient in the process of negotiating academic and non-academic curricula. I present the empirical evidence:

Socializing with the other students has been helping me a lot to learn English. Now I have many English-speaking friends, especially on my Blackberry messenger (bbm). When we communicate we mainly chat in English so I am able to learn new words in English

5.9.5 Educational experiences

I use data collected through the observation that I accumulated over a period of 12 weeks on Miriam as evidence of her educational experience. Miriam was one of the team leaders in my

Mathematics classes in 2012. She was one of the few resources that I used to engage other students in my Mathematics classes especially during group work strategies that were used to drive the learning of students. This experience of being a group leader was found to have enhanced her interaction with the other English-speaking students of my mathematics classes. She excelled in every assessment that I made in class and passed the two major tests of the Mathematics module. She also passed the group assignment in the bridging Mathematics module and passed the Mathematics examination with distinction. In an attempt to cater for the second phase of my inquiry as directed by Chow (2006), that educational experience involves academic performance and schooling experiences I observed Miriam within a period of one semester in informal gatherings before the commencement of classes. She roved around South African students and French-speaking students. She integrated very well into the ACOP by listening and communicating with these other stakeholders. During lecture periods, Miriam continuously engaged me by asking questions on topics covered during normal class lessons. She regularly sought consultation to clarify unclear issues in Mathematics. I monitored her during tutorial sessions. She was very punctual at every opportunity to learn. During the process of documentary analysis I examined her academic report and found that she had passed all six modules despite her linguistic challenge. I came to a point of resolution, based on my 12 weeks observation that she had an extroverted character. It seemed that the extroverted character paved the way for Miriam to learn English by becoming the friend of stakeholders who could speak English.

5.9.6 The roles of lecturers and student advisors

In an attempt to explore the roles played by lecturers and student advisors at Montana College I inquired from Miriam and she said, “When I have any problem, I go to my lecturer and student advisor”. Her narrative seems to confirm the support mechanism in place to alleviate the concerns of foreign students at Montana College.

5.10 Empirical evidence of hybridization of language, academic acculturation and academic identity

Miriam’s process of learning English, developing academic acculturation and academic identity are taken as empirical evidence that language is important in the development of a sense of belonging to the academic institution/academic acculturation. Her expression of satisfaction with life at Montana College was an indication of academic identity. My

observation for a whole semester proved that she excelled. Consequently these findings seem to suggest that learning ensues when there is a hybridization of the three sociocultural factors.

5.11 Erika: “I want to learn and study in English”

5.11.1 Biographical information

Erika was a female French-speaking student from Gabon. She was admitted to the pre-degree programme to study Biomedicine. She comes from a family of seven. Her parents were medical doctors in Gabon. She held the secondary school leaving certificate which she had obtained in Gabon. She had been a student in Montana College for 8 months as at the time of this interview. She had a brother who was also studying Business Management in Pretoria. The prominent narrative used to describe her storyline points in the direction of earnestly desiring to study in English.

It seemed to have become a family habit to leave Gabon to study in English in South Africa. This was an attempt to attain an identity of multilingualism because she had also learned Spanish for 2 years in Gabon. In response to my inquiry on the other languages she spoke, she said, “I can manage to speak my father’s language which is Lingala, a language from the DRC”. She had a little knowledge of English before she began the pre-degree programme as she said, “I learned English in Pretoria at the English school called Prestige for 7 months”. French-speaking students had to demonstrate an average level of competence in English before they were allowed to start the pre-degree programme.

5.12 Curriculum experiences of Erika

5.12.1 Linguistic transition as a curriculum issue in the academic community of practice

“When I came to South Africa, I was not able to speak like now. I could say my name, where I am from and a little bit of words to express myself but not perfectly”. These were the concerns of Erika at the point of entry to Montana College. Her concerns were fundamental to her success because English language was the cultural route to obtaining a degree at Montana College. She realised the significant difference between high school and tertiary education by saying “A university is different from high school”. At the point of entry, she said, “The most difficult thing for me is the English. I carry the English dictionary

everywhere I go so as to learn new words". Consequently, I present linguistic transition as a curriculum issue to Erika.

a) Translation of curriculum content from English to French and back to English

Erika gave vital information that she studied twice to be able to meet curriculum requirements by translating from English to French, and back to English. Erika speaks:

I would pass my examinations better, if we are taught in the medium of French because I study twice. For example in the maths class, it took me time to understand what was being said. I had to translate to French first before I could understand what the lecturer was saying. For human development, I also translated to French before I could understand.

These were the concerns of Erika at the point of entry to Montana College, proof that linguistic transition from French to English is a curriculum issue for French-speaking students.

b) Predominant use of Zulu

Erika perceived the predominant use of Zulu as an act of rudeness during conversation sessions in class. She saw it as an avenue that excluded her from discussions and learning from them:

Some of the South African students are rude. In Gabon we don't speak other languages in class. Here in the class, South African students speak Zulu and other languages, not minding that some of us don't understand the language. I am disappointed. In class, they speak English but they mix it with Zulu. This is a sign of disrespect. They told me it is a bad habit, and that they didn't do it intentionally.

5.12.2 Attachment to academic institution as a symbol of academic acculturation and academic identity

Erika seemed to attach importance to the relationship between her and her South African friends as a symbol of academic acculturation and academic identity. Her friends from the other African countries also played the same roles. This experience presents a basis of argument that interaction with more knowledgeable others in an ACOP could constitute the basis of forming academic acculturation and academic identity:

South African students are my close friends here. If I don't understand lectures in the class, they help me after the class. Even when I speak English incorrectly, they stop me and tell me it is wrong. They teach me the correct way to speak the English. I also have friends from my country, DRC, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Malawi.

b) Linguistic acculturation and linguistic identity

It does not seem to be enough to be in possession of academic acculturation and academic identity. Erika demonstrated a quest for linguistic acculturation and linguistic identity.

Evidence is provided:

I want to be able to speak with the English accent and when I speak French, I must speak with the French accent. I don't want to mix the two together. Then I can speak for others to hear me correctly. There are times I speak and pronounce certain words and the people around me never understand what I said because of the way I pronounce words in English. I hate this idea, so I must speak with the right accent.

c) Identity description

I explored Erika's degree of attachment to the mainstream society in an attempt to recognise how she defined her identity. This is what she said:

I am a Gabonese and I won't change my nationality even if the opportunity comes. It is not because I don't love South Africa, but I love my country. I love Gabon, so I am going to stay a Gabonese all of my life. The only thing that can make me live here is if my parents and siblings live here, but I will still remain a Gabonese.

d) Mainstream identity construction

The following is used to present a strong case that Erika was not constructing her identity in terms of mainstream society experiences. This was the response she gave to my inquiry when I asked her if she could become a South African if the opportunity came. She cited an unforgettable experience which seemed to have given her a basis not to negotiate the Gabonese culture with the South African culture:

No, I don't think I can live here all my life, no. It's going to be too much stress for me. I miss my home. Some people are not good to me in this country. I went to Pretoria, to Western Union. There was a lady who couldn't understand the way I spoke. I was speaking with my friend in French and she said I didn't have to speak French in front of her that it was so rude. She gave me my passport and said she was no longer going to give me my money. They don't like foreigners in this country but at this school they are okay.

Erika's concluding statement indicated that she had academic identity instead of mainstream identity.

5.12.3 Sense of belonging to an academic institution as a symbol of commitment to participate in the ACOP

A sense of belonging is created in relation to an issue that brings attraction or focus as was the case with Erika. She succeeded in creating an atmosphere surrounded by her South African friends and the other friends from Lesotho and Swaziland. Proximity to the academic

institution likely paved the way for this experience. This issue is presented as one of the factors that likely gave her a sense of belonging to Montana College:

I like this school because of my friends, and I live at the residence of the school. I have friends from South Africa. I have friends from Lesotho and Swaziland. They all help me with my studies, especially to learn English.

a) The secret of academic success

Erika says, “The secret of academic success is to study. It is not that a student must always study. A student can play a little but it must not be too much”. She identified a major challenge that she confronted at Montana College by saying, “My first problem is the English. If I am able to speak English like the people from here, I would be able to do better than I am doing now”. It is therefore presented that the secret of academic success which she knew likely contributed to her acquisition of a sense of belonging to Montana College.

5.12.4 Intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula

Erika experienced challenges in terms of understanding one of the modules which she took, an intended curriculum stipulated by Montana College. Human Development was a challenging module to Erika because of her limited comprehension of English. She was not satisfied with her achievements in the other modules that needed a good command of English. Her concerns are presented:

Human Development gave me problems because it was hard. I couldn't understand it. Whenever I went back to do my assignment, I couldn't do it properly in English. I got 60% in the test, the mark is too low for me, I am not happy. Also in student skills, I got 60%, but in psychology I got 65%. But in maths, that is my best subject I got 98%.

a) Proactivity

Erika saw the importance of studying in advance to make sure that she understood her class lessons. Studying ahead of each lecture also gave her the opportunity of asking questions in the class. I asked her if she was scared of her lecturers. She responded, “I am not afraid of my lecturers because they are available to assist me”. Her utterance indicated that she had rapport with lecturers, an indication of the positive lecturer-student relationship. Evidence of Erika's proactive strategy is presented:

I study before attending each lecture. When I study before attending lectures, I am able to ask the lecturer questions and he explains to me. It is better to work ahead of time.

Erika's strategy in terms of being academically proactive is presented as a hidden curriculum issue, which was vital to enhance compliance with the planned and enacted curricula.

b) Extraordinary achievement in Mathematics

Erika demonstrated that she was keenly interested in Mathematics since childhood, and it eventually became her best subject. It seems French-speaking students are equipped with the wherewithal to engage with figures better than words. I present the evidence:

I love mathematics, it is my best subject. I used to love mathematics since I was in my country. When I was young I loved figures.

She considered the Mathematics module which she did at Montana College comparable to what she did in Grade 10 when she was in the high school. According to her statement she was not challenged by the bridging mathematics module because of the foundation which she had from the Mathematics curriculum she negotiated in Gabon. Erika speaks on the issue:

The Mathematics that I am doing here was done in Grade 10 in Gabon. I forgot it but now I remember. When I came here, I thought the Mathematics would be very difficult, so I was preparing. The same goes for other students from Cameroon, it is not difficult for them, so they are just passing it.

c) Homesickness

Erika was asked to divulge other challenges which she faced at Montana College. She said, "It is homesickness; I miss my twin sister and my family members". Homesickness is thus presented as a hidden curriculum issue experienced by Erika.

d) Student-lecturer relationship

Consultation sessions of students with lecturers at Montana College were indications that they had cordial relationships suitable to foster interaction and academic focus. Erika relates her experience in this regard:

I have one-on-one relationship with my lecturers, like my psychology lecturer, Ms. Shamos. I couldn't understand psychology. The first day I attended class it was horrible for me because of the language. She gave me a timetable and I began to see her during consultation, but I am now fine.

e) Group work and individual presentation

The inherent character of discipline and hard work exhibited by Erika was seen to influence her decisions in recruiting group members to work with. She detached herself from her previous group to join another because she realised that the South African students who were previously in her group had more concern for comfort than for their studies. She was thus

compelled to look for another French-speaking student and a serious minded South African student to be in her group. Her situation points to focus and discipline to work together with other serious-minded students. Erika laments:

I did my first group assignment in maths. I was in a group with three South African students. I took their cell numbers, but no one answered. Eventually, I changed from that group. They behaved like that because they hate to study, and I don't want to fail because of them. I took Flora, who is French-speaking and a boy who is focused because he sits in front of me in class. Some of the South African students only try to submit assignments on the due date.

Erika was embarrassed when she had to present a topic in the presence of many students because of her linguistic challenge and accent. Her accent became centre stage because she pronounced words differently than the South African students. She relates her experience:

I was embarrassed on the first day I had to make a presentation because I was not used to speaking in the presence of many people in English. Some of my classmates laughed about my accent. When the lecturer saw the way other students embarrassed me, she made an arrangement for me to do the presentation without the other students. The second presentation was in student skills. I was scared and there were 10 students in the class when I made a presentation during student skills, so it was fine.

However, the opportunity to watch and listen to the other students as they made their presentations was a learning experience to Erika:

I learned how the other students made presentations, and there were some of them who presented very well. I learned the pronunciation, the way they used the computer during presentation and the way they expressed themselves. I also learned their accent and I know that the way I used to pronounce some words was wrong.

f) The fear of losing French as a language of communication

The following words reveal Erika's state of mind when I asked if she did not mind losing French as a language:

No (in a loud voice) I am not going to lose French. I don't want to lose it. I want to know English, and then keep speaking French. My father and mother can speak English because they are medical doctors. I also want to be like them.

g) Premonition and anticipation

Erika pondered, "I used to go to a private school in Gabon. So when my father found this one, he told me to come here because it is a private university". Furthermore, she expressed her desire to become a medical doctor like her parents, an indication to attain a set identity. She said, "I also want to become a medical doctor and speak English like my parents". These findings suggest that premonition and anticipation are capable of influencing the decisions made by French-speaking students to obtain academic degrees.

h) The motivation to obtain a degree

Parental support becomes invaluable when issues bordering on obtaining academic degrees are considered. Montana College was an expensive institution to attend, for many of the South African students. However, in the case of Erika's parents, it was an investment. I inquired about the tuition fee, to study at Montana College. Erika said:

Yes it is expensive but my father told me that to study, there is no short course, he had to pay. He said no matter how expensive, he would pay. It is my dream to become a medical doctor because my parents motivate me to be a doctor.

i) Satisfaction with life on campus

Satisfaction with life can be measured via association and interaction with the people of a new environment. The presence of student advisors on campus added to her confidence and satisfaction with academic life. Evidence is provided:

Yes I can say I am adapting. Now I am able to speak to my friends and would no longer stay alone as I used to do when I just came to this school. Student advisors help me with my fees. If I have any problem they can help me with my class. They are like my father and mother in South Africa. They give me advice in terms of my studies and about my life. There is a lady who is a student advisor who graduated from this school. She is experienced and she helps me.

5.12.5 Educational experiences

A prominent educational experience of Erika was using the library and other facilities to complete her assignments in the company of her friends who assisted her through her multifaceted challenges:

I visit the library to do my assignment and research but sometimes, I don't understand English in the textbook. I go to ask my English teacher, at times my friends tell me. At times I go to the computer; write the name of the author and it gives me some explanation.

On the issue of academic performance, Erika was my student in the pre-degree programme. I observed her for the whole semester in my Mathematics class when she did not know that I was going to seek her consent to participate in my research. I consciously engaged her in the midst of English-speaking students in an attempt to foster interaction with the other students so that she could learn English. I asked her if she had ever failed any of the modules that she took because I monitored her performance in Mathematics and saw that she was an excellent student. She said, "I have never failed". This experience was amazing because I checked her academic record during the phase of documentary analysis that I conducted and found her academic achievement encouraging. She passed all her modules despite the linguistic challenge that confronted her.

5.12.6 Empirical evidence of hybridization of sociocultural factors in an ACOP

I present Erika's statement to show the importance of language on learning. She worked twice as hard as the other students when she was a new student. With adjustments made via her acquisition of a sense of belonging she developed an academic identity which gave her the impetus to seek consultation with lecturers and peers:

I used to translate my work from English to French, now I don't translate my work from English to French anymore; it was only when I came for the first time to this school. Now when the lecturer is teaching, I don't translate to French anymore because my English is getting better.

The available evidence in terms of language, academic acculturation and academic identity seem to point to the notion that learning evolves when the three sociocultural factors are in a state of constant redress.

5.13 Belinda: "I want to do Biomedicine but I was not accepted at any public university"

5.13.1 Biographical information

Belinda (female) is from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). She was a first-year student who had gone through the pre-degree programme. She started the pre-degree programme in 2011 but was only available for one semester. She could not get her study permit renewed in the DRC, so she lost a semester. She came back in January 2012 but had to start in the first year course. Belinda had to do the remaining modules she could not complete in 2011 while she started the first-year modules in biomedicine. I took note of Belinda since 2011 as a dedicated student. My prolonged exposure at Montana College for a year and a half gave me firsthand information. She comes from a family with seven children, and had lived for two years as a student in South Africa. She held the secondary school leaving certificate and had to study English before being accepted to study at Montana College. Belinda is from a family with a reasonably high socio-economic status. She seemed to have made up her mind to prepare for the global trend that requires people to be bilingual, to increase the chances of getting better jobs in future. When she was asked why she came to South Africa, she expressed herself with these words:

I came to study in South Africa because I want to study in English and not in French. Everywhere English is required. Even in my country, English is one of the required languages at school. It is also required to get jobs.

Belinda's distinctive storyline bordered on the statement that she did not meet the entry requirements at most public institutions. She could only find space at the private tertiary

institution where she entered through the foundation programme (pre-degree programme). Belinda's inability to study at the public university seemed to reveal that students who deviated from set standards in the matriculation examinations had to turn aside to negotiate the pre-degree programme. There seemed to be a shortfall in the curriculum of DRC as evaluated by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), as she did not get matric exemption to go directly to the first-year degree programme. She expressed concern for her refusal at most public institutions of South Africa:

It was easy for me to get accepted here. I tried the public universities but it was difficult for me to get admission. I wanted to do biomedicine but I was not accepted.

Belinda's story revealed the gap filled by Montana College, in terms of bridging the gap between high school and the first-year curriculum. Consequently, the pre-degree programme seemed to be a bridging curriculum experience for French-speaking students.

5.14 Curriculum experiences of Belinda

5.14.1 Linguistic transition as a curriculum issue in the academic community of practice

Belinda's storyline supports the notion that French-speaking students have linguistic challenges, especially at the pre-degree stage, through to first year of study. Their experience seems to show the trend of linguistic recuperation as they go through to third year. Their linguistic recovery process seems to be due to a number of factors such as interaction at the entry level with English-speaking students, hard work and memorization of unfamiliar words in the English language. Belinda's comparison of the academic infrastructure in South Africa with that of the DRC was a reflection of the ingenuity of the academic infrastructure at the college. Rote memorization seemed to be a hidden curriculum experience of French-speaking students at the school. Belinda spoke thus:

The major difficulty for me is the language. I cannot learn as fast as other students. I have to do twice the work in some instances to be able to learn. I have to memorize unfamiliar words first.

She engaged in converting curriculum content from English to French and back to English. Consequently, her learning was slowed down. A curriculum experience common to French-speaking students was the translation of curriculum content from English to French and back to English in an attempt to cope with the LOLT.

a) Learning via observation and listening

Belinda's story was an indication of the fact that learning seems to take place through observation and listening to others. She pointed to the difficulty encountered at the entry level

to the campus. Through an enabling environment and interaction, she began to gain confidence to speak and read in English. Her character as an outgoing person likely assisted her in the process of obtaining the necessary vocabulary and command that she needed to thrive academically. Observation of friends in terms of how they spoke English and their ability to listen to classmates with rapt attention seemed to be hidden curriculum experiences, capable of breaking barriers of language among the French-speaking students at Montana College. Evidence of these assertions was given by Belinda:

English was very difficult for me at the beginning but now it's a lot better. I learn by observing how the other students speak English and I learn their accents. The fact that I come to class and listen to my classmates helps me to understand English. So I can say that interacting with non-French speaking students to learn English is better. I go out of my way to find someone who can help me with the words that I don't understand.

b) Use of dictionary

Belinda was a frequent user of the English dictionary in an attempt to understand unfamiliar words during lectures and while reading textbooks. When I asked if she understood lectures given by the lecturers she said, "I only understand a bit of what I hear in class". This shows that a curriculum experience common to French-speaking students was the use of the English dictionary.

c) The role of academic advisors

The roles played by academic advisors at Montana College served as curriculum experience to the French-speaking students. Belinda explains:

They help me with academic and administrative issues. This is because I am not very comfortable in speaking English, and they can speak better than I do. I go and meet them when there is need, so that they can assist me to speak to the lecturers or the head of faculty when I have issues to sort out.

d) Student-lecturer relationship

The relationship between students and lecturers was seen as a curriculum experience. The lecturers were patient with the students in terms of their availability to attend to academic issues confronting the students without coercion. I present evidence in Belinda's own words:

All of my lecturers are very patient and they are willing to help me whenever I need help. The fact that they are very patient encourages me to see them for consultation anytime I have a challenge in my studies. I am very comfortable around them, so I get the help I need from them anytime.

e) Boldness to ask questions

The boldness to ask questions openly in class was a challenge as far as Belinda's presence during lecture periods was concerned. As a result the fear of being ridiculed was taken as a hidden curriculum issue that likely delayed the transition of French-speaking students from French to English. Belinda speaks on the issue:

Sometimes I don't want to ask questions because I am not sure of what I am going to say in English, so I don't want people to laugh at me in class because of my English language deficiency.

f) Shyness

On the issue of Belinda's inability to openly ask questions in the class, she responded to my question on why she did not boldly ask questions in the class apart from the issue of not wanting to make mistakes because of her pronunciation. She said:

I am a shy person and I don't want to be ridiculed. I would have asked questions in French if I was studying in the DRC because I am comfortable with French as a language. Here I would not ask questions because I don't want people to laugh at me as I am a shy person".

Shyness, as a result of an inability to speak English fluently, is thus presented as a likely hidden curriculum issue responsible for the delayed transition of French-speaking students from French to English.

g) Proficient French-speaking students as a resource to alleviate linguistic challenge

Belinda's route to getting her linguistic problems solved seemed different. She employed the assistance of other French-speaking students who were more proficient in English to alleviate her linguistic concerns. Evidence is provided:

I go out of my way to find someone who can help me with unfamiliar words that I don't understand in the textbooks that I read. I usually go to French-speaking students who are better than me in English language.

h) Reticence as curriculum issue

During lecture periods Belinda explained how she behaved when she did not understand unclear concepts especially when there were too many words whose meaning she did not understand. Her behaviour was an act of reticence due to linguistic complications. Reticence (caginess) is thus presented as a likely hidden curriculum experience of French-speaking students. She replied to my inquiry:

I just don't bother to stop the lecturer when I don't understand because I know my English is bad, so I just keep quiet. It was more difficult for me at the beginning but now it's a lot better.

i) Homesickness

It seems homesickness is a common experience to French-speaking students. Belinda was not left out of the experience as she said, “I miss my family but I have an obligation to study, so that I can achieve my goal of becoming a neurosurgeon”. Ultimately homesickness was a hidden curriculum experience for Belinda at Montana College.

5.14.2 Attachment to academic institution as a symbol of academic acculturation and academic identity

Belinda’s desire to become a graduate seemed to have given her the required level of acculturation and identity in Montana College. This kind of acculturation is different from the acculturation and identity in terms of the mainstream society. It is termed academic acculturation and academic identity because they are not acquired in an attempt to settle indefinitely in the mainstream society. Academic acculturation and academic identity are acquired in this context to reach the domain as suggested by Wenger (1998), which is to earn a degree. Furthermore, the fact that she was not discriminated against by South African students was responsible for her attachment to Montana College. She demonstrates her commitment and attachment to Montana College:

The school is meeting my needs. My classmates are very friendly (nodding her head in affirmation). They talk to me, and I do talk to them as well. I am sure this school is going to assist me to achieve my goals.

5.14.3 Sense of belonging to academic institution as a symbol of commitment to participate in the ACOP

Belinda was found to participate in the academic activities at Montana College because of the future goal which she set to achieve success in life. She seemed to have developed a sense of belonging to Montana College because she saw the possibility of using the school to reach the domain, drawing on Wenger (1998). This finding suggests that the domain in an ACOP is capable of assisting participants to generate the sense of belonging they require to achieve their aims. Belinda speaks out:

I want to achieve success in life. Because I don’t think I can have a good job with my high school result; I want to go further than that.

5.14.4 Intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula

a) The pre-degree programme

The pre-degree programme was an intended curriculum experience as far as the French-speaking students were concerned because of their linguistic challenge. Apart from preparing them for the rigours of the first-year curriculum it served the purpose of strengthening their linguistic proficiency by giving them time to recuperate from their states of *incommunicado*. Belinda revealed this notion:

It would be so difficult for me to go directly to the first year without going through the pre-degree programme. This is because, as I am a French speaker, it is good for me to start with those courses because I am gradually trying to improve my English.

b) The mathematics curriculum

Belinda's experience in the Mathematics curriculum is cited as an intended curriculum issue particularly her experience with word problems. She was good at solving mathematical problems. However, when it came to word problems she had challenges due to an inability to understand the English. This is an indication that French-speaking students engaged with standard mathematics curriculum in their home country, but were limited by an inability to understand the LOLT at Montana College. An inability to understand word problems in Mathematics is suggested as an intended curriculum issue. This idea was obtained when she divulged her experience by saying, "I find word problems very challenging because of the English language involved".

c) The commitment of lecturers

The commitment of lecturers at Montana College symbolized the route to curriculum enactment. Belinda's expression that it was much easier to learn at Montana College than in the DRC, and the fact that lecturers were not punctual in the DRC indicated that lecturers at Montana College were more committed to the enactment of the intended curriculum. Her expression was identified as an enacted curriculum experience, likely for French-speaking students. I present her argument:

In my country, sometimes the lecturers will come once in the whole year. Learning is much better and I am more comfortable here. One of the lecturers here encourages me all the time. When he comes to class to teach mathematics he encourages us to do well. If I didn't do well in a test, he encourages me to try harder next time. This personal interaction helps me to put in more effort in my school work. He is a motivator.

d) The assessed curriculum

Belinda's response to the assessed curriculum was investigated via documentary analysis, and the observation session which I conducted on her. I checked her performance over an entire semester and found that she passed Mathematics with distinction. She also passed all the other modules very well. The surprising experience that was found about her performance was in the second semester Mathematics module. She registered very late and her lecturer (Mr. Taylor) advised her not to take the module. She assured him that she would cope. She attained 81% in that module, despite registering very late. Belinda is an example of focus and resilience. During the observation session, she kept quiet in the lecture hall throughout the entire period. While other students were asking questions, she kept quiet throughout and did not utter a word. She sat beside a South African student on that day but there was no interaction between them. I matched her response during the interview session with what I saw and found that she was always quiet and attentive in class. Her quietness during lecture periods did not indicate lack of focus, rather her style of learning which bordered on listening and watching others was of immense advantage. She watched and listened to the lecturer intently as he taught them in the class.

e) Group work

Belinda's preference in terms of working with others was in the direction of working with French-speaking students because she could only do her best in communicating to her group members in French. She argues:

I prefer to work in a group of DRC students because it is better and easier to understand people who speak my language. When I have to do an assignment, it's better for me to do my best and I cannot do my best in English. When I am working in a group with French-speaking students, I can explain my idea to them in French so that, if one of the French-speaking students is more proficient in English, that student will be able to help me understand English. It works well that way.

f) Learning style

A closer look at Belinda's academic performance reveals another dimension of what has been observed in the course of studying the French-speaking students' curriculum experiences. It has been a strong point of recurrence that associating with English-speaking students enhanced the acquisition of the LOLT among the French-speaking students. In Belinda's case her association was more with her French-speaking counterparts, and this style seemed to work for her. It is therefore suggested that learning style is important among French-speaking

students, although interaction with more knowledgeable other is also important. She sought out French-speaking students who were more proficient in English to assist her in the learning of the LOLT.

g) The fear of losing French as a language of communication

Belinda was passionate about her home language to the point that she minded losing it. Despite her interest to learn English she preferred to be bilingual. During the interview session with her she said, “I would rather keep French and learn English instead of throwing French away because it is also an internationally accepted medium of expression”.

h) Premonition, anticipation and motivation

Premonition and anticipation are used in this study to refer to the intuition to take an action to forestall an impending danger in terms of not being left out of a common relevance. Belinda’s mind seemed to have been tuned towards obtaining a degree because every member of her family had a university degree. Secondly, the future goal of getting a good job was also instrumental to her actions. Evidence is provided:

I don’t want to be the only one left out in my family because everybody is a university graduate. I would not be able to have a good job if I stop my education at high school level. I must go further to obtain a degree.

i) Indecent dressing

An unusual experience at Montana College to Belinda was the way female students exposed their bodies unnecessarily. She was not accustomed to such a way of dressing. This is presented as a hidden curriculum experience as far as Belinda was concerned. I present her frustration on this issue:

I don’t like the way people dress, it is different from the way people dress in my country. I expect girls to dress decently.

5.14.5 Satisfaction with academic and social life

Belinda expressed her opinion in terms of satisfaction with life at Montana College. She applauded the pre-degree programme which presented her with the opportunity to gain academic and linguistic stamina to adjust to the rigours of first-year. She spoke about her classmates who were welcoming and ready to associate with her at the school. It seemed that she had a kind of institutional satisfaction, which seemed to be hidden curriculum experiences. The welcoming environment seemed to present her with ample opportunity to

integrate and socialize with friends and classmates in order to gain the linguistic and cultural capital needed to link her plight to the pedestal of academic success. Furthermore, a community spirit was noticeable at the school, a vital ingredient that seemed to sustain her academic and sociocultural potential. She related her experience:

It would be difficult for me to go directly to the first year without going through the pre-degree programme as a French speaker. It was good for me to have started with pre-degree courses as I am gradually trying to improve my English.

Belinda mentioned a number of measures of life satisfaction which seem to agree with the stipulations of Chow (2007). These were taken as evidence of academic acculturation and academic identity, required for optimal acquiescence with the curriculum. The following narrative is presented as evidence that Belinda had satisfaction in life at Montana College:

I enjoy this school because there is no discrimination. My South African friends are welcoming. I enjoy living here because it is much hotter in my country (talking about the weather in South Africa, as better than in the DRC). The lecturers are very supportive. Student advisors offer assistance. The library is functional. I feel at home in this institution.

5.14.6 Identity and acculturation experience

Belinda's description of her identity was not different from that of the other French-speaking students. She declared herself as "Congolese". She had academic acculturation, but not mainstream society acculturation. It appears as if the learning so far experienced by the French-speaking students had been due to their attachment to the tertiary institution, and not the acceptance of the mainstream culture at large. Montana College seemed to have been providing French-speaking students with a secluded kind of environment which was devoid of the xenophobic prototype in the larger society. When she was asked whether she was interested in becoming a South African, she was not interested but held on to her Congolese identity. It appears as if this attachment to ethnic cultural mores among the French-speaking students is an ingrained and firmly entrenched characteristic. Therefore identity and acculturation struggles in the mainstream society seemed to be hidden curriculum experiences. The interesting aspect involved the notion that she appeared to learn not to be a South African through the experience she had. Belinda's acceptance of the institutional culture presented a posture of academic identity and institutional acculturation. The learning that Belinda seemed to have experienced appears to have arisen due to institutional adaptation and identity, and not from the mainstream society. From Belinda's experience it furthermore seemed as if learning takes place when there is a hybridization of language, acculturation and identity. She spoke on the issue:

I am a Congolese and nothing can change it. I like this institution but it doesn't go beyond that. I will return to my country no matter what happens. I must go serve my people so that my country can also be developed.

a) Motivation

Belinda's storyline presented an opportunity to decipher the motivation behind French-speaking students' influx into South Africa to learn in the English language. First of all, Belinda seemed to have been influenced by the status of her family members and parents in the DRC. She said that she did not want to be left out of the successful storyline of her family. It appears as if parental and family motivation could be responsible for the quest of French-speaking students in terms of aspiring to gain the upward mobility stratum in life. She could see the effects of becoming educated like her parents and family members (upward class mobility index). This idea seems to be a form of identity, that is, "to become like my parents". Becoming like her parents is therefore taken as a hidden curriculum factor which probably motivated her in terms of focusing on her studies. While I was going through Belinda's academic history at Montana College (document analysis), I was privileged to see her academic performance. She obtained distinctions in mathematics and student skills, and had above 70% in all her modules. Her results proved beyond reasonable doubt that she was aspiring to become somebody in life, an emblem of identity and a hidden curriculum asset. Aspiration to achieve, parental role modelling and drive to attain the upward mobility cadre seemed to be hidden curriculum experiences as far as Belinda was concerned. These seemed to trigger her compliance with the assessed curriculum. She responded to questions posed via this narrative:

My parents don't want me to stop at high school because everyone in my family has a university degree. That is why I also want to have a degree as well. I don't want to be the only one left out.

5.15 Zelda: "I am studying Tourism, so I need to be able to speak English"

5.15.1 Biographical information

Zelda was a first-year student from Gabon at Montana College. She was from a family of five. Her parents lived in Gabon while her other siblings were in France. She was the only child of the family who came to study in South Africa. She came in through the pre-degree programme and was studying Tourism. She had lived in South Africa for 3 years, as at the time of this study because she attended an English proficiency school for one year in an

attempt to prepare for study in South Africa. The prominent narrative which characterizes her experience pointed to the main reason why she came to study in South Africa. It was because of her quest to be bilingual. She said, “I am studying Tourism, so I need to be able to speak English”. She was eager to offer the reason for her action by saying, “English would give me the opportunity to work anywhere in the world”. She came to South Africa in the hope of studying at one of the public tertiary institutions but was told that her performance was insufficient to meet entry requirements. She said, “When I applied to other institutions, they didn’t accept me. I was told that my matric result was not very good and that they could not accept me”. In the end she had to come to Montana College through the pre-degree programme.

5.16 Curriculum experiences of Zelda

5.16.1 Linguistic transition as a curriculum issue in the academic community of practice

Zelda was lost when she first came to Montana College because she was unable to communicate with the other stakeholders. Her experience was such that she needed to negotiate linguistic transition from French to the LOLT. I present proof of this claim:

When I got to this school for the first time, I was lost because around me, everybody was speaking in English and I didn’t know how to speak in English very well.

Consequently, linguistic transition was a curriculum issue negotiated by Zelda at Montana College.

a) The pre-degree programme

Zelda pointed to the effectiveness of the pre-degree programme by citing one of the required modules offered in the pre-degree programme as useful. Student Skills module was the module that assisted her in terms of time management. She said, “In pre-degree I took one module known as student skills. We were taught how to manage our time so as to succeed and this has assisted me a lot to pass my examinations”. The pre-degree programme is presented as an intended curriculum experience of French-speaking students because it bridged the gap between secondary and tertiary education curriculum expectations.

b) The Mathematics curriculum

Zelda did not like Mathematics while she studied in Gabon. However, the mode of learning facilitation by the lecturers at Montana College became beneficial to the extent that she passed the module. During the interview session with her I asked whether she liked Mathematics. She said:

Mathematics? Firstly, when I was in Gabon I didn't like mathematics. But when I came to this institution, because my lecturers were helpful, they taught me very well and I passed. They are friendly; I even had times that I sought help from them concerning my private life's challenges.

c) Translation of curriculum content from English to French and back to English

Zelda was involved in the practice of translating curriculum content from English to French and back to English because of her challenge in the LOLT. However, she said it did not help her much because it wasted her time. Zelda speaks on the issue:

Sometimes I translate my work from English to French, and back to English. It helps at times, but it does not eventually help because I am required to learn in English, and not in French. It also wastes my time.

d) Indecent dressing

A hidden curriculum experience of Zelda bordered on the way South African female students dressed. It was strange to her because they exposed their nakedness. Evidence is provided as she said, "I don't like the way South African female students dress".

e) Small class sizes

Zelda was very glad to be a student at Montana College. I inquired whether she preferred to go to one of the public universities. She responded, "I like this place because we are not many in class like in Pretoria University. At this school I get personalised attention, I can book for consultation to see my lecturers any time. I have never experienced discrimination from anybody and our tutors are very patient with us". Small class sizes are a feature of the curriculum strategies at Montana College.

f) Shyness

Zelda was not able to ask questions in the class because of her linguistic proficiency issues. She said, "I am shy to ask questions in the class because it is my behaviour. I am afraid that

other students would laugh at me when I ask questions in English”. Shyness is presented as a hidden curriculum issue among French-speaking students because of their issues with the LOLT.

g) Student-lecturer relationship

Zelda was connected to Montana College because she said that the lecturers “are very friendly, and they explain concepts very well to us whenever we go to meet them for consultation”. This is a finding that explains the ingenuity of a healthy student-lecturer relationship. Zelda experienced a good student-lecturer relationship at Montana College.

h) Accent

Zelda mentioned the issue of pronunciation during the interview session with her as a challenge. She particularly had a challenge because she could not follow the accent of white lecturers during learning facilitation. She said, “I have to listen very attentively before I can hear my White lecturers’ accents when in class”. Furthermore she said, “I have to ask them to please come again, so that I can benefit in the class discussions”. In amazement she said, “Oh I like Mr. Bakare because he is an immigrant lecturer and he pronounces words distinctly so that all of us can hear what he is saying. He cares about foreign students a lot”. The issue of accent is presented as a hidden curriculum experience capable of preventing French-speaking students from participating effectively during curriculum enactment exercises.

5.16.2 Attachment to academic institution as a symbol of academic acculturation and academic identity

Zelda was connected to Montana College by virtue of the distinction which she made between the Gabonese educational experience and the experience which she had at Montana College. Firstly she was freer to express herself with the lecturers at Montana College without exercising any fear of unethical behaviour. Secondly she was attached to South African students who taught her English. These two experiences seemed to have given her academic acculturation and academic identity at Montana College:

This institution is meeting my academic needs because I can see improvement in some of my modules. In Gabon, you can’t approach the lecturers like here in South Africa because, they are very different. In Gabon when you are talking with a lecturer, people may think you are engaged or you are going out together. Also my South African friends help me to improve my English.

a) Identity description

Zelda described her identity as Gabonese despite the fact that she had academic acculturation and academic identity at Montana College. This was an indication that the benefits derived from an environment may not suffice to make people decide to negotiate their identity with the mainstream society's cultural predisposition. During the interview session she was asked to describe her identity. She said, "I am a Gabonese, and I want to stay a Gabonese. I want to go back to Gabon because not everyone in this country likes foreigners". She gave reasons for her decision thus:

Sometimes when you have a problem with your bank account, and you go to the bank, they ask you to bring out many documents like proof of residence, ID and your parent's documents. So it's very difficult for us to live here.

5.16.3 Sense of belonging to academic institution as a symbol of commitment to participate in the ACOP

Zelda was asked to indicate whether her lecturers encouraged her to excel at Montana College. This question was asked in an attempt to explore her sense of belonging to Montana College. It was an indirect question to initiate a discussion on how effectively she was encouraged to participate in the ACOP. To excel in the ACOP engagement and interaction with more knowledgeable others is of paramount importance as suggested by Reyes (2007). This may be initiated via Zelda's development of a sense of belonging to the ACOP. She said:

Yes my lecturers encourage me, because they advise me, like don't give up, you must work hard and things like that. Their advice has been helping me a lot.

5.16.4 Intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula

a) Preference for foreign lecturers

In terms of the intended curriculum, linguistic challenge characterised the experience of Zelda as previously presented in section 5.13.1. A vital point to emphasise limits to Zelda's perception that foreign lecturers taught better than South African lecturers. She said, "I prefer foreign lecturers because they explain better than the South African lecturers at this institution. Their accents are more understandable to us". Her conspicuous experience with the enacted curriculum was based on the issue of accentuation especially when she spoke about how white lecturers pronounced words as discussed in section 5.13. Her experience in terms of the assessed curriculum was identified when she said she began to see improvement in terms of her marks after engaging with the other stakeholders at Montana College (section

5.14). A scenario of the hidden curriculum which impacted on the intended and enacted curricula is presented as proactivity as discussed shortly.

b) Proactivity

Proactivity is presented as a hidden curriculum experience capable of assisting the compliance of students with the intended curriculum as was the case with Zelda. She prepared in advance in an attempt to follow discussions in the class especially when it was time to summarise the previous lessons. She cultivated the habit of reading new topics ahead of time, in an attempt to understand the topic better. Zelda relates her experience:

I prepare before going to the class because I don't want to be lost. Maybe the lecturer may want to ask about what we did in the last class. So, I would be able to tell the lecturer what we previously did in class. If we are to start a new topic, I read through the new topic ahead of time.

During the observation session that I conducted on Zelda I almost found nothing to write about her in the lecture period because she kept quiet throughout the contact session. She did not ask a single question during the lecture period. The only observation I could make was based on what she had told me during the interview session with her, namely that she was not accustomed to ask questions in class because she had a shy nature. However the shyness was as a result of linguistic challenge because she did not want her peers to embarrass her in the class.

c) Group work

Zelda said, "I participate in group assignments so that I can share knowledge with my group members." She mentioned South African students and French-speaking students as members of her group. She said it was a requirement at Montana College to form groups, in order to learn together. Group work is thus presented as an intended curriculum experience of French-speaking students at Montana College.

d) The fear of losing French as a language of communication

Zelda did not entertain the fear of losing French as a medium of communication. She felt it was better to stop speaking French in order to learn English. However, I asked her how this was going to be practicable. She said, "Sir, I don't know how to stop speaking French so that I can speak English properly". It is thus presented that the spontaneity of using French as a medium of expression was a curriculum challenge for Zelda at Montana College.

e) Premonition and anticipation

Zelda's notion of wanting to study in English was her demonstration of premonition and anticipation because they represented her quest to attain an identity. She said, "I am in South Africa because I want to study in English." Presentiment and anticipation are presented as hidden curriculum issues.

f) Motivation

The fact that Zelda's parents had university degrees paved the way for her to also desire a university degree. I asked her to divulge the reason for wanting to obtain a degree in an indirect manner by asking her who paid her school fees. She said, "It is my mother". I attempted to ask her why her father was not paying her fees, she said, "It is very complicated", so I did not want to be intrusive. The important evidence that I needed was found when she said, "I also want to have a university degree". Motivation to obtain a degree is presented as a hidden curriculum experience.

g) The satisfaction with life on campus

Zelda's life satisfaction on campus was deciphered through the benefit of small class size initiative employed at Montana College. This idea was found to have initiated a point of connection between Zelda and Montana College. It is thus presented that the satisfaction that she had at Montana College likely paved the way for her choice to develop of academic acculturation and academic identity. I found this idea out when Zelda said, "We are not many in class like in Pretoria University I like this university". Satisfaction with the academic life at Montana College is presented as a curriculum experience of French-speaking students.

5.17 Marilyn: "I want to learn English, the education in South Africa is better than in my country"

5.17.1 Biographical information

Marilyn was a first-year female student at Montana College from Gabon. She was studying accounting at the time of this study. She came in to Montana College through the pre-degree programme. When I asked Marilyn how she got to know Montana College, she said, "I knew this institution through a friend who studied here and then I decided to come". She was admitted to Montana College through the matric examination that she wrote in Gabon. She found herself at Montana College because she was not accepted at the public universities that

she applied to. She said, “I was not admitted to the Tshwane University of Technology and the University of Johannesburg because they said my results were not good enough. They also said that my English proficiency was inadequate”. Consequently, she was admitted to Montana College to go through the pre-degree programme. She went to learn English for 1 year in Johannesburg before she commenced the pre-degree programme. In an attempt to inquire about her English proficiency level, she said, “I can read and write, but to speak in English is the problem”. Marilyn was from a family of six, the only child of the family that came to study in South Africa. The prominent narrative that describes her storyline borders on the main reason why she came to study in South Africa. She said, “I want to learn English, the education in South Africa is better than in my country and the lecturers here are better”. She mentioned the fact that lecturers at Montana College gave better attention to students than in her country of origin. Marilyn was partly sponsored by the Gabonese government to study at Montana College while her parents paid the balance. The Gabonese government paid tuition costs while the parents paid for living expenses.

5.18 Curriculum experiences of Marilyn

5.18.1 Linguistic transition as a curriculum issue in the academic community of practice

When Marilyn was interviewed she was asked to identify her greatest linguistic challenge. She said, “I can read and write in English, but my greatest challenge is to speak in English”. This is provided as evidence that she needed to transit from French to English in order to become more proficient in English. Similarly she needed to be able to speak in English so as to interact with more knowledgeable others in an ACOP. It would imply that she would not be capable of doing oral presentation for others to learn. It is presented that Marilyn needed to negotiate a transition from French to English in an attempt to interact with the principles of the ACOP.

a) Proactivity

A curriculum experience of Marilyn was the routine of studying before attending each lecture, because of her linguistic challenge. It also provided the opportunity of understanding the intended curriculum better. Marilyn responded to my question on whether she studied before attending lectures, thus:

I study before attending classes because I don't like it when lecturers ask questions, and I am not able to respond. I read ahead because of the language and to know that I will be taught better.

Consequently, proactivity was found to be a curriculum experience of Marilyn, an attempt to gain better understanding of her modules.

b) Student-lecturer relationship

It takes a good working relationship between the lecturer and student to be capable of engaging a student to work extra hard. This notion was found when Marilyn gave an indication of the commitment of foreign lecturers to students. Foreign lecturers were positively implicated for engaging students in hard-working tasks. The constant interrogations given by one of the lecturers was seen as a source of motivation which encouraged Marilyn to work hard. Evidence is provided:

My economics lecturer (Mrs. Folake, a foreign lecturer) pushes me to work hard and every time she sees me, she asks questions whether I am doing well in my tests. Even in class she asks me questions all the time.

c) Group work

Group work meant a different thing to Marilyn. She preferred to work with other foreign students instead of South African students. She mentioned the fact that foreign students were hard-working, because their parents were looking forward to their success. The issue of fees was also a contributory factor to the focus exhibited by foreign students because it was expensive to study in South Africa. Furthermore, she mentioned the fact that she learned better from foreign students than South African students. These are her words:

I don't like working with South Africa students because they are lazy and they don't like doing their work. Foreign students are hard-working, because we know why we came here and we have to work on our studies and our parents are spending a lot of money on us. I learn better from other foreign students.

Group work was a curriculum experience of Marilyn. However a major distinction was found, because she preferred to work with foreign students instead of South African students.

d) Boldness to ask questions

Diminished proficiency in a language of communication is capable of leading to an inability to ask questions during lecture periods. Marilyn experienced this situation because she could not eloquently ask questions in the classroom. She said, "I don't like asking questions in class

because I am afraid of my English”. Lack of confidence is thus presented as a curriculum experience of Marilyn because she could not gather sufficient vocabulary to verbally communicate with stakeholders in the ACOP.

5.18.2 Attachment to academic institution as a symbol of academic acculturation and academic identity

a) Student-lecturer relationship

Marilyn preferred to study at Montana College because she had a basis to compare Montana College with the university that she had attended in Gabon. She mentioned the nonchalant attitude of lecturers in Gabon as a major setback to academic achievement. However, she identified a strategy employed at Montana College which took care of students, in terms of the readiness of lecturers to explain academic concepts to students, especially among foreign lecturers. She expresses her concerns with these words:

I like this institution because I can learn. It is not the same because, I was at a university in my country and it was bad, so I withdrew. Whenever lecturers came to class they didn't care whether you understood what they taught or not in Gabon. I prefer foreign lecturers at this institution, because they explain better than the South African lecturers, and they push us to work hard.

The commitment demonstrated by lecturers to student learning is presented as a curriculum experience of Marilyn. Furthermore, lecturers' commitment to student learning was likely responsible for the development of academic acculturation and academic identity which Marilyn demonstrated.

b) Friendliness among the other foreign students

The network of foreign students at Montana College was found instrumental to Marilyn's exhibition of academic acculturation and academic identity. Marilyn held the presence of the other foreign students at Montana College in high esteem because they seemed to contribute to her development of a sense of belonging, which is vital for the development of academic acculturation, and subsequently, academic identity. Consequently, friendliness was an attribute, exhibited by the other foreign students, which likely assisted Marilyn to develop academic acculturation and academic identity at Montana College. Friendliness as demonstrated by the other foreign students at Montana College was therefore a curriculum experience of Marilyn. I present evidence of the abovementioned deductions from Marilyn's story:

I have South African friends but I prefer students from other foreign countries because they are friendlier than South African students.

c) Identity description

Marilyn could not describe her identity to indicate her engagement with the South African culture. Rather, when she was asked to describe her identity, she said, “I am a Gabonese. I don’t want to become a South African for any reason.” This points attention to the fact that Marilyn developed academic identity with respect to the principles of Montana College in an attempt to obtain her degree. It is thus presented that there was no indication that Marilyn was connected to the mainstream society’s cultural predispositions.

5.18.3 Sense of belonging to academic institution as a symbol of commitment to participate in the ACOP

a) The academic infrastructure

The academic infrastructure at Montana College seemed to have enhanced Marilyn’s development of a sense of belonging. Friendliness and academic infrastructure were likely responsible for her development of a sense of belonging to Montana College. Marilyn speaks out:

It is better to study here than to study in Gabon because the environment of this institution is friendly and I enjoy it a lot because it is very comfortable for me.

b) The pre-degree programme

The pre-degree programme was identified by Marilyn to have assisted her in learning English. Similarly the module on student skills was found to help her manage her time so that she would know how to work as a student. The pre-degree programme is presented as a curriculum experience of Marilyn, which enabled her manage her time. It is also presented as the instrument which aided her development of a sense of belonging to Montana College, to the extent that she could work together with more knowledgeable others in the ACOP. She relays her experience:

The pre-degree programme helped me with English and subjects like student skills, to manage stress and plan my time to know how to work

c) Market day

This was a yearly event where students in the commerce department and the other students were involved in buying and selling of different cultural materials. All the cultures represented on the campus were allowed to exhibit their cultures. It gave many students the opportunity to learn the cultures of the other students. Marilyn was glad that she could exhibit her culture for the other stakeholders to see. This activity was found to be a hidden curriculum experience, which likely gave Marilyn a sense of belonging to Montana College. She was ecstatic to the point that she said she felt that the other students would be capable of knowing her better, once they were aware of her culture. Marilyn narrates her experience:

On market day we show things from our country and I feel proud because it gives me the feeling of living in my country. I have an impression that when the other students know my culture they would understand me more. I like the school, location, and the environment.

5.18.4 Intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula

a) Evidence of interaction with the curriculum

The intended curriculum seemed to have benefited Marilyn to the extent that she said, “I learn English from the foreign and South African lecturers”. This was an indication that apart from the specified curricula French-speaking students could be afforded the opportunity to learn the use of English from foreign and South African lecturers as they facilitated learning. The enacted curriculum at Montana College, especially in the Mathematics module was a point of consideration because French-speaking students displayed a unique understanding of mathematics. Marilyn said:

I like mathematics but sometimes I struggle, because at times I don't work hard. Foreign lecturers help me to understand my modules by giving extra classes.

Marilyn recognized the impact of the enacted curriculum via the giving of extra classes by foreign lecturers. Attendance of extra classes became a curriculum experience of Marilyn in the Mathematics module. The assessed curriculum as experienced by Marilyn was based on her level of hard work. She said, “I failed a module because I did not prepare well for it”. This was the Mathematics module which she took in the pre-degree programme. She attributed the reason for failing the mathematics module to insufficient preparation. However, at the second attempt she passed. In that mathematics module, she obtained 75%. In an analysis of the academic record I observed the effect of language on her report as the marks were just above average with the exception of Mathematics.

I did not have the opportunity to observe Marilyn in the classroom, but I observed her in the midst of her friends during break time, as they engaged in informal discussions. One observation that I made, was that she always surrounded herself with French-speaking students and they always spoke in French. This indulgence was found, through my observation to have likely slowed down her ability to speak eloquently in English.

A hidden curriculum experience of Marilyn was in terms of her survival at Montana College because she was on a partial scholarship from the Gabonese government. She mentioned the fact that studying in South Africa was very expensive. I repeat her words on this issue:

Sometimes we have problems, to survive is very challenging because we have to pay rent, and the transport is very expensive. At times I don't have money to come to school. My friends from Gabon assist me at times to come to the school.

b) Indecent dressing

The way of dressing by female South African students became a hidden curriculum issue, which Marilyn had to confront at Montana College. As a result of this experience she sternly disagreed with the idea of learning the South African culture. She said she felt that the female students were exposing her nakedness. Consequently she was incessantly embarrassed. Marilyn expresses her concerns:

I am not interested in learning the South African culture because I don't like how South African students dress. It is not good for me. It is like they are exposing me as a woman.

c) Premonition and anticipation

The fact that Marilyn wanted to learn in English was the driving force to study at Montana College. She spoke thus, "I want to learn English, the education in South Africa is better than in my country". Secondly, she wanted to obtain a degree in South Africa, "because the lecturers are better" in South Africa than in her country. Premonition and anticipation that learning English would provide her with better opportunities are presented as hidden curriculum experiences.

d) Motivation

Parental motivation was a source of motivation for Marilyn to obtain a degree. The fact that her father went to a university became a source of motivation to earn a degree. Parental

motivation is therefore presented as a hidden curriculum experience, capable of encouraging the French-speaking students to pursue higher education. Marilyn said:

My father has a university degree; I also want to have a university degree so that when I complete my studies I would be able to get a good job.

5.19 Beatrice: “In my country I have been doing the same thing over and over, I want to have a change of system and face the world”

5.19.1 Biographical information

Beatrice was a Cameroonian at the time this study was undertaken, and had lived in South Africa for a year and a half. She was 32 years old, had been a nurse, and worked in one of the clinics in Cameroon before she decided to come to study at Montana College. She got to know of Montana College by searching the internet. She was studying Biomedicine during the period of this study in her first year. She could speak French and English fluently because Cameroon has two major national languages, English and French. She started learning English as a child, but then began to learn French when she started to work as a nurse because she worked in a clinic where they spoke French and did not understand English. She was very fluent in French because it was necessary for her to use the medium of French to interact with her patients at the clinic. She was from a family of 8 children, but was the only one who decided to leave Cameroon to study in South Africa. This explains why I have chosen this prominent narrative, “In my country I have been doing the same thing over and over. I want to have a change of system and face the world”, to describe her because her experience was unique when compared with the other French-speaking students that I interviewed. Beatrice did not go through the pre-degree route but was directly admitted to the first-year degree programme because she had a good result. However, she was evaluated at the point of admission that she needed to register for the pre-degree bridging Mathematics module. This was the only connection that she had with the pre-degree programme. I came to know her because she was a mature student. One day she came to me for consultation about Mathematics and did not stop coming to ask questions concerning her choice of study. She had challenges with Mathematics and this gave me the opportunity to interact with her although I was not her lecturer per se. I saw determination in her to succeed and she never gave up hope when confronted by challenges. At first I did not know that she could speak English fluently because she was always communicating with her friends from other French-speaking countries in French. Her story gave me another perspective in terms of the ingenuity

of bilingualism and how it impacts on the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students.

5.20 Curriculum experiences of Beatrice

5.20.1 Linguistic transition as a curriculum issue in the academic COP

Beatrice already made the linguistic transition necessary to survive the rigours of academics at Montana College. Her case serves as a reference point to the other French-speaking students who needed to make a linguistic transition from French to English. She had no problem relating with both English and French-speaking students. I reflected on the case of Belinda, the French-speaking student from Gabon, who preferred to interact with French-speaking students who were capable of understanding and speaking English. Beatrice undoubtedly was a resource to such French-speaking students who were shy to relate to South African students because she would assist them to understand their work better.

5.20.2 Attachment to academic institution as a symbol of academic acculturation and identity

Beatrice was connected to Montana College because of her desire to earn a degree. She was focused and used her spare time in the library instead of visiting friends. I found that she had a connection with Montana College through her utterance, a depiction of academic acculturation and academic identity. She said:

I am determined to achieve my aim, and this is the means of doing it. Nobody has ever attended a university in my family. This institution is going to assist me to achieve my goal. I would rather use this opportunity wisely because I am comfortable with the way they teach students here.

Beatrice had academic acculturation and identity and they are presented as curriculum experiences in this study.

a) Identity description

Beatrice categorically defined her identity by saying, “I am a Cameroonian”. She was determined to go back to Cameroon: “I have to go back to develop my own country”. I asked her if she adapted to South Africa she would consider changing her identity, “Even if I adapt and stay here, it would not be forever. I have to go back”. The strong Cameroonian identity exhibited by Beatrice is thus presented as a hidden curriculum experience because she was undaunted as far as the negotiation of the Cameroonian culture was with the South African culture.

5.20.3 Sense of belonging to academic institution as a symbol of commitment to participate in the ACOP

Beatrice connected with her lecturers at Montana College fearlessly. She described the relationship between students and lecturers as cordial and welcoming. She said, “Our lecturers are approachable and cordial. Each time I book a consultation, they attend to me, except when they are busy, and then I do understand that they are busy because the school is busy”. Consequently she said, “I like this institution because of the attention given to students during tutorials and consultation sessions”. Beatrice developed a sense of belonging to Montana College via the predisposition of her lecturers in terms of their availability and patience to guide students through their academic tasks. She explains elaborately:

This institution is meeting my needs because it has been quite some time that I did not study. Since I finished matric, I was at home for 10 years. I just started to study this year. The way they teach us here is systematic because the lecturers take time to explain to us. At the other universities, they don't have time for solving the problems of students as they do here.

It is thus clear that Beatrice experienced a sense of belonging to Montana College.

5.20.4 Intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula

a) Boldness to ask questions

The fact that Beatrice worked for a long time after completing her professional examination in nursing while in Cameroon was a challenging experience because she could not cope with the pace at which academic activities were outlined at Montana College. The time lag in tuition constituted an intended curriculum issue for her. Consequently, during the facilitation of learning exercises she slowed down the pace at which learning took place by asking questions from the lecturers. She applauded the lecturers for their patience, and endeavoured to study hard in an attempt to cope with her studies. She explains in her own words:

The first challenge I had is that, it has been a long time since I studied. Other students in class understand concepts faster than I do. This explains why I study hard, so that I can catch up with their pace. In class, when the lecturer explains, they understand quicker while I am left behind. When I get back home, I study hard and when I finally understand the concept, I never forget such concepts afterwards.

Beatrice was bold and not to be ashamed to ask questions during lecture periods. She knew the importance of engaging the lecturers because she wanted to learn at all costs. She narrates her experience:

The other students in my class say I ask questions too much but I don't care because I am here for my own progress and my education. All my first-year lecturers know me because I am always in class, and I do ask questions.

Beatrice was observed during a learning facilitation, a presentation of the intended curriculum. She was a dominant inquirer in the lecture room because she took time to clarify academic issues and never gave up. This was an indication that she knew why she was a student and knew the importance of engaging her lecturers in discussions in order to learn. I listened carefully to her construction of words and found that she was proficient, unlike the other French-speaking students who kept quiet during lecture periods. Her case was unique and it gave me the notion that bilingualism is capable of giving students the knack of asking questions without fear. It was Beatrice's experience that gave me the opportunity of knowing that the fundamental reason why the other French-speaking students were silent during lecture periods was due to their inability to express themselves in English.

b) Compliance with the assessed curriculum

I asked Beatrice whether she had previously failed any module, to which she responded, "No I have never failed any module, because I study hard. That is why I don't have friends. I am 32 years old. I have to be focused on my studies". During the documentary analysis session of this study it was found that her academic record indicated that she had not failed any of the modules that she took. Age is presented as an agent of focus capable of predisposing French-speaking students to achieve. It seems that advanced age is capable of focusing the attention of students on learning the vital aspects of the curriculum.

c) Determination to succeed

A character demonstrated by Beatrice was a determination to succeed academically. Because of this she did not socialise with the other students who could not add value to her academic life. She was mindful of the possibility of being distracted from her studies. Beatrice stated:

I am that kind of person who doesn't make friends because I don't want them to distract me. The friends that I have in class are those that I greet. I don't have friends that I visit.

d) Use of the library

Beatrice saw the importance of attending all her lectures. She discovered the importance of using free periods to intensify her effort to study by using the library. During the interview session with her she stated, "I attend all my classes, and during my free periods I go to the library to study." The use of the library is thus presented as a curriculum experience of Beatrice at Montana College.

e) Homesickness

Beatrice's dimension of experiencing homesickness differed from that of other students. The focus she had at Montana College seemed to have consumed her passion to the extent that she was not focusing on her people that she missed. However, she was homesick because she missed her only son who was in Cameroon. She spoke thus:

I don't really miss home because I am here for a purpose. If I start to think about Cameroon, it is like I don't know why I am here. However I miss my son but it is for a purpose.

f) Maturity

Maturity was recommended by Beatrice as one of the important features to look for before students are admitted to the university. She reflected on her character as a teenager and found a great difference between that time and the period she was studying as a mature student at Montana College. She admitted that she was clueless about issues of life when she completed her matric examination. She makes her recommendation thus:

I would suggest that maturity is important before students are admitted to study at the university because I compare how I used to behave at matric level. It was like I didn't know what I was doing at matric level. The little I did at that time, I thought I was doing those things for my parents. In those days, I went to school because they told me to go. Now I realize why I have to go to school.

Maturity was found to be a hidden curriculum experience that assisted Beatrice to focus on the content of the presented curriculum.

g) Power relations

The issue of fees was reported by Beatrice as a competitor in terms of students' attention. In an attempt to settle fees and to obtain clearance, students had to queue for hours. Consequently students were unable to attend classes. Beatrice made this known to register her discontent in terms of how the fees department wasted the time of students. She reports on the issue:

I always go to the fees department, and there is always a long queue. Students have to wait for their turns and this affects class attendance. Many times, I get out of the queue to attend classes but I am compelled to come back to check the status of my account.

A hindrance to the enactment of the curriculum was the delay experienced by students at Montana College regarding the verification of payments made to the school. It was evidence of power relations because the school management mandated students to settle fees before they were allowed to attend classes. Beatrice saw this as a waste of time that she could attend

classes and pay at a later time. The effect of power relations in this dimension impacts on the time available for Beatrice to receive tuition in order to comply with the curriculum stipulations at Montana College.

h) Group work and individual presentation

The issue of linguistic incapability was not restricted to foreign students alone. This idea was found from the discussion I had with Beatrice in an attempt to decipher whether she participated in group discussions with the other stakeholders of the ACOP. Code switching was revealed to characterise the discussion sessions of the groups that Beatrice belonged to. Code switching on the part of the South African students was an involuntary action because they were also linguistically challenged. Beatrice made the effort of regularly reminding them about her presence in such groups. Consequently they reverted to forcefully explaining in English. The scenario is presented:

South African students also have the challenge of speaking English, especially when we are doing assignments together in a group. Some of them may begin to explain in English. After a while they switch to the traditional language and I am lost and left out. In such a group, I am the only foreigner. I remind them that I don't understand the language. They are thus compelled to speak in English.

The fact that Beatrice loved people and cared about their welfare was an advantage to her during presentation sessions. Her profession as a nurse had given her the knack of working with people. Consequently she was not afraid of making presentations in the presence of the other students. I present evidence to this claim:

To me, as a nurse, I chose Biomedicine as a course because it relates to what I did before. It relates to health. I love working with people. I am not afraid of making presentations in class because I have been working with people for a long time. I know how to approach people and I am not scared. First of all, those people are my colleagues in class. I don't have any reason to be scared of them.

i) The fear of losing French as a language of communication

Beatrice did not have to fear losing French as a language. She was bilingual and spoke the two languages very fluently. However, she was forgetting how to write in French, suggesting the possibility of losing a language when not properly engaged. Her experience was significant because it revealed the possibility of using two languages. When I compared her experience with the experiences of the other French-speaking students who were just learning to use English as a medium of expression, they told me that they were tending to forget

French because they spoke English at Montana College. When I interviewed her again in 2013 on the issue of losing French as a language she told me she preferred to retain English instead of French although she spoke French at Montana College. It means that decisions to retain or relinquish a language of communication may be circumstantial and time-dependent.

j) Premonition and anticipation

The fact that Beatrice said, “In my country I have been doing the same thing over and over, I want to have a change of system and face the world”, symbolises an anticipatory move to attain an identity. It was an epitome of a hunch or premonition to evolve into another identity status. Her move has been taken to imply a hidden curriculum experience to attain a set identity of earning a university degree.

k) The motivation to obtain a degree

The motivation to earn a degree was generated out of Beatrice’s desire to be singled out, an aspiration to reach an identity status. Her parents were not her role models because they were not academically inclined. She went to a professional school and saved money in anticipation of study at Montana College. Beatrice’s parents eventually supported her because she had saved money to come to South Africa. She communicates her experience on the issue:

Nobody has been to the university in my family, I am the first person. I am the one encouraging myself because I had always wanted to go further. Since I finished matric, my parents were not financially capable to help me further my education. I went to a professional school. I started working, and then I saved some money. I told my parents that I wanted to go to school and they supported me with what I had.

l) The satisfaction with life on campus

The experience of Beatrice on campus was seen as the anchor that held her to the goal she set for herself. Her experience with the mainstream society in terms of the racial discrimination was sufficient to discourage her from pursuing her goal to earn a degree. Her determination to earn a degree was seen to supersede the challenges of racial hatred which she daily experienced on her way to Montana College. The fact that she spoke English on the taxi everyday was an issue because the other occupants of the taxi knew she was a foreigner. Her daily experience with the inhabitants of South Africa seemed to have created an impression about the entire society that they exhibited xenophobic tendencies. She adopted a strategy to always remain silent while on the Taxi to avoid such repeated acts of embarrassment. I

present her story to show that the inclination she had to study and live in South Africa at the time of this study was academic in nature:

My education is encouraging me to stay in South Africa but there are some shortcomings about the main society, but I don't look at the shortcomings because I want to learn. I do enjoy this institution because I am getting what I want. The problem I face is outside of the school. When I speak English in the taxi, they look at me like I am a nonentity. At such times, they speak in their language and I feel they are abusive. I know everybody has his/her own language but here, it is another story. When they see that you are not from here, they look at you in a different way. They look at you with hatred, and I face this problem every day. These days I just keep quiet. I pay the fare but never ask for my change. By the time you speak English, they can beat you up because they are very aggressive.

Consequently Beatrice was satisfied with the life on campus and not with the mainstream society. Satisfaction with the academic life at Montana College thus became a hidden curriculum experience for Beatrice because she already formed her opinion to achieve her goal to earn a degree despite the challenges she experienced. Furthermore, she contrasted her experience outside of campus with what she experienced with South African students on campus by saying, "South African students also speak in their languages among themselves here but when I talk to them in English, they answer me in English". This gave her satisfaction with life on campus. Beatrice consoled herself with these words:

It is different here because I realized there is a difference between the educated and the uneducated. The people who treat me with hatred are those who have never been to school. All they have is a stigma for foreigners. They just say, *You have come to take our jobs and good houses, but we stay in uncompleted buildings*. They just hate foreigners.

5.20.5 Educational experiences

The educational experience of Beatrice was unique at Montana College because she had a break of up to 10 years without formal education after she wrote the matric examination. It was a challenging experience indeed. She got help from the tutors and lecturers who were dedicated to assisting her through a series of consultation and tutoring exercises. These attempts revamped her from her many years of separation from academic endeavours because she found a common ground to learn with the other students at Montana College. Beatrice ecstatically speaks:

When I came here for the first time, I was demotivated because I have not been to school for a long time. The system of teaching and consultation with lecturers helped me to improve. The lecturers have been explaining difficult aspects of the modules to me. Now I am confident to study with other students.

Beatrice was interested in learning Zulu. She said, “I want to learn Zulu because they speak it so much in Gauteng, I understand a bit of it”. Her motivation to learn and speak Zulu was aroused by the following concerns:

Some students are used to their language, so when it comes to speaking English, they find it difficult. They find it difficult to explain what they want to explain to you. If you speak their language, they would easily explain to you in their language. They revert to English but it becomes difficult for them to explain in English.

It is presented that the educational experience of Beatrice comprised an act of adapting to the academic culture of Montana College at all costs anticipating to earn a degree. She developed a keen interest in understanding Zulu to be capable of interacting with the stipulated curriculum at Montana College. A prominent feature in her narrative points to the issue of age and maturity. It thus implies that at the right age the maturity to participate in an ACOP could be fostered.

5.21 Ornella: “I like South Africa because it is like we are studying in Europe”

5.21.1 Biographical information

Ornella (female) was a second-year Business Administration student from Gabon in central Africa. She was the only child of the family. She had lived in South Africa as a student for three years as at the time of this study. She also came to study in South Africa because she wanted to learn in English, an attempt to be bilingual. Her drive to learn in English was fuelled by the current global trend that presents English language as a language of influence and nobility. A prominent narrative from her storyline pointed to her love for the infrastructure of this country. She described South Africa as a similitude of Europe suggesting that the infrastructure in South Africa could be a hidden curriculum factor predisposing French-speaking students coming to study. The infrastructure of South Africa seemed to position Montana College on the edge of admitting students from diverse sociocultural terrains. A lucid opportunity apparently gained by the academic institution involved admitting a blend of students from diverse cultures within the campus environment. She was asked reasons for attending a private provider of higher education. She had this to say:

It is because of English. In my country we need people who are speaking English because it is so important in the world now. And secondly, I like South Africa and it is like we are studying in Europe. I applied to UP and TUT and they didn't take me, so I came here to study.

Secondly, she said, “I applied to the University of Pretoria and the Tshwane University of Technology, they didn’t take me, so I came here to study”. As I probed further, she said, “They just said I needed to have scored up to 18 points but I didn’t have up to that number of points, so I was not accepted”. It also seemed that the French-speaking students’ curriculum experiences back home were regarded as being on a lower level than those required for the South African matric. Consequently French-speaking students seemed to be refused full matric exemption, predisposing them to going through the foundation programme (pre-degree).

5.22 Curriculum experiences of Ornella

5.22.1 Linguistic transition as a curriculum issue in the academic COP

a) Translation of curriculum content from English to French and back to English

An indication that Ornella needed to experience linguistic transition from French to English was found through her experience with the presented and enacted curricula. She engaged in translating curriculum content from English to French before she could understand her modules. One would expect that by the second year she should have overcome the challenge. When I asked whether she was still translating from English to French before she could understand her modules, this is what she said:

Yes, even now I still translate from English to French. In certain modules, I have to interpret to French before I can understand. English language is a big issue for me. My English can only improve by speaking and talking with others in English, but here South African students like to speak Zulu too much, so it is difficult to learn English from them. It is not fair to speak another language that I don’t understand. I would prefer them to speak in English so that I can hear and learn from what they are saying.

b) Use of the French/English dictionary

Another proof that Ornella needed to negotiate transition from French to English is provided. She engaged the English/French dictionaries to study even at the second year of degree studies. Ornella speaks, “I use both the French and English dictionaries to understand my work. It is time consuming to do this. If I don’t use the dictionaries it would be too difficult for me to understand my work”.

c) Indulgence in terms of the incessant use of French

Ornella reiterates the effect of speaking with French-speaking students as a major source of diminished transition from French to English. The major challenge she had was that she

indulged in speaking with her peers from the other French-speaking countries in French and not in English. I present her concerns on the indulgent use of French as language of communication among her peers:

I prefer to work with French-speaking students but this is not helping me to speak English. If I speak French all of the time, it is not good for me because I want to study in English. The point is that, most of the time when we are together we speak French and it worsens my situation.

5.22.2 Attachment to academic institution as a symbol of academic acculturation and academic identity

The mode of learning facilitation was Ornella's source of getting attached to Montana College. She cited the case in Gabon as an example that students did not enjoy the assistance offered by lecturers. At Montana College however she seemed to have developed academic acculturation and academic identity because lecturers were approachable. Evidence of this presentation is given subsequently:

I enjoy the way we are taught at this school because this is not so in my country. In Gabon, if you don't understand something, the lecturer is not approachable. They tell students that their job is mainly in class and not outside the classroom. If you don't understand in class, it is your problem.

a) Identity description

In an attempt to discover the extent to which Ornella had succeeded in integrating her home cultural tenets with the cultural predispositions of South Africa, I asked her how she would describe her identity having lived and studied in South Africa for 3 years. This is what she said:

I would say I am a Gabonese. Some of the South Africans are not friendly to foreigners. After my bachelor's and honour's degrees, I will go back to Gabon to live and work. Sir, I said I like South Africa, not South Africans. I like the country and the people but there are some black people who are not friendly at all.

Ornella's description of identity is presented as a hidden curriculum issue because it seemed to have been her guiding principle and focus that she was in South Africa for the purpose of earning a degree.

5.22.3 Sense of belonging to academic institution as a symbol of commitment to participate in the ACOP

Ornella was asked whether Montana College was meeting her academic needs. She opened up by extensively demonstrating her attachment and passion for Montana College because of

the lecturers at the school. This was taken to imply that she had developed a sense of belonging to Montana College, a vital ingredient that is capable of focusing the attention of students on learning the presented and enacted curricula until compliance with the assessed curriculum evolves. She reveals what was in her mind:

I can say yes, this institution is meeting my academic needs. I do like some lecturers because they are working hard to assist us. They help us with tutorials and many activities in class. They explain concepts very well to us in the classroom. I like this institution for employing these excellent lecturers. I see them as assets to foreign students and we tell others in our country to come here to study.

5.22.4 Intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula

a) Proactivity

Ornella was of the mindset that it was better for the French-speaking students to prepare before attending lectures. This practice was aimed at fostering a quick understanding of concepts such that when the lecturer begins to explain those concepts they would be furnished with better understanding. The evidence is provided:

It is easier for French speaking-students to read before going for a lecture. If I go to the class without preparing, and the lecturer starts to explain, it would be hard to understand. Personally, I read before going to class so that I can understand more.

A curriculum experience of Ornella was the practice of studying ahead of the enacted curriculum to facilitate easy comprehension.

b) Boldness to ask questions

Ornella demonstrated that there was a cordial relationship between students and lecturers at Montana College. She said she was free to ask questions in the class and this relationship was instrumental to the ease of interacting with the curriculum. An example is cited by Ornella to demonstrate the support she received from her research methodology lecturer:

I am not afraid to ask questions in the class because our lecturers are friendly and approachable. It is easy for us to interact with them. They also encourage us to succeed. For example, in the research methodology module, yesterday my lecturer encouraged me because my due performance is not fine but she encouraged me to write the examination. She said I must not give up and that helps me a lot.

The boldness to ask questions during the process of learning facilitation was found as a curriculum experience of Ornella.

c) Accent and code-switching

Ornella was of the mindset that she received assistance from foreign lecturers. However, she mentioned that an Afrikaans-speaking lecturer code-switched intermittently and used the Afrikaans accent which she found challenging to understand. She speaks on the issue:

Immigrant lecturers help me but the White South African lecturers switch to Afrikaans when they are talking. They also use the Afrikaans accent which I find difficult to understand. Foreign lecturers explain very well and they are friendly because they understand our challenges.

Unfamiliar accent and issues of code-switching are presented as hidden curriculum experiences of Ornella at Montana College.

d) Power relations

It was a policy at Montana College that students had to pay their fees on a monthly basis. Students with fees in arrears were excluded from tuition and were not allowed to write tests and examinations. Ornella lamented that Montana College needed to understand that late payments could arise from transfer problems from Gabon:

If you do not pay the school fees as at when due, they block you from coming in to the campus. Even if you have a test, you will not be allowed to write. The institution should try to understand our problems with respect to delays in payment that at times we are challenged in terms of the ease of transferring funds from Gabon to South Africa. If I don't write the tests, then I cannot write exams or go to the next class. This challenge is a stress factor.

Her experience signifies the power relations between the management of an academic institution and the notion of students in terms of the payment of fees. Her argument pointed to the notion that eventually she had to pay fees and she should not have been excluded from tuition.

e) Market day

The market day, an annual exhibition of cultures from the different African countries served the purpose of making students connect with their cultural origins. Ornella was excited because she saw an opportunity to showcase her cultural beliefs for the other students to see. She speaks thus:

On the market day we sell our products from our country like food, clothes etc. and this idea makes me proud of my country and gives me a sense of belonging to this school. It also makes me have a feeling that other students would understand me better as I display my culture.

f) Group work and individual presentation

Ornella worked with South African students strictly on a business basis because she did not engage them socially. She expressed that during presentation sessions on chosen topics she made grammatical errors but was not embarrassed by the South African students. I present her words:

I work with South African students when it is time for group work. I don't have them as friends. During presentation sessions, I make mistakes but they don't embarrass me because they understand that I am trying to learn English. I am not scared at this level to make mistakes. That is the only way I can learn English properly.

It is shown that Ornella engaged the South African students during group work and presentation sessions. These are taken as intended curriculum experiences of Ornella in the ACOP.

g) The secret of academic success

Ornella recognised the secret of success as hard work when I asked whether she had ever failed any examination before. She said, "The secret is to work hard, I have never failed any examination before but I have written a supplementary examination because I was sick". I could not observe Ornella during any of her lecture periods. The only observation session that I was privileged to conduct was during the informal discussion with her French-speaking peers. They did not speak in English throughout the period of my observation. They indulged in speaking French and this gave me first-hand information that indulgence in terms of speaking in French was one of the reasons for the delayed transition of French-speaking students from French to English. After a while I interjected and asked them why they did not speak in English. One of them said, "It is difficult to speak English when we are together because it is natural for us to speak French without thinking as we have to do when conversing in English".

h) The fear of losing French as a language of communication

Ornella minded losing her French-speaking ability because she was determined to go back to Gabon. I attempted to ask whether she did not mind to losing French as a language. She said:

French is my home language. I cannot lose it no matter what happens. It is true that I want to learn English. I would rather keep French and have English as an additional language because it would become an advantage when I get back to Gabon.

The fear of losing French as a means of communication was a hidden curriculum to Ornella.

i) Premonition and anticipation

The learning of English was an anticipatory move as far as Ornella was concerned. One of the reasons that she came to Montana College was that in Gabon it had become a trend to be bilingual. Bilingualism was a requirement to get certain jobs. Ornella said, “I want to increase my chances of getting job opportunities, as I am aspiring to become a diplomat”. The learning of English is presented as a curriculum issue to Ornella because of its versatility at assisting her to achieve her academic goal of earning a degree.

j) Homesickness

I booked an appointment with Ornella on the 27th of February 2013 to interview her on certain issues which were not covered during the interview I had with her in 2012. One of the issues that emerged was homesickness. I thought she got over the issue of homesickness since she was in South Africa for a much longer period. She responded thus:

Yes, I am homesick because I am away from my family members and friends. South African students are not friendly with foreigners. It is certain to be lonely and isolated but this is my third year in the degree programme, I will soon be with my loved ones.

k) Motivation

Parental motivation and role modelling were likely hidden curriculum factors propelling non-South African French-speaking students to aspire to go through tertiary education. Ornella gave reasons for aspiring to attain academic status due to the pace that had been set in the family, especially by her father. She mentioned the fact that her father’s high academic attainment gave her the drive to study:

My dad and mother went to the University, so they encourage me. My mother didn’t finish university, only my father finished and he is highly educated

Ornella saw cordiality and approachability of lecturers at Montana College as advantage to learn and thrive on campus. She mentioned the positive effect of their behavior (lecturers) as a tool that fostered cordiality and approachability during lecture and tutorial periods. Tutors were also applauded for their commitment and dedication to academic work. Cordiality and approachability of lecturers and tutors seemed to address issues of the intended curriculum. It could be said that the character and mindset of lecturers and tutors, a hidden curriculum issue likely paved the way for academic learning at the school. It may be said that a hidden

experience of the curriculum among non-South African French-speaking students was in the area of enjoying cordiality and approachability from lecturers and tutors. From Ornella's statements, it was deciphered that she had academic acculturation, and was keenly learning the English language, not likely from South African students but from other students who spoke English and her lecturers and tutors. She mentioned that she only worked with South African students during group work, but that she preferred to stay professional with them (a demonstration of academic identity). It could imply that a hybridization of language use, academic acculturation and academic identity fostered learning among the non-South African French-speaking students within the campus. She explained:

Our lecturers take tutorials and explain very well to us in class. They are approachable and friendly. I don't want to have South African friends, but I work with them during group work. My English improves by speaking and talking with others in English. South African students don't really like foreigners.

1) Support mechanism

The student advisory unit of Montana College seemed to act as support mechanism to the French-speaking students' academic and general welfare. French-speaking student advisors liaised with the school to offer assistance to the French-speaking students whenever they were prevented from gaining access to the campus. The assistance offered to French-speaking students seemed to cushion their challenges. They saw student advisors as representatives of their parents on campus, and this idea seemed to support them when they were challenged. Ornella spoke about the student advisors:

They help us to solve certain problems. If I have any problem, I go to my student advisor to help me. Like fees and if I have a problem at the gate.

The student advisory unit served as part of the intended curriculum experience of French-speaking students.

5.23 Empirical evidence of hybridization of language, acculturation and mediation of identity

From the available evidence the curriculum experience of Ornella largely depended on her acquisition of the LOLT, the development of academic acculturation/sense of belonging and academic identity. What was observed in her case was a strong encounter in terms of reaching the required position of equilibrium in terms of these three sociocultural factors in the ACOP for learning to ensue. Therefore redress among the three sociocultural factors

could be responsible for the emergent academic learning that she had at Montana College as she interacted with the curriculum. The major fulcrum of the three sociocultural factors was the English language, which Ornella needed to engage to be capable of demonstrating compliance with the assessed curriculum. The importance of the LOLT is depicted by Ornella's submission in terms of the incessant use of Zulu by the South African students because it prevented her from learning the English from them. It was found that the foreign lecturers were resourceful at teaching the French-speaking students the use of English apart from their roles as facilitators of learning. Ornella developed a sense of belonging to Montana College by virtue of the roles played by the lecturers, and subsequently academic identity based on the cordial student-lecturer relationships that existed at Montana College. It is presented that these stages of development of the potentials to learn were created by the redress among the three sociocultural factors in the ACOP.

5.24 Elijah: "I came to South Africa at the age of 15; I can speak English better than I could do 6 years ago"

5.24.1 Biographical information

Elijah came to South Africa with his parents who relocated temporarily from the DRC. He had his secondary school education in South Africa from Grade 9. He wrote his matriculation examination in South Africa and gained admission to Montana College via direct entry. He did not go through the pre-degree programme because he passed the matriculation examination very well. He was a second year student of B.Com Marketing at Montana College. He could speak French, Linghala and Swahili. At home he spoke French and Swahili to his parents, but English to his siblings because he wanted them to also learn English. He had been living in South Africa for 6 years as at the time of this interview, which was conducted on the 6th of March 2013. The prominent narrative which describes his storyline entails the notion that he had linguistic challenge. His statement gave an impression that he had improved in English over a period of 6 years in South Africa. He attended an English learning centre known as ABC English when he came to South Africa for 3 months.

5.25 Curriculum experiences of Elijah

5.25.1 Linguistic transition as a curriculum issue in the ACOP

a) Linguistic transition

Elijah previously belonged to an ACOP at the secondary school level where he commenced his linguistic transition. His prior experience is used to depict that at the point of entry to South Africa he had a linguistic challenge. He attended an English learning school before he began to study at Montana College, an attempt which seemed to have given him a commensurate degree of linguistic capital in the LOLT. His statement that “I went to ABC English centre for 3 months and after that I went to high school” provides evidence that he did negotiate a transition from French to English because it was a curriculum issue.

b) Translation of curriculum content from English to French and back to English

Elijah was not left out of the rigorous struggle which entailed that he had to translate curriculum content from English to French and back to English. According to him the way French-speaking students interpreted and made sense of scholarly tasks bordered on the route to making meaning. By the time they completed the process of translating from English to French and back to English the meaning of what they were translating could have been lost. He was of the opinion that as long as a French-speaking student refuses to surround him/herself with English-speaking students, the situation could persist. I present his case:

I translated from English to French and back to English because of the way we think as French-speaking students. I process words from English to French. It had to do with speaking French all the time, so I reasoned in French. However if you speak in English, your thoughts would be in that line. It is important for a French speaker to change his/her environment so as to learn English. If a French speaker sticks to French-speaking students all the time, such a student would never learn English.

5.25.2 Attachment to academic institution as a symbol of academic acculturation and identity

Elijah got connected to the principles of Montana College because of his quest to earn a degree. His attachment was of academic origin capable of letting him achieve his goal of becoming a university graduate. I present his words which are taken to imply academic acculturation and academic identity. He said, “My attachment to this institution is to enable me to complete my studies as soon as possible”. Consequently his attachment to the tenets of Montana College is taken to symbolize the possession of academic acculturation and identity.

a) Identity description

Elijah described his identity as “Congolese”. He was determined to return to the DRC when his studies are completed. His experience was a demonstration of the fact that the length of stay is not a guarantee to foster settlement in a novel society.

5.25.3 Sense of belonging to academic institution as a symbol of commitment to participate in the ACOP

Elijah had a sense of belonging to Montana College based on his experience with the majority of the lecturers who had taught him. He had an issue with one of the lecturers. He was of the opinion that the lecturer was not as experienced as the others. He agreed that this particular lecturer he had an issue with was academically sound. He had an issue with her mode of assessment but he continued to hold on to his goal of earning a degree. I present his concerns:

My lecturers are dedicated, it’s probably one of them that I am not so comfortable with, but she is not too bad because she was not good at marking. By being inexperienced it does not mean she is not academically sound but it is that she needs to improve. I have a sense of belonging to this institution. I do not allow this to discourage me from participating in the opportunities provided to learn.

Elijah’s demonstration of a sense of belonging was seen to inform his tenacity to engage with the curriculum at Montana College. His experience is thus presented as a demonstration to participate in the curriculum of Montana College.

5.25.4 Intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula

a) The secret of success

I inquired about the intended and enacted curricula from Elijah by asking whether he had failed any module before. He responded in the affirmative. He told me it was not because of the English as he found that he did not dedicate enough effort to his studies. Lack of dedication is thus seen as a possible cause of his failure. Consequently lack of dedication to academic work is taken as a hidden curriculum experience of Elijah when he failed one of his examinations.

b) Accent

There were indications that Elijah had outgrown the stage where different accents prevented him from coping academically. His experience of six years speaking with different people seemed to have grounded him to accommodate different accents. He spoke thus:

Everyone has his/her own way of speaking because of one or two issues. For example if they have to call my name, I listen attentively because they are not from Congo. I admit that every time, so I don't have issues with them. Their ways of speaking do not affect me anymore. At first I had issues with the accents of teachers, now I am fine.

c) The fear of losing French as a language of communication

Since Elijah was bilingual I asked if he preferred to speak English or French. He said, "No". I went a step further by asking if he minded losing French as a language of communication. He said, "No, I am Congolese, if I have to lose French it means that I am losing my Congolese identity". His exclamation was intriguing to the extent that I connected language to the definition of identity. Elijah's response showed the strong connection between language and identity. It is thus shown that Elijah minded losing French as a language of communication.

d) Boldness to ask questions

The stage to be afraid of asking questions in class had passed as far as Elijah's case was concerned. His experience proves that after a while, as long as the necessary linguistic transition has been made, foreign language speakers regain their boldness because of the acquisition of vocabularies to use during discussion times. Elijah revealed his experience:

When I came to South Africa 6 years ago, I could not ask questions. Now at this institution, I ask questions. I was very shy at first but now I am not shy anymore because I can now express myself fluently in English.

It is thus shown that the time to regain the necessary transition from French to English is an invaluable part of the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students. Elijah's case was unique because he already had negotiated his transition from French to English before he started the degree programme when he got to South Africa in Grade 9. However, his early arrival did not prevent him from failing some modules. Ultimately, it is presented that the transition experience from French to English may not be sufficient to excel, rather a combination of other hidden curriculum factors such as boldness and dedication to academic tasks as he previously commented.

e) Linguistic incongruity

Based on my daily observation that French-speaking students were found in different groups on campus communicating in French, I asked Elijah why this was always the case. He said, "It is because French is all that we have, it is natural and something we cannot ignore". It is

presented that the spontaneity of speaking French with the other French-speaking students at Montana College was likely triggered by the search for belongingness among the French-speaking students.

f) Homesickness

The issue of homesickness was a common experience to almost all the French-speaking students. Elijah had this to say when he was asked whether he was homesick before. This time he was not missing his immediate family members because they lived together. He missed old friends that he left behind in the DRC. He said:

Yes I experienced homesickness when I came at first, because I left old friends. I like DRC a lot although the infrastructure here is better but it is my country. I don't feel it anymore as I used to feel it initially. I am adjusting to this place. You can see that I am growing up. I am 21 years old.

Homesickness is presented as a curriculum experience of Elijah when he came to South Africa. However, he got better as he grew older.

g) Motivation

Elijah was motivated by his father's educational achievement. He said his father was his role model. According to him, whenever he was challenged academically, he remembered that his father was his encourager. In the end he began to focus on his studies. For example, I was given an appointment to interview him when he was studying and preparing for the upcoming tests. He told me he had realised his previous mistakes and that he was not willing to perform badly in his studies. This is what he said:

My dad is my motivator. He is a lawyer; anytime I remember this fact it dawns on me to also work hard to achieve my goals.

It is thus presented that the motivation of parents could be responsible for the tenacity demonstrated among French-speaking students at Montana College.

5.26 Candy: "They told me that if I had to study at a public university, I had to do matric again"

5.26.1 Biographical information

Candy (female) was a third-year biomedicine student at Montana College. She is from the DRC. Her mission in South Africa was to study in English. She said, "When I came to South Africa, I wanted to study at Wits University but they didn't admit me there because of my

matric result. I did not make up to the required number of points. That is why someone told me about this institution and I came to register here”. Her prominent narrative of distinction was reflective of her challenge, which was in terms of her refusal to study at a public South African university because her matric result was not up to standard according to the South African public university requirements. She was told to sit for the South African matric examination again before she could gain access to the public university. Her home language was French and she began to learn the English language when she came to South Africa. Candy came to Montana College via the pre-degree programme and had coped very well in the use of the English language by the third year of study. She was sponsored by her parents from the DRC because there was no government subsidy.

5.27 Curriculum experiences of Candy

5.27.1 Linguistic transition as a curriculum issue in the ACOP

At the point of entry to Montana College, Candy could not understand English too well. Although she did a little bit of English in the DRC, this did not suffice to go through a degree programme in South Africa. She said she could cope with mathematics. While I conducted a document analysis, I confirmed she obtained 99% in maths while she was in the pre-degree programme. In biology she was an average student because of linguistic challenge. During the interview, I observed that her English comprehension and vocabulary had tremendously improved. It seemed as if time assisted her to grasp the command of English language. A curriculum experience of Candy at Montana College was linguistic challenge in the LoLT at the point of entry. Secondly, by the time Candy reached the third-year programme, her linguistic challenges seemed to improve tremendously. She narrates her experience:

My English was very bad when I got to this institution, although I did English in Congo, in an American institute where they teach English. I came to South Africa but it was very difficult for me to express myself in English. In other subjects, I was trying, like in biology I was trying to get at least 50% because I didn't know the language of instruction.

She sought assistance from one of the lecturers who began to assist her to learn English. The lecturer took the initiative to teach her English in order to rescue her from her state of incommunicado. It was a remedial initiative to revamp Candy from her state of frustration because she could not effectively participate in the curriculum of Montana College. The role of this lecturer was an indication of the role of an expert in the ACOP, creating the opportunity to engage beginners to engender the atmosphere of learning by interaction and integration. Candy said:

Whenever I had a problem in English, I had a lecturer who helped me. I have improved a lot because while I was in pre-degree, we had a presentation. I was there, standing before everyone and I had my laptop so I was reading from my laptop because I didn't have confidence in my English. Now, I can talk without looking and reading from my laptop in the presence of everyone.

Candy's experience indicated that linguistic transition was a curriculum issue that she needed to pay attention to in the academic institution otherwise referred to as an ACOP. It took a turnaround time of about 4 years to reach the stage that she reached at the time of this interview. The evidence that she had tremendously improved was found when she said she could present a topic in the presence of the other students, which was not previously the case. She had gathered sufficient vocabulary that could foster boldness to reach out to the other students.

a) Translation of curriculum content from English to French and back to English

Candy was faced with the challenge of translating curriculum content from English to French and back to English. She employed English and French dictionaries to get this done. This practice was the order of the day for her during normal lecture periods. She had to translate English to French even while lectures were being delivered by the lecturers. It was very challenging to sustain the habit of translating every word from the lecturers to French and back to English. She relates her experience:

It was very difficult for me to survive in those years because when in class, I had to translate everything to French before I could understand. I used the dictionary by translating from English to French before I could understand and then it was like writing an essay. It was the worst thing in my life. When I had to complete an assignment, I wrote in French and had to translate what I had written to English again. My friends who could speak English would write 10 pages and I would write only 2 pages.

b) The advantage of bilingualism

Candy pointed to the case of a Cameroonian student who was bilingual because she could speak French and English fluently. She said the Cameroonian student was the best student in her class because of the advantage that she had in terms of being capable of understanding English and French. Candy made it clear that it was an advantage to be bilingual and that bilingualism is capable of assisting a student from a French-speaking background to excel. She narrates her experience:

The best student in my class is a Cameroonian. You know in Cameroun they have two parts, the English-speaking and French-speaking areas. She comes from the English-speaking part of Cameroun but she speaks French. This advantage has really helped her to excel at this institution.

c) Evidence of isolation

Candy preferred to have French-speaking students as friends although she found that it was not a good idea because they always indulged in speaking French and not English. When I asked her for a reason why it was so comfortable to speak French in the midst of the other French-speaking students, she said:

Of course you know you are comfortable when speaking with fellow French-speakers. It is better to stay in the midst of people who mainly speak English so that the learning of English can take place. As long as a French-speaking student stays with the other French-speaking students it would be difficult to learn English.

Ultimately the idea of preferring to stay with French-speaking counterparts was a hidden curriculum issue which limited the capacity of the French-speaking students to transit from French to English.

d) Accent

The issue of pronunciation of words during normal learning facilitation exercises became an issue. Candy mentioned that while she was in the pre-degree programme, she did not understand the accents of white lecturers. However, she resorted to watching the television and regularly listened to the news on CNN, to learn the accents of presenters on TV. I provide evidence of this claim:

In pre-degree I didn't understand the pronunciation of the White lecturers. One thing that helped me was the fact that I regularly watched the TV. I had to listen to the news like the CNN. You know British English is very hard also. I survived that way, but some of the White lecturers spoke with an Afrikaans accent, and it was very difficult for me to understand.

e) Evidence of interaction

Within a space of about four years on campus, Candy had a very supportive South African friend in first-year that she always visited in her home, and they studied together in English. It seems there may be an exception to the rule that South African students do not associate well with foreign students. It seemed as if there were pockets of experiences in which South African students were close friends of foreign students. Although they (South African and French-speaking students) may have a shared repertoire of the curriculum which could have initiated association and interaction, it (the shared repertoire of curriculum) seemed to have worked well for Candy that she had a close friend to teach her the use of English. Candy's South African friend also had experience through her dad who had lived in Germany before, and must have been informed about how to associate and integrate with foreigners. It could therefore imply that the moment South African students on campus were informed of the

predicament of French-speaking students and other foreign students, they could consciously respond to their needs. This scenario seemed to be a depiction of informal support mechanism that alleviated Candy's linguistic challenge, among other factors that helped her transition to English. Candy shared this story:

Yes my South African friend did help me in first year, when we knew each other, because she started from first year. I was going to her house and we were studying together. Her dad was in Germany, and because of that she knew how to relate with foreigners. Whenever I was around her, she didn't speak Zulu.

5.27.2 Attachment to academic institution as a symbol of academic acculturation and identity

Candy seemed to have features of temporal and conditional acculturation to mainstream South African society, apart from the academic acculturation she had. Her views were based on the stance that she preferred the infrastructure of South Africa to that of the DRC. Her acculturation was the type that had an expiry date, because she said she was aiming to work for some time if she got a good and paying job, after which she would go back to the DRC. Candy mentioned the high cost of living in South Africa as a disadvantage in settling down. This was evidence that the French-speaking students at Montana College had strong attachment to the Congolese culture, and were not prepared to trade it off. It seemed as if the non-South African French-speaking students at the institution only had academic acculturation tendencies and not the kind of acculturation that could lead to final or eventual settlement. She spoke these words:

Life here in South Africa is easy but some of the things here are expensive like rent and fuel, but in Congo we don't have some of these problems. In Congo it is possible to rent a 2 bedroom flat for 100 US dollars whereas in South Africa it ranges from USD 600-800. I don't mind living here if I have good life but I would still like to go back to Congo on holidays.

Candy identified with the set curricula of Montana College in terms of support mechanisms put in place to aid academic achievement. However, she seemed to lack the dimension of identity capable of leading to eventual settlement and relinquishing her cultural roots. Her story initially trailed a pattern that seemed to suggest that her quest to attain affluence could nullify the attachment she had to the Congolese culture. The chase she had after affluence seemed to retain the undertone of the strong Congolese identity. Candy pondered the fact that South African citizens were aggressive as a point of deviation from mediating her cultural identity with the South African identity. When she was asked to define her identity, she said she was a Congolese. She had this to say:

There is something that I don't like about South Africans. They are so aggressive. I am Congolese and I am proud to be Congolese. I would accept to be a citizen but I also want to have my passport. I would want to go back to my country after working here in South Africa.

A curriculum experience likely common to a number of non-South African French-speaking students was truncated acculturation and arduous mediation of cultural identity with the South African culture.

Candy found solace in the academic institution because she could connect with one of the lecturers. As a result she enjoyed the academic institution. She found pleasure in regularly seeking consultation with her pre-degree lecturer who she said was like a father to her. She seemed to have gained the academic acculturation and academic identity she needed through the mentoring opportunity she had from this particular lecturer. Her regular visit to her pre-degree Mathematics lecturer was seen to have masked a number of challenges that could have swept her away from the academic institution. She speaks on this issue:

I can never forget my pre-degree mathematics teacher. He helps me with my modules, even now that I am in the third-year degree programme. Whenever I have any problem, I find my way to him because he is always attentive to my cries. I can say that because of him, I am enjoying this school.

a) Identity description

Candy did not hesitate on describing her identity as Congolese. She was of the mindset that if she got a job in South Africa she could stay to work for a period of time after which she would return to the DRC. Her utterance reveals that it is possible to decide to temporarily live in an unusual environment if the living conditions at home are not encouraging. However, Candy still had an indescribable affection for the DRC. Evidence is provided:

I am Congolese and I am proud to be Congolese. I don't mind living here if I have a good life here but I would still like to go back to Congo on holidays. Life is a bit tough in Congo. You know like I said before, that South Africans are attached to their culture and there is something that I don't like about them. They are so aggressive. I would accept to be a citizen but I would also want to have my passport. I don't want to lose my identity as Congolese.

5.27.3 Sense of belonging to academic institution as a symbol of commitment to participate in the ACOP

I perceived that Candy would not have had a sense of belonging to Montana College if not for the support she received from the lecturers and tutors academically and socially. She was discouraged by the attitude of South African students in terms of their incessant use of

indigenous languages, an act which excluded foreign students and prevented them from gaining access as stakeholders to the community of students for intercultural communication to take place. Resultantly Candy's involvement with the lecturers and tutors symbolized her commitment to participate in the activities of the ACOP. She speaks on the issue:

You know, for the students, South Africans like each other because they always speak in their languages and when you are with them, you just leave them alone. That is the only problem I have with them. I like this institution, especially because of the academic support I receive from lecturers and tutors. I can see that I am going to achieve my aim of becoming a graduate.

5.27.4 Planned, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula

a) Compliance with the planned and enacted curricula

Compliance with the planned and enacted curricula was found to be as a result that Candy studied very hard despite her limited understanding of English. This finding indicated that the limitation in terms of language may be overcome through hard work among the French-speaking students. According to the documentary analysis that I conducted I found that in the pre-degree Mathematics examination she obtained 99%. This was one of the main reasons why Candy was employed as a tutor at Montana College. Candy relates her story:

In subjects like Mathematics and bio-entrepreneurship, computer skills, I did very well. It was only in English that I had something like 55% or something like that. I think it was because I studied very well. When you put your mind to do something, you succeed very well.

Candy related her experience with the enacted curriculum while in the DRC and compared it with her experience at Montana College. She identified the use of force in the teaching styles of teachers in the DRC. She said students were forced to do extra exercises in Mathematics. She said the idea was responsible for the good mathematical skills displayed by the French-speaking students at Montana College. This further shows that practice is a key factor that guarantees success in Mathematics. She speaks on the scholastic comparison between the DRC's maths curriculum and the pre-degree maths curriculum offered at Montana College:

You know in Congo, for example I am talking about maths. In Congo the teacher tells you that you have to know the things in the maths curriculum. The teacher forces students to know what they have to know by forcing them to do extra exercises. This idea helped a lot because when I came here and I saw the maths we were required to do, I thought it was not the kind of Maths University students were supposed to do. The maths in Congo is very hard. The maths here is very easy and South African students are struggling, I don't really know why they are struggling.

b) Boldness to ask questions

At pre-degree level Candy could not ask questions from the lecturers during lecture periods because of her issues with the English. She was of the opinion that her classmates could

laugh at her inability to speak eloquently in English when asking questions. She rather chose to ask questions from her lecturers in their offices to avoid embarrassment:

You know, up to the first year of study, my English wasn't good and when I asked questions, I felt I could ask incorrectly and I had a feeling that people would laugh at me in the class. That is why I prefer going to the office to ask my lecturers in private because I was shy to ask questions in the open.

c) Student-lecturer relationship

The atmosphere of Montana College was seen as a very supportive terrain by Candy. This was because of the academic support she had received from the lecturers. Her experience therefore suggests that a cordial relationship between the lecturers and students could foster learning. Student-lecturer relationship is perceived as the relationship between the novice and the expert in an ACOP. I present Candy's standpoint on the issue of student-lecturer relationship:

My lecturers are very supportive. If you have a question and something that you didn't understand in class, you can go to the office and they would explain very well to you. This has been my experience from pre-degree to the third-year degree programme.

d) Foreign lecturers

Foreign lecturers have been reported to play vital roles in the academic and social lives of foreign students in this study. Candy's experience supports these other claims that foreign lecturers had a kind of empathy towards foreign students. This was not always the case with the White lecturers although there were a few of the white lecturers who were very supportive. Another case was Candy's white lecturer who taught her English in the pre-degree outside of the English classes. In this case Candy's Maths lecturer seemed to have touched her heart passionately to the point that the maths lecturer became her mentor. Evidence is provided:

In my four year stay at this school, I have only had 3 black lecturers. All the others are White lecturers. Like my maths lecturer in pre-degree, he has been helping me and I go to his office to seek consultation up till now. He is more than a lecturer to me. He is a foreign black lecturer. He has been helping me a lot, telling me that I have to work hard and that I have to be successful in life. He tells me to try hard to attain a Cum Laude result.

e) Experience with the assessed curriculum

Scientific terminology posed a challenge to Candy apart from the English. She was compelled to learn scientific terminology in English. She depended on the lecture notes given by the lecturer but they were not sufficient until she looked for money to buy the textbook.

Her experience was an indication that for certain modules students may have to look for additional information. It was clear that reliance on lecture notes could not enhance the achievement of Candy in molecular biology. Candy narrates her experience:

In my second year I failed molecular biology. You know that subject, I was going to the class and the teacher was explaining everything, and I was not getting it because of English. Then I told myself that I have to study hard for the subject. It was a White teacher that taught the module and I had problem with terminology. I had to look for R1000 to buy the textbook because I did not have money to buy it. The note given by the lecturer did not help me but the textbook helped me. I wrote a supplementary examination and eventually passed it.

f) Linguistic incongruity among South African students

The use of South African languages was a challenge to Candy at Montana College. In her stay of four years, the situation did not change. She experienced South African students using Zulu and Sotho relentlessly, a situation that excluded French-speaking students and tended to limit their ability to briskly interact with South African students. Candy only came to the campus when there were lectures, and left when she was free. The limited time she spent over a period of four years seemed to have lengthened her transition from French to English-speaking. What it meant was that she came into the school strictly to attend lectures. The vocabulary she gathered over a space of four years from her lecturers and through personal effort to learn the English seemed to have stretched her learning curriculum of the English to about four years. Consequently, the use of Zulu and Sotho on campus seemed to be a hidden curriculum experience among non-South African French-speaking students at Montana College. This was what Candy said during the interview:

South Africans like each other because they always speak in their languages and when you are with them, you just leave them alone. That is the only problem I have with them. When I had a class to attend, I came around but when there were no classes, I left the campus.

g) Power relations

The issue of fees was a hidden curriculum issue because of the power dynamics at work. Montana College had a policy that foreign students had to pay 50% of their fees at registration and the balance needed to be paid on monthly basis spread over a period of 10 months. At times Candy's parents could not afford to fees when they became due. She intermittently faced traumatic experiences capable of distracting her from academic focus because access to Montana College was denied for fee defaulters. Candy saw the need to attend lectures since she knew it was mandatory to pay fees. The management of Montana

College upheld their policy on fee payment as at when due. This was one of the avenues through which power relations evolved at Montana College between the school authority and students in terms of conflicting interests. I present Candy's argument:

You know that this institution is a private University, so the fees are expensive. Sometimes I don't have enough money to pay because a foreign student has to pay 50% at the beginning of the year, then after that the remaining 50% has to be paid over a period of 10 months. Sometimes if the 50% is not available at the beginning of the year, it means I would not be able to start school. At least they know we would eventually pay, so they should not block us from attending lectures.

h) Individual presentation

Candy did not benefit much when South African students made presentations on selected topics in the class because she perceived that they also struggled with the use of English. She was of the opinion that their indigenous languages excluded them from using English correctly. As a result she saw their inability to proficiently speak in English as one of the causes of delayed transition of French-speaking students from French to English amongst other reasons analysed in this chapter. Candy states:

You know that some of the South African students were born here, and they knew English when they were kids. It is because of their language, they are attached to Zulu speaking students mainly. If they could speak fluently in English, I would have been able to learn from them.

i) The fear of losing French as a language of communication

Candy was against losing French as a language. She was becoming agitated because as she was learning English she tended to forget some words in French. She was of the opinion that it was better to retain English and French. She believed it was an advantage to speak the two languages. Family influence was also found to be a determinant to retain French as a language. The fact that her mother studied in French was a marker that she had to be in tune with French. Candy thus believed that bilingualism was of the utmost importance. I present evidence:

You know in my case as I have started to speak English with other people. There are some words that are not coming as it was when I was speaking French. It is good to have French here because it is very important. If you speak two languages, you are at an advantage compared with those who speak only one language. It is better to keep both languages my parents don't want me to lose French because my mum also studied in French.

Consequently it is presented that the fear of losing French as a language was a hidden curriculum experience of Candy.

j) Motivation

A key hidden curriculum experience of Candy was in the area of obtaining motivation and role modelling initiatives from parents and family members. She mentioned her father as a key motivator in her quest to attain a university degree. Her uncles in the family also had university degrees, so she got motivated by these role models to become a university graduate. It therefore seemed as if motivation from family members who have academic achievement was a hidden curriculum experience which likely motivated non-South African French-speaking students in terms of focus and commitment to their studies. Candy narrated her experience:

My dad went to the university in Congo. My uncles studied in France. Other members of my family went to the university; some of them went in Congo, some of them to Belgium to study.

k) Homesickness

It seemed as if French-speaking students were constantly challenged by intermittent feelings which pointed to the fact that they missed their family members. Despite the fact that Candy regularly spoke with her parents by telephone she was not left out of this matter of homesickness. She said in these few words:

I miss everybody in my family because of homesickness. We speak regularly over the phone but that is not sufficient. At times when I am alone I remember all of them but it's fine because I have a goal to achieve. I keep myself busy at such times and I assure myself that it is for the good.

Homesickness is presented as a hidden curriculum experience of Candy despite being in constant touch with her parents via the telephone.

5.27.5 Educational experiences

I inquired from Candy whether she was proud to be a student of Montana College in an attempt to explore her educational experience. She was glad to be a student because she was capable of interacting with the planned, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula. These opportunities that she used to her advantage seemed to have given her the fortitude to take responsibility for her learning by utilising the skills of experts in the ACOP (Montana College) to achieve her ideals. She speaks on her educational experience:

Yes because some people are saying that this institution is very difficult. From pre-degree to third-year, I managed to pass every module I have taken. So, I am very proud to be a student of this institution despite all the challenges that I have faced.

5.28 Empirical evidence of hybridization of sociocultural factors in an ACOP

It has been presented that Candy experienced challenges in terms of learning the LOLT from the pre-degree to the third-year degree programme. Her linguistic proficiency improved gradually because she interacted with more knowledgeable others at Montana College. The interaction she had with her English lecturer who devoted time to teach her the use of English, consultation with the other lecturers and tutors and the fact that she had a South African friend who assisted her throughout the period of her study, serve as proof that she was able to learn. Furthermore, these opportunities seemed to have given her the knack of taking responsibility for her learning by developing the appropriate sense of belonging to Montana College. The sense of belonging was seen to have given her academic acculturation, a state to which she began to adjust at Montana College. The academic acculturation was seen to eventually develop into the status of academic identity which made Candy see the responsibilities attached to scholastic injunctions. It is shown that the gradual acquisition of the LOLT fostered the development of academic acculturation and academic identity construction. From pre-degree to the third-year degree programme it was discovered that redress in terms of the three sociocultural factors by virtue of the interaction and integration she had with the stakeholders of Montana College began to yield dividends of academic learning. The academic learning was seen through her compliance with the assessed curriculum from pre-degree to the third-year degree programme. Although I did not have the opportunity to observe Candy during normal lecture periods, I always found her with her pre-degree Mathematics lecturer in consultation sessions. She was one of the tutors at Montana College. This gave me the opportunity to observe her because I coordinated the Mathematics tutoring programme from 2011 to 2012. Consequently, learning seems to evolve when the three sociocultural factors, namely language, academic acculturation and academic identity are in phases of constant redress. The magnitude of learning seems to depend on the extent of interaction between the three sociocultural factors and the other stakeholders in the ACOP.

5.29 Amanda: “I want to learn in English because it opens more doors than speaking in French”

5.29.1 Biographical information

Amanda (female) was a third-year Information Technology student at Montana College. She was from Gabon in central Africa. Amanda attended an English school in Pretoria to prepare

for tertiary education for eight months. She had lived in South African for over four years at the time of conducting this study. She had two brothers and two sisters. She lived in South Africa with two of her brothers and one of her sisters who were also studying in South African schools. Only one of her sisters was with their parents in Gabon. Amanda lived in Pretoria with her siblings and was their guardian in South Africa. She had a car bought by her parents, and she used the car to travel from Pretoria to Johannesburg area where Montana College was situated. She came to South Africa because of the opportunity to learn in English. The prominent narrative that distinguished her pointed to the opportunity to learn in English, and the advantage of opening more channels of opportunities in the future. During the interview session she had this to say about her mission in South African:

The first advantage is the language because in my country we speak French, so I wanted to study in an English-speaking country. Secondly, the school fee is not as expensive as it is in other countries of the world. I want to learn in English because speaking in English opens more doors than speaking in French. If I am bilingual, I can find myself anywhere being at ease with other people who speak English.

5.30 Curriculum experiences of Amanda

5.30.1 Linguistic transition as a curriculum issue in the ACOP

Amanda had a quick transition experience from French to English. She attributed the brisk transition to the English school she attended in Pretoria, and the South African friends she had from the point of entry to the school. Her vocabulary was enhanced and better than that of most of the fresh arrivals from Gabon. South African students who were her friends also contributed to her vocabulary because they taught her English and how to speak it. Amanda said she still maintained her South African friends in her third-year degree programme because she believed friendship was not an issue to put aside easily. She expressed the fact that friendship entailed giving and taking. Amanda taught her South African friends French while her South African friends taught her English. Amanda's experience pointed to the fact that association with English-speaking students could assist in learning English language. A hidden curriculum feature that seemed to have assisted Amanda was friendship with South African students. An intended curriculum experience that helped her to develop vocabulary in the English language was experienced at the English school she attended. Therefore, she experienced a carry-over effect of linguistic competence from the English she had learned before arriving at Montana College. Her friendship with South African students assisted in consolidating her prior learning of the English. She had this to say:

I didn't really have so much of language issues because, going to the English school really helped me and my vocabulary was not so low. In terms of vocabulary, my South African friends have been able to help me. I still have my South African friends because friendship is not just something that you throw away and it is not always expecting from someone, it is also about giving. As much as I learn from them, I also teach them French.

a) Translation of curriculum content from English to French and back to English

The idea of translating curriculum content from English to French and back to French was seen as a waste of time by Amanda. She said that she never practised it. She relied on the English dictionary to assist her with the comprehension of unfamiliar words. This is what she said when I asked whether she engaged in translating curriculum content from English to French and vice versa:

First of all, I think it is a waste of time and it doesn't really help. If I have to translate every single thing that I read to French, it means I still have to translate from French to English again in my understanding. I don't really learn like that. If it is a word that I don't understand, I take the contextual meaning by looking at the dictionary but I won't translate the whole text.

Moreover Amanda interacted with more knowledgeable English speakers at Montana College. Her interaction was a symbiotic association because she taught them French and they taught her the use of English, which worked for her good in interacting with the planned, enacted and assessed curricula at Montana College.

5.30.2 Attachment to academic institution as a symbol of academic acculturation and identity

It took me some time to identify the point of connection that Amanda had with Montana College. It was at that point that she began to identify important lecturers who encouraged her through the IT programme that I took note of how she developed academic acculturation and academic identity. The mode of learning facilitation was the key connector of Amanda to Montana College, especially by two of her lecturers. She said she did not want to let these two lecturers down. Additionally she said that she also did not want to let herself down. Consequently, I present the fact that Amanda was connected to Montana College through the scholastic interaction with the other stakeholders at this college as basis for claiming that she developed academic acculturation and academic identity. I present the evidence:

There are actually two lecturers that I have admired throughout my stay at this institution. They are Mrs. Van Staden, the Head of the Faculty of IT (Information Technology) and MS Creek. For Mrs. Van Staden, I think about the way she teaches us in class and she handled the programming class in the first-year, and the way she explained matters. She explained and really motivated me to understand the concepts of programming and I like programming

because the basis of programming was good. For Ms. Creek, I just like the way she teaches. I don't want to let them down. I wouldn't want to also let myself down.

a) Identity description

Amanda expressed a liking of the sociocultural diversity of South African. A notable challenge that seemed to limit her likeness for South Africa was in the area of traces of xenophobia. She mentioned that South Africans were closed to foreigners, and this was a disadvantage. However, she encountered a few South Africans who seemed to have broken the barriers of xenophobia, and found that she could learn from them. She found interest in the culture of South Africans in terms of how they danced and what they ate. A hidden curriculum experience was the interest to learn from the South African culture. The second hidden curriculum experience as far as Amanda's experience was concerned was the challenge of xenophobia. She had this to say:

I like the diverse cultures in this country, although South African people tend to be closed because they don't want to be open to foreigners. Sometimes this is a challenge because when they totally become close, they start judging you. Some of them are open-minded and it is quite interesting to learn from them, the way they dance and their food and every other thing about them.

Despite the fact that Amanda was interested in the culture of South Africa she could not negotiate her Gabonese identity with the South African identity. Amanda was asked to define her identity in South Africa. She said, "I am Gabonese". She said that it was not a matter of not enjoying the infrastructure of South Africa. She did not mind working in South Africa to gain work experience, but eventually had to return to her country of birth. Amanda saw the possibility of developing her country if French-speaking students returned to Gabon. A hidden curriculum experience of Amanda was inability to attach to the South African culture, despite the likeness and life satisfaction she demonstrated. She expressed her acculturation and identity issues through these words:

I am Gabonese. It doesn't mean I am not comfortable studying here. As much as I would like to start working here in South Africa to gain work experience, I definitely want to go back home. If we put the will and the means into my country, we could develop my country as well.

5.30.3 Sense of belonging to academic institution as a symbol of commitment to participate in the ACOP

My question to Amanda was a direct one in the sense that I asked if she had a sense of belonging to Montana College. This idea was to explore her acculturative potential as well as how she described her identity. This is what she said:

Yes because this institution reminds me that I am not defined by who I know, but by the choices I make. This has actually opened up my perspectives. When I came to this institution, I had a closed mind about what I came to do. Now that I am about to leave, I see a much wider horizon if I can say that. Sometimes when I think about this institution, I just want to leave. I want to leave especially when I think about the fee and the distance I travel to get to this school every day.

It is deduced that she found that she had to make certain decisions that would be meaningful to her in respect of the future goal she set. It was her responsibility to interact as much as possible with the curriculum of study so she could earn a degree. On the other hand the price she paid to belong to Montana College was high in terms of the outrageous fee and the distance she had to travel on a daily basis to reach Montana College. She placed a high premium on the requirement to comply with the curriculum so that her effort could be worthwhile. Therefore she developed a sense of belonging to Montana College in an attempt to participate in the activities of Montana College to earn a degree.

5.30.4 Intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula

a) Group work and workload

Amanda analyzed the nature of workload at Montana College as hectic in terms of the responsibilities attached to concurrently submitting assignments given by different lecturers. She saw the idea of having to write tests every week as hectic. At Montana College, there was a constant drive to assess the intended and enacted curriculum as a tool to drive learning. The effect on the part of students was academic rigour and perpetual distress. She also complained about the unease attached to working with classmates in groups as this, according to her was difficult to manage. Amanda's storyline gave an indication that workload and assessment were curriculum experiences of non-South African French-speaking students at Montana College. Her voice is presented:

Most of the tests are given at the same period, and I find myself having to submit assignments. It is quite challenging and not always easy to bring out my best at school because of the rigours involved. At times we have to work in groups and that is not easy because working with people is not easy.

b) Student-lecturer relationship

As far as Amanda was concerned all the lecturers that she interacted with at Montana College were supportive. She probably had this experience because she did not have challenges in

terms of understanding their accents and reaching them for consultation. She states the following:

I don't really have preference when it comes to my lecturers because they have all been very supportive. Anytime that I have turned to them when in need they were always there to attend to my academic needs.

d) Boldness to ask questions in class

Amanda did not exhibit traces of fear or shyness probably because she had been able to understand English better than the other French-speaking students earlier enough. She considered an inability to put questions to the lecturers as an act of injustice to herself. She saw the lecturers as stakeholders in her learning trajectory. Consequently she made the best use of the opportunity to learn at Montana College by engaging the services of lecturers. This was a reflection of the arguments of Wenger (1998) and Lave and Wenger (1991) that beginners make use of the opportunity to engage experts in the COP to achieve their ideals by engaging and interacting with them until full participation is reached. Amanda speaks on the issue of boldness to ask questions in the classroom:

Well first of all I think that when I am in class, I am not in class because of anybody. If I have a question and I don't ask in class, then I'll keep questioning myself and I'll never get the answer and I will never learn. In terms of the time that I have taken to come here to study, it is better for me to make the best use of the time so that I can get the right answer.

e) Proactivity

Amanda was of the mindset that she needed to read ahead of the class when the lecturer was a good lecturer. She preferred to attend lectures and engage and participate in the class activities. Her experience was in line with the principles of a typical COP where engagement and interaction were useful to reach the domain, an indication of full participation. However, when she attended a class where the lecturer did not interest her, she did not read but read afterwards. Amanda's story reveals the ingenuity of having a good lecturer because it seems a good lecturer is capable of arousing the interest of students to the extent that they would be stimulated to participate in the ACOP. This is what Amanda said when I asked her whether she read ahead of every lecture:

Now it depends. When I know it is a very good lecturer that is going to teach, I like reading ahead if my schedule allows me to. I don't like going to class and folding my hands, not knowing what the lecturer is going to speak about. Sometimes, I do attend lectures without reading ahead but I try to understand from the very beginning to have a clearer mind and I read afterwards.

f) Group work and individual presentation

Group work at Montana College was a curriculum requirement in the Computer Science Department where Amanda was a third-year student. She reiterated the rigour associated with working in groups with people of different mindsets. A hidden curriculum experience associated with working with other students was revealed by Amanda. She said she had to spend time to understand her group members, and this was not always easy. Her experience unfolded the notion that group work was an intended curriculum experience of non-South African French-speaking students at Montana College. The requirement to take time to understand fellow group members seemed to be the hidden curriculum experience needed to foster the completion of group work. Amanda spoke on the issue thus:

Unfortunately for me, at times we have to work in groups and that is not easy because working with people is not easy. When you work alone you don't have to deal with issues, and you are focused on what you want to achieve. When you work with people, you have to make sure your group members look in the same direction and everyone has the same vision about the work. Yes, like now as part of our curriculum we have to do a project in a group of four people. We have to make sure that we understand each other and it is not always easy. Sometimes we don't have the same objectives and views and it just makes the work drag.

On the issue of individual presentation Amanda said she felt blank at times because of anxiety caused by the requirement to face the crowd. I present her experience:

Obviously there is a lot of stress because sometimes you are just afraid and you just go blank because you won't be able to express what you really wanted to say. The second thing is that when you are not well prepared and you get in front of the lecturer, it is terrible. If I am stressing, I forget the English and the French and the vocabulary.

g) Use of dictionary

The use of the English dictionary was important to French-speaking students. Amanda was not left out in the practice of using the English dictionary. She carried it everywhere she went in anticipation that there could be new words to learn. Amanda relates her experience in the use of the English dictionary:

As soon as I read something and I don't understand it, I look up the meaning myself and it stays there and I don't forget it. I use the dictionary because when you are speaking in English to people and you don't understand what they are saying, you just have to find an alternative in the hope that the person in front of you would understand what you actually mean

h) The fear of losing French as a language of communication

Amanda did not want to lose French as a language of communication. She preferred to be bilingual. She was concerned that her frequent communication in English was already

making her forget French. She wanted to be in touch with her cultural roots. She was of the opinion that she had to maintain the habit of speaking in French to French-speaking people, and English to English-speaking people. She speaks on her concerns:

I don't want to forget my French. The fact that I speak English is making me forget French gradually. I want to keep both of them. I have to keep speaking French with French-speaking people and English with English-speaking people. Otherwise I find myself speaking with French-speaking people who don't understand a word in English.

i) Motivation

Amanda mentioned that because her two parents were university graduates, she was inspired and motivated to study and even go higher than her parents did academically. She enjoyed studying, so she motivated herself to also study and obtain academic qualifications. Role-modelling and self-motivation were hidden curriculum experiences demonstrated by Amanda, and these seemed factors which gave her the drive to negotiate the rigors of higher education. She spoke verbatim:

The fact that my parents are university graduates is quite a motivation. The thing is that the pride of any child is to go higher than what the parents did, and I also like studying and the fact that my parents also studied motivates me.

j) Power relations

Amanda seemed to be financially and emotionally stressed at Montana College in her third-year. It seemed the tuition fee was a big issue to French-speaking students because it escalated by about 8-15% per year according to document analysis that I conducted at the school. This situation was an indication of the power dynamics that Lave and Wenger (1991) proposed. As a student she saw the need for Montana College to be lenient with fees. On the other hand Montana College had obligations to respond to inflation because stakeholders had to receive remuneration with yearly increments to cushion the effects of inflation. Her second source of challenge was the stress of driving from Pretoria to Johannesburg every day to come to school. According to the enquiry made at the institution, there were limited spaces at the halls of residence for students. The other issue was that it was very expensive to live there. Amanda had a huge responsibility of taking care of her siblings in South Africa. A number of hidden curriculum experiences emerged from Amanda's experience at Montana College namely (a) high tuition, (b) logistical challenge in terms of kilometres covered to and from the school and (c) the huge responsibility of taking care of her siblings who were also studying in South Africa. These issues were masked from the provider of higher education,

and were not likely considered in the design of the academic curriculum. Amanda responded to the question posed about academic acculturation in this manner:

Sometimes when I think about this institution, I just want to leave when I think about the fee and the distance I travel to get to this school every day.

k) Linguistic incongruity

Amanda gave an indication of the challenge involved when in the same group with fellow French-speaking students. She expressed the opinion that it takes commitment and dedication to be disciplined when in the midst of French-speaking students. Language seems to be a cultural unifier, but it might not be healthy for French-speaking students because of the issue of losing the command of the English language which had taken about four years to acquire. However, this inconsistency seemed to be addressed whenever a non-French speaker was assigned to be in their group. The drive to speak French when with fellow French speakers seemed to be a hidden curriculum issue at Montana College. Based on Amanda's previous concern that she had to balance her communication between the English-speaking and French-speaking students, a certain dimension of linguistic power dynamics was ongoing in the mind of Amanda. The demand at Montana College necessitated her to speak and use English, the cultural demand of speaking French was also vital. Amanda was the only one with the prerogative of deciphering the frequency and versatility of knowing when and how to use the two languages. She expressed her views:

One bad habit that I picked is to express myself in French. Before, when I was with French speaking students, I practised my English. Now, I speak French more often, except when there are other students who do not understand French.

l) Indecent dressing

Amanda was asked to divulge prominent issues she did not enjoy at Montana College. She pointed to the issue of indecent dressing among male and female students at Montana College. It is presented in this study that the issue of dressing was a hidden curriculum experience of Amanda although she did not complain that indecent dressing had any negative impact on her academic pursuit. She only experienced emotional trauma. Evidence is provided:

This is interesting. I don't really like the way people dress, not only in South Africa. I have noticed it is a global matter now, because people just dress anyhow. They don't respect values, they don't respect people. I am quite sometimes shocked when I look at the way people dress, especially when they expose their nakedness. I am really uncomfortable on the campus. Students should dress decently to show that they were properly brought up.

m) Evidence of interaction

I could not observe Amanda in the lecture room because the logistics did not work out. From what I saw as I interviewed her, her construction and vocabulary in the English were commendable. I almost did not know she was from a French-speaking country. She spoke with her friends during the group work session where she gave me some time to interview her. Her pronunciation was great and precise. She did not have issues with the pronunciation of words from her lecturers. She could decipher what each lecturer from the different countries represented on campus had said during lecture periods. Her experience was such that indicated full engagement with the other stakeholders in the ACOP. She also interacted with the English curriculum by reading different books written in English. I present her experience in this regard:

The main thing that has helped me was to interact with English speakers but the English school helped me in terms of grammar because I am able to know when to use the right tenses or a kind of expression. I also read books a lot. When you interact with people and make mistakes, the advantage is that they correct you by saying, this is not the way to say the word and you learn from that.

5.31 Empirical evidence of hybridization of sociocultural factors in an ACOP

Amanda's curriculum experience presented an opportunity to compare the effect of brisk transition from French to English. The significance of her ability to swiftly negotiate this transition fosters an understanding of the pivotal nature of linguistic proficiency among the other two sociocultural factors, namely acculturation and identity. However in specific terms she had academic acculturation and identity disparate from the mainstream acculturation and identity mediation. She had academic acculturation by virtue of the connectedness she had with two of her lecturers who taught her very well. She also had academic acculturation and identity by virtue of her own ambition to earn a degree. These three sociocultural forces were seen from her storyline to be in different states of redress until academic learning ensued. The fact that she had passed all the modules which she took up to date was an indication of learning. Her experience is presented as an example that learning evolves when there is a hybridization of the three sociocultural forces. The magnitudes of learning would depend on the extent of hybridization among the sociocultural forces.

5.32 Andre: “I chose to come here because it is not too far from home”

5.32.1 Biographical information

Andre came to study in South Africa because he obtained a scholarship from the Gabonese government. He came to South Africa in 2006. He had just obtained his degree when I interviewed him. He was in the third-year degree programme when I began to seek his permission to participate in this study. I interviewed him as he just concluded his degree programme in Biomedicine. His experience gave a full indication of a beginner who came into an ACOP integrated with the other stakeholders and showed evidence of full participation in it. He obtained a scholarship from the Gabonese government, chose to study at Montana College because South Africa was not too far away from Gabon. The Gabonese government covered the cost of travelling to see his family. The history of South Africa was another point of attraction to him. The prominent narrative which describes him points to the issue of closeness to his family in Gabon, an indication of homesickness. His experience shows the importance of homesickness among the French-speaking students at Montana College. He speaks thus:

I came to South Africa as a result of a scholarship which I got from my government. I had a choice of where I wanted to go. I would have gone to Europe, Asia or America. I chose to come here because it is not too far from home and I wanted to be close to my family. It would be easy for me to travel to Gabon with the help of my government because of the cost since it is not too far from home. Secondly I love South Africa so much because of its history.

5.33 Curriculum experiences of Andre

5.33.1 Linguistic transition as a curriculum issue in the ACOP

a) Dedication as a catalyst for linguistic transition

Andre had negotiated the transition from French to English in his six-year stay in South Africa. He went to study English when he got to South Africa for 10 months and he earnestly studied English to the extent that it was difficult for me to recognise him as a French speaker. Consequently I commended his English-speaking ability as I questioned him on how he succeeded in negotiating a brisk transition from French to English. He responded as follows:

Thank you for that acknowledgment that my English is quite good. Yes I went to an English school for 10 months to learn English. I couldn't even greet when I got here six years ago. I actually worked on it. When I got here, I had to study in English. I am a dedicated person. When I am doing something, it is either I do it or I don't. When I do what I am supposed to do, I do it the way it is supposed to be done. That is the best I could do to speak the English I am speaking now.

Consequently Andre's linguistic experience pointed to the requirement that French-speaking students had to negotiate a transition from French to English before they were capable of interacting with the curriculum of the ACOP and its stakeholders.

b) Translation of curriculum content from English to French and back to English

The fact that Andre had quick transition from French to English shielded him from the challenge of having to translate curriculum content from English to French and back to English. He seemed to have developed the acumen to understand English to the point that his understanding was in French without literally translating the contexts to French and back to English. He speaks on the issue:

I have never done that but there is a saying that you hear in your own language. When someone is speaking to you, no matter the language that person is speaking to you, you will hear in your own language. Even if I am reading a book in English, my understanding would be in French because that is my native language but I would not take time to translate.

c) Likeness of diverse cultures

The likeness of cultures and languages became an advantage which Andre used to acquire different languages. He narrated his experience with an Angolan friend with whom he interacted for 2 years. Within the space of 2 years he had acquired the ability to speak Portuguese. His other experience was with a Nigerian and after a while he could speak pidgin English. Andre's story suggests that association and interaction with more knowledgeable others is capable of fostering acquisition of skills and attitudes as far as the commitment and interest to learn are in place. Evidence of my deduction is provided from Andre's storyline:

I had a friend from Angola for 2 years and then our ways parted. She is now living in another country. Within those 2years, I was able to speak Portuguese. Then I got to meet with a Nigerian and we stayed together for about 1 year and I was able to speak pidgin English. I like languages, I like cultures. That is the kind of person that I am.

5.33.2 Attachment to academic institution as a symbol of academic acculturation and identity

a) Student-lecturer relationship

The cordial relationship between students and lecturers at Montana College was instrumental to Andre's development of academic acculturation and academic identity. The cordial relationship was responsible for the ease with which students saw the lecturers for consultation to clarify unclear aspects of the curriculum. This symbolises the argument of

Wenger (1998) that experts attend to the needs of novices in an attempt to encourage them to reach full participation in the ACOP. Andre unfolds his experience:

Student-lecturer relationship is feasible at this school. The lecturers are welcoming and any student can see the lecturers at any time and any student who wants to succeed would really love that. I can say I have adapted to the environment and the academic offering at this school.

b) Identity description

Andre described himself as a nationalist, implying that he had strict adherence to his cultural roots. He considered the option of what South Africa could offer him as a condition that could make him accept the South African identity. However, the acceptance of the South African identity would not prevent him from describing his identity as a Gabonese. Andre's experience is used to present the case that the matter of identity surpasses the gimmick of changing an identity document. It is rather rooted in cultural principles which are strong and ardent. He speaks thus:

I am a nationalist in the sense that I love my country. There is nothing that can make me resent my country, no matter what setback I may get from it. From another perspective, the question may be in terms of what I can get from South Africa. If I have to say yes to that question, it would amount to asking what I can get from being a South African. What will I not get if I am a South African? If there is something good to get from this country, then I could become a South African. If there is nothing to get from this country, I would not become a South African. I would say I am a Gabonese, exactly which was what I just said to you earlier. Nationality has to do with culture; your culture is your identity. It is usually said that it is your culture that you are left with, when you have lost everything.

c) Homesickness

Andre reiterates he would return to Gabon after living in South Africa for a while. His point of attraction to Gabon was further revealed when he mentioned that his parents were living there, being the only child of the family. His experience suggests that the points of attraction in a person's cultural origin are capable of stimulating the formation of a strong identity. Andre reveals his standpoint:

I would go back to Gabon, but I don't know when I would go back. The fact that I am the only child and my parents live in Gabon will make me to go back. The fact that they would never see their son again does not arise. I have to go back one day, even if I am 50 years old. Even if I get a South African identity document, I would still go back to Gabon because I miss my home.

5.33.3 Sense of belonging to academic institution as a symbol of commitment to participate in the ACOP

Andre was found to have developed a sense of belonging to Montana College through the opportunity to follow internship programmes, which formed part of the biomedicine curriculum. Although he wanted to become an engineer he had the idea of taking

Biomedicine. A passionate point of interest to him was his experience during the internship programme. In 2012 he did his internship in a clinical company. The experience was unique to him. He also worked as a sales representative in one of the pharmaceutical industries. Drawing on Wenger (1998) the opportunity to engage in the internship programme formed a subset of the larger communities of practice (the biomedicine programme). Andre's experience unfolds the reality of having a COP as a subset of a bigger picture of COP. The internships were emblems of subsets of the communities of practice in a bigger community of practice. These experiences seemed to have triggered a point of connection with Montana College in him. Consequently he admitted that Montana College had given him a lifetime opportunity to interact with the other important stakeholders in his quest to earn a degree. He narrates his experience:

If I go back to what I wanted to be, an engineer doing physics. Then I moved to biomedicine and I got to love the biomedicine which I am doing now. As far as the biomedicine is concerned I would say that this institution has met my needs because it has provided me with internship opportunities. I did my internship during my second year, and this year I went to a clinical research company in Johannesburg which is something I have never done before. I have also had the chance of working during the internship programme as a sales representative. So I can say this institution has met my educational needs.

In another instance during the interview session Andre mentioned the advantage of Montana College as a private institution in the sense that he had easy access to the lecturers when he needed consultation. The response he got from his peers was also a motivating factor. I present his words:

With the attention that I get from the students at this private institution, being a small place compared to other public institutions, I would say I am enjoying this place. I can easily see a lecturer when I have a problem.

5.33.4 Intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula

a) Comprehension of the English language

The success of the intended curriculum depends on the ability of the French-speaking student to comprehend the English language. If the level of English comprehension is good the French-speaking student would be capable of participating in the enacted curriculum. Andre also mentioned the attitude of French-speaking students as an important factor in the attainment of success. Andre's experience is presented to support the claims made so far:

The success of a French-speaking student revolves around knowing and understanding the English. If the level of understanding in English is good, and the level of commitment as a student is present in the French-speaking student it would be easy for success to be achieved.

Those who are not good in English, even if they are geniuses, cannot succeed in their academic work.

Andre's experience with the assessed curriculum pointed to the fact that it was not only the issue with language that determines the compliance of French-speaking students with the enacted curriculum. He was of the opinion that the modules he failed had nothing to do with the English language because he was very proficient in English. He stressed the importance that students have their strengths and weaknesses apart from linguistic issues. His experience in the assessed curriculum is presented as evidence:

I passed the modules that I was able to pass and failed those I was not able to do well. It didn't have anything to do with English. Each student has preferences in specific fields. Some students are good in Maths, others in English, and some in Psychology. The fact that I failed those subjects was because I was not good in the specific subjects that I failed. I got the opportunity to do them the second time and managed to pass.

b) Student-lecturer relationship

Andre was asked to comment on the student-lecturer relationship at Montana College. He was of the opinion that good relationships existed between lecturers and students because they were always willing to assist students in their academic tasks. Andre relays his experience by saying, "Yes lecturers are welcoming. I never had any lecturer rejecting or refusing to help me with my studies at this institution."

c) Preference for lecturers

As far as Andre was concerned, he had no favourite among the lecturers. He pointed to the fact that throughout his period of study at Montana College he had very few black African lecturers. He had many White lecturers who taught him. He spoke thus:

Race does not matter when it comes to academic issues. I didn't have many African lecturers; most of them were whites. My favorite lecturer is no longer at this institution. She taught me Maths, Physics and Chemistry.

d) Accent

It seems that the issue relating to lecturers' accents among the French-speaking students depends on their ability to quickly adapt and integrate into the ACOP. Andre said that he got used to the pronunciation of white lecturers and other unfamiliar accents while he was at the English school, prior to his admission to Montana College:

I had this problem before but I was able to overcome the challenge when I was learning English at the English school. By the time I got to this institution I already got used to how they speak.

e) Small class sizes

An advantage which characterized Montana College in terms of the presented curriculum was the issue of small class-sizes. Lecturers had the opportunity to reach students in small groups rather than in large groups. Andre compared the class sizes at Montana College with those available at most public universities by saying that he preferred the class sizes at Montana College. Evidence is provided:

Classes are small, which is an advantage compared with the big Universities where you have a big crowd and the lecturer cannot focus on all the students.

f) Interaction

Andre had a charismatic character. It was not unlikely that he acquired his brisk linguistic skills through interaction as he said in the earlier narratives. He believed in having friends from other African countries because of the drive to learn English. His opinion was that any French-speaking student that desired to learn English had to interact more aggressively with English-speaking students. I present his ideology:

People always say I am a down-to-earth person. I am a social person because I like getting involved with other people and I don't believe in having only friends from home and it doesn't even help. If you want to improve your English, you have to practice. It is like any other thing in life. The only way to improve your English is to speak and mingle with other English-speaking people. Right from the English school where I attended, I used to mingle with both English and non-English-speaking people like the Portuguese.

g) Group work and individual presentation

Andre's character of outgoingness made him enjoy presentation exercises. He used every available means to learn English. His learning of English was not limited to the confines of Montana College alone. He used sports and religion to buffer his linguistic skills. His interest was aroused at every opportunity to speak in English. His opinion was that every field has its own vocabulary which must be learned. He conveyed his opinion thus:

I love speaking during group presentations. Even at church, I preach in English. Even the religious vocabulary has to be learned as well. I am using an English Bible because things like this improve my English daily. I need to speak the religious language. When it is sports, I need to speak the sports language and when it is Science; I need to speak the Science language. I do presentations sometimes in pharmacology and I need to use the terminology. All these disciplines have improved my English.

h) The fear of losing French as a language of communication

Andre minded losing French as a language of communication because he had the intention of returning to Gabon to settle and live. He said, “Once I learn a language I must not lose it because it gives me the opportunity to know the culture behind the language”. Furthermore he said, “I will still return to Gabon, if I forget French, how am I going to communicate with the members of my family?”

i) The satisfaction with life on campus

The satisfaction that Andre had at Montana College was seen to have given him the academic acculturation and academic identity which he demonstrated at Montana College. He pointed to the availability of the school library as a facility which supported student learning. The amiable student-lecturer relationship was also mentioned as an index of life satisfaction on the campus. He divulged his yardstick for measuring life satisfaction with these words:

Yes I am satisfied with the life here because, unless you come to this institution for any other reason other than to study then you would say that this school is not welcoming. But if your aim is to study here, there is a library where you can get the prescribed books. There is student-lecturer relationship which is feasible at this school. The lecturers are welcoming and any student can see the lecturers at any time and any student who wants to succeed would really love that.

5.34 Empirical evidence of hybridization of sociocultural factors in an ACOP

The curriculum experiences of Andre were pointers to the significance of the three sociocultural factors necessary to operate in an ACOP. He got to Montana College with the required dimension of linguistic capital which he used to negotiate academic acculturation and academic identity. The rapport between him, other students and the lecturers gave him the capacity to interact with them to the point that he attained full participation, which culminated in his accomplishment in terms of the degree which he eventually earned. Although he failed some modules, he was seen to have learned how not to learn the modules which he failed, drawing on Wenger (1998). His failure as far as those modules were concerned was not based on the issue of language but on preference for certain modules. Consequently it is presented that the high linguistic capital he brought into Montana College assisted him to engage with the activities of the ACOP until different categories of academic learning emerged. The learning experiences were likely evident when there were dimensions of hybridization of language, academic acculturation and academic identity.

5.35 Precious: “My parents chose that I should study in English and not in French”

5.35.1 Biographical information

Precious was a 20-year old student of biomedicine at Montana College. She is a Cameroonian. She comes from the French-speaking part of Cameroon but she could speak in English fluently. English was not a challenge to Precious at Montana College. Her story is another measure of comparison with the French-speaking students from non-English-speaking regions of Africa who came to Montana College to study. Her source of inspiration was her mother who had a doctorate degree in accounting. In 2012 she was completing a second doctorate degree in Cameroon. Precious had her secondary school education in Cameroon and came to Montana College through a friend who had completed a degree in biomedicine. Her friend was studying medicine at Wits University in 2012. It seemed her friend was also a motivator of her academic path. Precious narrates her experience on how she got to Montana College thus:

I was looking for a school that had courses in the medical line but not medicine per se because this institution doesn't offer medicine, so I chose biomedicine. I found it interesting to study biomedicine at this institution.

5.36 Curriculum experience of Precious

5.36.1 Linguistic transition as a curriculum issue in the ACOP

Precious had already made the necessary transition required to study at Montana College before she got to Montana College. She did not attend any English school. However, she took English modules at Montana College because it was compulsory for all students at the school. This was an attempt to continuously assist all the students to improve their linguistic abilities as part of the planned curriculum. However, she pointed to the fact that French-speaking students who are not bilingual are confronted by similar challenges which involve English. She mentioned the challenges thus:

For some French-speaking students, I think we all have the same problems. Sometimes it might be one or two words in English that we don't really understand.

Precious revealed that irrespective of the proficiency in English, French-speaking students had to grapple with some words in English. Her narrative is presented as proof that French-speaking students negotiated challenging transition from French to English if they did had not previously used English as the main language of communication.

5.36.2 Attachment to academic institution as a symbol of academic acculturation and academic identity

It was not an enjoyable experience for Precious living in South Africa. However the satisfaction she got as a student at Montana College seemed to have given her the attachment she had. The attachment she had to her lecturers was likely responsible for her development of academic acculturation and academic identity. I present her line of thinking:

I won't really say I enjoy living here but I can just say it is conducive for schooling. South African students have a different culture from what we have back home. I don't really mix that much. I am an introvert. I think I am attached to this institution because our lecturers just know their work and how to teach.

a) Identity description

When Precious was asked how she would define her identity she did not hide her feelings. The description of her identity as a Cameroonian signalled her intention to study at Montana College and not for any other reason. It was not on her agenda to commence the negotiation of her identity with the mainstream society's cultural tenets. She was of the mindset that she could work in South Africa for a while after which she would return to her country of birth. Her experience also signalled the fact that the French-speaking students were tenaciously attached to their cultural roots and were not willing to relinquish it for any reason. Precious spoke to me with an assurance that she was resolute:

I am a Cameroonian, why would I want to change? My intention is not to live here all my life. I would really want to finish, have an honours degree or masters. If I get a job, I may work but I don't want to stay here all my life. After a certain period, I want to go back to Cameroun.

5.36.3 Sense of belonging to academic institution as a symbol of commitment to participate in the ACOP

I discovered that Precious had a sense of belonging to Montana College because she was not shy to ask questions in the class during learning facilitation. The fact that she had academic acculturation and academic identity to Montana College was seen to trigger her briskness at asking questions and registering her concerns. When she newly got to Montana College she could not cope with the pace at which the white South African lecturers spoke during lecture periods. The fact that she could express herself eloquently in the medium of English gave her the boldness to tell the white lecturers about the pace at which they spoke during lecture periods:

Whenever the White lecturers were too fast in those years I raised my hand to ask them to slow down but after some time, they soon forgot because it was their usual way of expressing themselves.

Another issue which indicated that she had a sense of belonging was the consideration that Montana College was a private institution where classes were smaller and students got adequate attention. I present her argument on the comparison between private and public institutions as an indication of her possession of a sense of belonging to Montana College:

I think this institution is better although it is a private institution. Back home, although I have never been to a private University but I guess it would be the same as it is here in this institution because in the private Universities, classes are smaller. If it is the public University, the crowd is usually too much. The lecturers don't actually take time to teach at the public universities because they are always under pressure.

5.36.4 Intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula

a) The speed at which white lecturers spoke as curriculum experience

A very conspicuous experience of Precious with respect to the enacted curriculum entailed the speed at which white lecturers spoke during learning facilitation sessions. She had this experience as a challenge while in the first-year degree programme. She resorted to seeking consultation whenever she could not catch up with the pace at which they spoke. Consequently, the pace at which white lecturers spoke was an enacted curriculum experience negotiated by Precious at Montana College. She registered her concern with these words:

In my first-year it was the speed at which the White lecturers spoke that was a real challenge to me. Whenever they spoke very fast I always had to go see them to explain what they meant in class.

b) Boldness to ask questions

The narrative of Precious supports the findings obtained from the other French-speaking students that French-speaking students had an inability to ask questions in class. However, she ascertained that in the third-year degree programme it would be difficult to find any of the French-speaking students who could not ask questions during learning facilitation exercises. She limited the challenge of not being able to ask questions to the first-year degree programme because the French-speaking students were expected to have gone past the bulk of their linguistic challenges in the LOLT. Precious expounds the situation:

It is difficult for French-speaking students who are not good in English to ask questions in class. But now that we are in third-year, I don't think there is any French-speaking student who would be afraid to ask questions in the class. It was when we were in first-year that those who were struggling to express themselves in English could possibly not raise their hands to ask questions. When I was in Pre-degree I could not ask questions but as the years passed, I began to socialize and became used to the academic environment.

c) Student-lecturer relationship

Student-lecturer relationships at Montana College were seen as being cordial by Precious. She said, “Our lecturers respond well and they are always open to answering questions and they attend to us when we seek consultation with them”. This kind of relationship is typical of the association between novices and experts in the ACOP because learning would take place in a non-coercive atmosphere.

Her experience with the assessed curriculum was found to be in the following direction, although she passed most of her modules at first attempt:

I failed a module known as Bio-entrepreneurship but I wrote the supplementary exam and I passed. I just did not understand the lecturer as the teaching sessions were going on. I passed all the other modules but this one gave me a tough challenge.

A curriculum implication of her experience points to the mode of learning facilitation among the lecturers. It reveals the possibility that Precious’s learning style was not accommodated by the teaching style of the lecturer who taught the Bio Entrepreneurship module. The experience that Precious had with the bio entrepreneurship module is presented as an enacted curriculum experience at Montana College.

d) Group work and individual presentation

The response that I got from Precious was a confirmation of the observation sessions I conducted within the campus environment in informal gatherings among the French-speaking students. The observation sessions revealed that French-speaking students preferred to stay among the other French-speaking students. Similarly, in the class it was not surprising to hear that French-speaking students preferred to be in the same group. According to Precious the challenge was in terms of linguistic incongruity where they spoke French together during group work sessions instead of English. This practice of staying in each other’s company was seen to have delayed their transition from French to English. Precious was not really afraid when she had to present a topic in class. If she was, she was not afraid because of the English:

If we are allowed to choose our group members, we always like to choose French-speaking students to be in our groups. The challenge there is that we speak French instead of English. On the issue of presenting a topic in class, I was not really afraid, not because of the English anyway.

e) The fear of losing French as a language of communication

The response I got from Precious when I asked whether she objected to losing French as a language was sufficient to assure me that she wanted to retain it. She responded to my question with another question. She was not ready to lose French as a medium of communication. The most astonishing response that I got was that she preferred French to English. I present Precious's concerns about the two languages (English and French):

Why would I lose French? Why would I stop speaking French? I can't stop speaking French because I grew up speaking both French and English and there is no way I can lose the two languages. I even prefer to speak French rather than English despite the fact that all my life I have been studying in English. I think it is a better language.

f) Homesickness

A hidden curriculum experience of Precious was her homesickness. She missed her family members. She responded to my inquiry on whether she missed home or not by saying, "Yes of course I miss my mum and my brothers all the time."

g) Premonition and anticipation

An anticipatory move of Precious entailed the notion that she wanted to study a course that was in the medical profession. She said, "I had always wanted to study something along the medical line, not medicine per se. Biomedicine is interesting to me as a course". This anticipatory move was likely responsible for the tenacity she had to study at Montana College.

5.37 Empirical evidence of hybridization of sociocultural factors in an ACOP

The linguistic capital of Precious was a demonstration of the fact that she came to Montana College to interact with the stakeholders and the curriculum of study. The prior acquisition of English gave her the capacity to develop academic acculturation and academic identity because she had the currency of communication to negotiate with the features of the dynamics involved. Of utmost importance to Precious was the connection she had with her lecturers who were described by her as very supportive. The community of French-speaking students also seemed to have given her a sense of belonging at Montana College. Her ability to speak fluently in English seemed to have given her the wherewithal to interact with South African students. The fact that she was bilingual became a resource to the other French-

speaking students because she was of assistance to them in terms of explaining unclear aspects of the curriculum to them in English. I quote, “I explain words that are not clear to the French-speaking students at the school because some words are in English but not in French.” Consequently she was engaged in different states of redress among the three sociocultural factors as she interacted and associated with the different stakeholders in the ACOP. These constant stages of redress were progressively responsible for her academic learning at Montana College because she had the linguistic capital to interact with more knowledgeable others in the ACOP. Precious’s experience therefore becomes an indication that when the three sociocultural factors in an ACOP are in states of redress learning tends to ensue. The magnitude of the learning would depend on the extent of hybridization among the three sociocultural factors.

5.38 Brandon: “When I came in here my English wasn’t that really good because I was one of those multilingual persons”

5.38.1 Biographical information

Brandon was a third-year public relations student from the DRC. He started schooling in Grade 9 when he came to South Africa to live with his brother in 2005. Brandon was a multilingualist. He spoke 7 languages namely French (his mother tongue), Arabic (his second mother tongue), English, Swahili, Lingala, Rwandan language and the Burundian language. The prominent narrative which describes his storyline pointed to the effect of multilingualism. He mentioned the fact that when he first came to Montana College his English speaking ability was not very good. Brandon revealed his linguistic state thus:

When I came in here my English wasn’t that really good because I was one of those multilingual persons and mostly I was busy with other languages and my English was very low but I adapted very easily.

I was curious to know the reason for his ability to speak 7 languages. He said, “I have been to almost all the African countries. When I get to a place, I learn something new and look for something to motivate me to learn more”. His utterance was an indication that he was an outgoing person who was readily available to learn new concepts. He was admitted to Montana College because he had obtained very good marks in his matriculation examination. He wrote his matriculation examination in South Africa, so he seemed to have adjusted to the academic climate of South Africa.

5.39 Curriculum experiences of Brandon

5.39.1 Linguistic transition as a curriculum issue in the ACOP

a) Inability to read the study guide

Two key points emerged from Brandon's narrative on the linguistic challenges confronting the French-speaking students at Montana College. Firstly, some of them are challenged because they did not take English as a subject at the high school level. Such French-speaking students usually are unable to read English. In the course of conducting this research I did not come across such. The French-speaking students that I came across so far in this study were able to read and write, but were challenged in terms of speaking English. Their ability to write evolved from the English which they studied as a subject. I present Brandon's experience on the issue of linguistic transition:

A major source of academic challenge confronting some of the French-speaking students is an inability to read the study guide, especially if such French-speaking students did not have any prior learning of English. For some, they are able to read and write but cannot speak in English.

Consequently, linguistic transition was of paramount importance for the French-speaking students at Montana College, because it was capable of determining their academic survival in the ACOP.

b) Linguistic acquisition via interaction with more knowledgeable others and the use of the library in the ACOP

A unique example of learning in an ACOP via the reading of books in the library and interaction with people who could speak English fluently was found in Brandon. He could not read English when he came to South Africa because he spoke French all his life. He divulged his experience thus:

I never went to any English school in my life. When I came here, my brother showed me the library and I borrowed books. I couldn't even read in English because I could only read in French. Through the way that I interacted with people, in a short time I could communicate with people in English.

c) Linguistic incongruity

Linguistic incongruity was one of the challenges common to the French-speaking students at Montana College. This tendency seemed to have prevented a number of them from participating in the activities of the ACOP because of their persistent use of French as a

medium of communication among their French-speaking peers. Brandon explained during the interview session with him:

The challenge we face is that when we are together, we feel very relaxed to the extent that we speak in French instead of English. We forget that we are required to do academic activities in English. Our conversation in French goes on unabated because it is our mother tongue

5.39.2 Attachment to academic institution as a symbol of academic acculturation and identity

Brandon connected with the tenets of Montana College by virtue of the role models he had at the home front. He got connected to Montana College and the principles put in place to assist him in earning a degree because he wanted to succeed. He saw Montana College as the available avenue to accomplish his dreams. He was thus seen to possess academic acculturation and academic identity:

I have strong and clear examples to follow; my brothers are my role models. So I must make sure that whatever it takes, I have to succeed academically at this institution. Every morning when they see me they tell me that in life, there is nothing they can give me except education. They tell me when they give me education; they are giving me something that cannot be destroyed. I am attached to every principle that has been put in place here to succeed academically.

a) Identity description

Brandon was asked to describe his identity, he said, “I am Congolese, I have a mission to carry out with my ambition to become a politician and I must return to the DRC to play that role of becoming a leader”. This was his stern assertion and he meant it, as I looked at him intently. He had a mission in mind as he studied at Montana College to ultimately lead his people.

5.39.3 Sense of belonging to academic institution as a symbol of commitment to participate in the ACOP

Brandon had built strong relationships with the stakeholders of Montana College because of his goal to earn a degree. He seemed to have left no stone unturned as he engaged with the lecturers and tutors at Montana College. His goal of becoming a politician gave him the fortitude to participate in the ACOP. He explained how he developed a sense of belonging:

At this institution I feel at home because of my culture like I said, I have built relationships with strong personalities, and that tends to make me associate myself with the lecturers and tutors. I know when I leave this place; I have a vision to move forward. This place is so nice because it is multicultural and I can relate with people from different cultures as I study here.

Brandon saw the academic environment of Montana College as a multicultural environment. It is thus shown that the academic environment of Montana College is a similitude of an internationalized academic community of practice.

5.39.4 Intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula

a) Student-lecturer relationship

The intended curriculum may not be enacted efficiently if lecturers are not well informed and adequately prepared. This was the mindset of Brandon as he engaged with the scholarly activities at Montana College. He agreed to the fact that the lecturers at Montana College presented and enacted the curriculum properly. I present his argument:

My lecturers are approachable. This gives me the opportunity to connect to the curriculum of study. We are welcome to see them when we have academic challenges.

b) Extroversion as a hidden curriculum experience in the ACOP

Brandon agreed to the notion that extroversion is capable of assisting a French-speaking student to learn English quicker. He mentioned the importance of a French-speaking student's capacity to associate with the stakeholders who are proficient in the use of English. In his words I could see the importance of taking the initiative to mix with more knowledgeable others who were proficient in English. He argued in this manner:

I am an extrovert. My character has helped me to learn English through interaction with other English-speaking people. The easiest way to learn English as a French-speaking student is to go out of one's way to regularly interact with English-speaking people.

c) Homesickness

When I interviewed Brandon in 2012, I did not remember asking him whether he experienced homesickness. On the 26th of February 2013, I booked an appointment with him to interview him at Montana College. He said:

Homesickness is the greatest problem of French-speaking students. Although I am an extrovert, no place is like home. I miss my brothers and sisters. The fact that I mix with people from different countries is good, but it is incomparable with my people from home.

d) Power dynamics

Drawing on the scholarly work of Lave and Wenger (1991) the issue of power relations is inexhaustible. It comes in different shades and perspectives. Brandon was of the opinion that the practice of excluding students who owed fees for tuition was detrimental to academic success among students. The school management at Montana College, being a private

institution used this means to create a regular cash flow in order to meet monthly expenditure.

Brandon explained:

The issue of excluding students from tuition is one of the major causes of failure at this institution. Imagine denying a student access to tuition for a whole week, and the other students are doing tests and assignments and the debtor is outside. At the end of the day the student still has to pay the fee owed. If a student owes school fees, I think he or she should be allowed to receive lectures until he pays what is owed.

It was a policy at Montana College to exclude students who owed tuition fees. This was an attempt to force fee defaulters to pay when the fees were due. Brandon saw this action as callous, since students who owed were bound by law to eventually pay what they owed. He argued that students needed to be granted permission to attend lecture despite the fact that they owed fees. He cited an instance which according to him contributed to his inability to pass one of his modules because he was not allowed access to attend revision classes before the examination on account of delayed payment of fees. His story presents one of the effects of power relations in an academic community of practice. He passionately relayed his story, an indication of the consequence of power relations in an ACOP:

The issue of exclusion from tuition has affected me before. Last year I had a problem with the fees department. My brother was overseas, so he could not pay them when due. I stayed away from school for more than 2 weeks because I was denied access to the school at the gate. I lost out completely and could not attend lectures. It was towards the examination period. I missed the whole revision week. Out of the 7 modules that I wrote in the examination, I failed 2 modules. I would have passed those 2 modules but I was not allowed to do revision when I was denied access to the school.

e) Group work and individual presentation

Brandon's character and capacity to speak in English were seen as assets that assisted him to associate with the other students. He was in different groups with students and was not afraid. His story revealed one of the reasons that French-speaking students refused to associate with English-speaking students. It was found that an inability to communicate in English seemed always to deter the French-speaking students from associating with the other students. On the day that I interviewed him for the second time I stood afar from him and observed him as he was in a group with two South African students. They were engaged in group discussion trying to do a group assignment. After a while I drew near and interviewed the other two female students. They were South African students. They communicated in the medium of English throughout. This was a first-hand experience that proficiency in English is capable of

fostering group work initiatives among students from dissimilar cultures. Similarly he was bold to present topics in class without fear. He argued his case:

I enjoy group work because I am a lover of people. Group work gives me the opportunity to interact with the other students. I play the role of mediating between the English-speaking students and the French-speaking students because I am proficient in English and French. I explain English words that are not available in French to them because there are some words that are in English, but absent in French. I enjoy individual presentation because I use it as a tool to declare my future intention of becoming a politician. I am never afraid of presenting any topic when asked to do so.

f) The fear of losing French as a language of communication

During the second round of interviews in February 2013 Brandon was asked whether he minded losing French as a language. He stared at me in amazement and shouted, “It is not possible for me to lose French as a language. The fact that I speak up to 7 languages should prove that I am a lover of languages”. It is thus presented that, apart from the fact that French-speaking students came to Montana College to learn in English, they minded losing French as a language of communication.

g) Motivation

Brandon had role models in his family who inspired him to earn a degree. His siblings were well read. They motivated him to study also and achieve academically. It is thus seen that the presence of role models in a French-speaking student’s academic path is capable of creating the knack to earn degrees. Brandon relates his experience with role models in his family as a motivating factor:

I am so blessed to have a family that is well educated. Everybody in my family is educated, except my father who didn’t study. All my brothers are well educated. One of my brothers is doing a second doctorate in law. The other one is doing his masters. Another one has completed his master’s degree. Another one is doing his honours and I would also be doing my honours. I would go for masters and doctorate degree as well.

h) The satisfaction with life on campus

Brandon expressed satisfaction with the academic and social life at Montana College. His entire interest was in the activities at Montana College. These activities were basically academic in nature. His words are presented as evidence:

This institution meets my academic and social needs because I am doing fine. I am getting what I need to get. This institution is building me up to be what I want to be in the future.

5.40 Empirical evidence of hybridization of sociocultural factors in an ACOP

From the available evidence on the ground, it is clear that Brandon's ability to proficiently express himself in English created in him the capacity to take responsibility for his learning. He developed academic acculturation and academic identity at Montana College. His capacity to interact and associate with English and non-English speakers in the medium of English was seen to have created the propensity to follow through the academic rigours at Montana College. The influence of familial role models also created focus and integration in him to the extent that he used every available means to learn in an integrated manner. His experience in terms of power relations at Montana College also did not deter him from participating in the curriculum – a proof of the suggestion made by Lave and Wenger (1991) that power relations have their ways of getting abated. A hybridization of his linguistic capacity with the academic acculturation and academic identity that he developed at Montana College likely evolved in academic learning. It is thus presented that learning tends to evolve when there is a hybridization of language, academic acculturation and identity in an ACOP.

5.41 Presentation of findings from Focus Group 1

5.41.1 Biographical information of participants

In focus group 1 seven respondents were interviewed from the French-speaking countries of Africa for about more than an hour. They all came to study at Montana College. It was a very challenging experience to have convened this focus group interview. At first I planned to interview cohorts from pre-degree through to the third-year degree programme but it was not possible. I resorted to interviewing the French-speaking students in clusters as they showed up by allowing the different categories of students to participate in each session. Out of the seven French-speaking students that were interviewed in focus Group 1 three of them were from pre-degree. Two of them were in their second year. One of them was in first-year and the last person had just completed the third-year degree programme in Biomedicine. All of them had to learn English at different English schools before starting their studies at Montana College except Cony, who studied in English in Cameroun but spoke French fluently. Cony preferred French to English but English was an advantage to her at Montana College. In Table 5.2, I present the profile of the French-speaking students who participated in Focus Group 1.

Table 5.2: Focus Group 1 respondents (non-South African French-speaking students interviewed)

Pseudonym	Year of study	Country of origin	Programme of study
Onthatile (Female)	2 nd year	DRC	Biomedicine
Stephanus (Male)	2 nd year	DRC	Bachelor of business administration
October (Female)	Pre-degree	Gabon	Commerce
Marthe (Female)	Pre-degree	DRC	Bachelor of business administration
Violet (Female)	Pre-degree	Gabon	Commerce
Rachel (Female)	1 st year	DRC	Biomedicine
Cony (Female)	3 rd year	Cameroon	Biomedicine

In the following section the emerging themes are presented to augment the semistructured interview finding conducted in 2012.

5.42 Curriculum experience of French-speaking students

5.42.1 Linguistic transition as curriculum issue in the academic community of practice

During the focus group interview with this group of French-speaking students the following were the linguistic concerns of the seven of them who participated in the interview:

Stephanus: My main problem in pre-degree was the English. I began to socialize with English-speaking students in order to learn it. I purposely came to South Africa to learn in English.

Onthatile: When I came here, I had problem with English but I began to learn as I studied. I read books and interacted with English-speaking students. I still interact with them till now. I am here because I want to be bilingual.

October: I find speaking in English a major challenge. When people are speaking in English, I can hear if the accent is not too difficult. I can also write in English because I did English in my country. I am here to learn in English so as to be different from the other members of my family who learned in French.

Marthe: English is my problem at this school. I am just a few days old on this campus but I am trying to make friends with English-speaking students so that I can learn fast. I am here to learn in English, I want to be bilingual.

Rachel: At pre-degree I could not speak a word in English but now that I am in first-year, I speak better than I did in pre-degree. Although I am not very good at speaking English correctly, I am determined because I came to South Africa to learn in English.

Cony: The advantage I had at this school was that I could speak English and French at the same time. In Cameroon I went to an English-speaking school but I prefer to speak French as a

language. At times, I also have linguistic challenge because some words just don't come up when I am speaking. However this did not affect my studies at this school.

Violet: If the problem of English is removed, I can do well in my studies but I am trying to learn. I am in South Africa because I want to learn in English.

From the abovementioned narratives of the seven respondents linguistic challenge among them is presented as a curriculum issue because it was capable of delaying their comprehension of the curriculum. Consequently linguistic transition was of paramount significance to their compliance with the planned, enacted and assessed curricula at Montana College, which in this case was an ACOP.

5.42.2 Attachment to academic institution as a symbol of academic acculturation and academic identity

a) Symbols of academic acculturation and academic identity

I present narratives which pointed to their attachment to Montana College, taken to imply academic acculturation and academic identity:

Onthatile: I like the way I was taught by my maths lecturer in pre-degree. The other lecturers too were very committed. The lecturers give me attachment to this school. I'm pleased with the courses that I am doing. However, there is one white lecturer teaching me maths now. She uses power point and this makes me uncomfortable.

Stephanus: I don't have any problem with this institution. I am happy to be here because most of the lecturers are very friendly. I prefer this place to the public university because they give us academic attention.

October: This school is meeting my needs because our lecturers are kind. The mathematics lecturer pays attention to me in the class because he knows I am just trying to learn English. He knows me by name and calls me regularly to ask if I understand what he is saying. I am happy to be here.

Marthe: Although I am a few days old here, I like the environment of the school, but we move classes and this is very uncomfortable for me. I am willing to bear the pain because I must get my degree.

Rachel: Our lecturers are kind. In fact I am so lucky because they all love me so I feel at home here.

Cony: I am happy with this institution because we are not many in class. We have very good lecturers, although some of them may not be too good but I am glad to be here.

Violet: I like my mathematics lecturer. He is patient with us; I am encouraged by his presence at this school. He encourages me to work hard.

The French-speaking students had different but similar points of connection into Montana College, capable of fostering their development of academic acculturation and academic

identity. However none of them defined his/her identity to signify negotiation with the mainstream society. Those from the DRC said they were Congolese. The ones from Gabon said that they were Gabonese. The French-speaking student from Cameroon said she was a Cameroonian.

5.42.3 Intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula

a) New knowledge about learning facilitation

A prominent finding emerged during the focus group interview session. It was in terms of the route taken by the French-speaking students to learn, because of the linguistic impediments they had. They all unanimously agreed that when lecturers facilitated learning the French-speaking students usually did not get all that was being said. Their route to understanding involved the lecturer making the effort to write what was said on the board. I present their experience on this finding:

Onthatile: I benefit most from lectures when the lecturer writes on the board because the way we understand in French is different from the way the lecturer explains.

Stephanus: I agree with the fact that the way to understand what has been said is for the lecturer to write a summary of his presentation.

October: My time to learn comes when the lecturer writes on the board because of how I understand as a French speaker. At times the pronunciations of certain words are confusing, so I wait to read what has been said on the board.

Marthe: Except the lecturer writes on the board, I feel like a stranger in the class. It has to do with the fact that my English is below standard.

Rachel: I wish all my lecturers could write summaries of what they say in the class. I benefit from power point presentations better than listening to lectures.

Cony: As for me, this does not work. I listen, write and speak English. I don't have to wait for the lecturer to write a summary of what has been said before I understand the lecture. I think it is because I had a bilingual education while in Cameroon.

Violet: Yes as the others have said, I can only understand when the lecturer writes on the board. I do not yet understand many words in English. When the lecturer writes, I write so that on getting home I bring out my dictionary to check unfamiliar words.

b) Accent

A number of issues emerged because of the different accents at Montana College. As a multiculturally diverse academic environment, accents and the pace at which lecturers spoke were prominent. The different accents present at Montana College were capable of adversely affecting the compliance of French-speaking students with the curriculum during learning

facilitation. The accents of the French-speaking students also became centre stage, because of the way they pronounced words. This could also slow down the rate at which the other students could interact with them. I present the different perspectives of experiences among the French-speaking students who had issues with accents, and those whose accents became problematic in the ACOP:

Onthatile: This year there is one lecturer that I don't get her accent. She is a South African. I also have the Congolese accent but I watch American movies to improve my accent. Consequently I don't have issues with the accents of white South African lecturers.

Stephanus: I try to learn as my lecturers speak in the class but I struggle at times with the accents of some of them, especially the white lecturers' accents.

October: A major challenge I have here is that some of the lecturers speak with accents that I don't understand. As I am trying to understand an accent, another one comes up.

Marthe: There are too many accents here. I have issues with the speed at which the white lecturers speak. My own French accent is also a thing that I have to work on, so that I would be heard correctly during conversation with my classmates.

Rachel: The lecturers speak with accents. I am trying to understand them better now that I am in first-year. When I was in pre-degree it was tough for me to understand them.

Cony: I didn't have problems with the accents of lecturers; rather people had issues with my own accent whenever we are doing group work in the lecture room.

Violet: Here a major problem I have is that all the lecturers here have different accents, and the white lecturers are too fast for me to understand.

Consequently, the pace at which the white lecturers spoke during learning facilitation and the diverse categories of accents at Montana College are presented as curriculum predicaments, capable of challenging the capacity of French-speaking students to comply with the planned, enacted and assessed curricula in the ACOP.

c) The fear of losing French as a language of communication

It was a unanimous decision among the French-speaking students at Montana College to keep French as a language of communication despite their quests to be bilingual. It is thus presented that the French-speaking students at Montana College minded losing French as a language of communication. Their views are presented:

Onthatile: How do I communicate with my parents and friends when I get back to my country if I lose French? It is impossible to lose it.

Stephanus: French is natural for me to speak; I am going to keep it.

October: I have been speaking French all my life, why should I lose it. It is too late to lose French.

Marthe: I want to keep French as well because it is a language for business in some parts of the world. When I know English my chances of getting connected would be high.

Rachel: No I do mind losing French because French is part of me, I grew up speaking it. I do want to learn in English but I want to keep the two of them. If I use one of our French-speaking lecturers as an example, she is working as an instructor here because she can speak English very well despite being a French speaker. If she goes back home, she would use French to communicate with her family members.

Cony: No, because no one wants to lose something to get another. In the future if I am looking for a contract and the only way of getting it is to be able to speak French. It increases my chance of getting such a contract. I would rather learn more languages while I keep French than lose French to keep English. The more languages I am able to speak the better for me.

Violet: I am going to keep French but I want to know English very well.

d) Homesickness

The issue of homesickness is a hidden curriculum experience because it could cause temporary distraction, to the extent that the French-speaking students may lose academic focus. I present the views of the French-speaking students on homesickness:

Rachel: I experienced homesickness last year when I was in pre-degree because I missed my family

Cony: As a foreign student in another culture, it is normal to experience homesickness but it gets better with time.

October: I had homesickness when I just came but Violet is making me forget homesickness. I need my mum all the time so the issue of homesickness is always there. Our parents take away our stress.

Marthe: I experience homesickness because I miss my mum

Onthatile: It is natural to miss home but I have to focus to get my degree

Stephanus: I am a big boy now but you know once in a while I feel lonely and think about my family.

Violet: Yes I miss home a lot but October fills the gap for me because we have been friends since secondary school.

e) Shyness

Shyness is a hidden curriculum experience capable of leading students to becoming reticent. They may become incapable of asking questions during the process of curriculum enactment. It usually emanates from their inability to speak English fluently. I present evidence of shyness among the French-speaking students at Montana College:

Onthatile: It is natural to be shy especially as a new student. Now that I am in second year, I have discovered that it is important to excel. I ask questions in the class but I sit in front to avoid shyness.

Stephanus: Before, I could not ask questions because of English. Now I am trying because I am shy.

October: Sir I am sure you see me in class that I always keep quiet. It is because of my English which is not good. Instead of asking questions, I would rather keep quiet and ask my friend because I am shy.

Marthe: To me English is a challenge but apart from that, the inability to interact due to shyness is the problem. I am shy because when I speak English, I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me because of my French accent.

Rachel: I am getting over shyness these days but at pre-degree I was too shy in the class because of my English and French accent, so I kept quiet in class all the time.

Cony: Why would I be shy? I can express myself in English. It was only when I used to be afraid of talking in the presence of many students that I experienced shyness. I am no longer shy because if I don't understand something, the lecturer must explain it to me.

Violet: Ha! To talk in the class is a problem because I am very shy. I can hear the English and write it down but I cannot speak in English because I am shy and afraid of making mistakes when I speak in front of all the students.

f) Group work

The pre-degree students in this focus group interview had not yet engaged in doing group work. However those in first to third-year degree programmes had a couple of experiences. I present their experiences:

Cony: In group work it is not easy because some people are bossy. I prefer to do group assignment with people that I know.

Onthatile: The people who start group work with me don't usually complete the work because they are full of excuses. I prefer to work with French-speaking students because we understand ourselves and we are more serious than the South African students.

Stephanus: Doing group work is a very difficult task because the other students don't want to work. They rely on us to do the group assignment, so I prefer to work with the French-speaking students because we know how much we are paying here. We must not fail because our parents are counting on us.

Rachel: Last year I made sure that, at least a French-speaking student was in my group because we understand each other. The South African students don't like to work. They prefer to start the assignment on the due day. I don't believe in working like that.

The French-speaking students preferred to work with their French-speaking counterparts because they understood themselves, and had strong work ethics because it was expensive to study at Montana College. The aim of working together in groups was to foster communication and interaction with more knowledgeable others in the ACOP. The dilemma was that the French-speaking students preferred to work with their peers from French-speaking countries. Consequently how would they have interacted with the English-speaking

students if they had preferred to work with their French-speaking counterparts? The implications of this finding are discussed in Chapter Seven.

g) Boldness to ask questions

The French-speaking students had a common challenge as far as asking questions is concerned. They had the predicament of expressing themselves in English. Consequently they were shy because they lacked the correct vocabulary to express themselves in the English. Evidence is provided:

Cony: At times the other students are waiting for someone to ask questions because they would have wanted to ask questions. If a French-speaking student takes the initiative to ask a question, the other students keep quiet even if the French-speaking student made mistakes in English while posing questions to the lecturer. At the end some of the South African students are grateful when I ask questions.

October: I can ask questions if I have one but I ask my friend first of all before I ask the lecturer. Sometimes I want to ask a question but I find it difficult to find the right words to use. I feel like writing the question to show the lecturer because I cannot speak fluently in English.

Violet: I prefer to wait till the end of the class before I ask questions because I don't know how to speak very well in English. My challenge is how to form the question. I am afraid to ask the lecturer because of my English. It is easier to read English but to speak is a big challenge. If a lecturer asks a question, I try to understand but the problem is how to reply because of my English.

Marthe: I ask questions at times but the challenge is that I can't find the words to put together, so I keep quiet. It is easier to hear what people are saying but difficult for the French-speaking student to construct words in the English.

Rachel: I am improving now, before I could not even construct a sentence correctly in English, not to even talk of asking questions in the class.

Stephanus: I am shy to ask questions in front of every student.

Onthatile: It takes courage to ask questions in class. When I was in pre-degree it was so difficult but now that I am in second year, I am forced to ask because it can affect my studies.

h) Individual presentation

I present findings from 3 out of the 7 respondents as evidence of how they felt when they were asked to present on specific topics. The issue of English was prominent. Some of them were shy and lacked confidence to speak expressively in English. It is presented that the boldness to present assigned topics was a curriculum issue among the French-speaking students at Montana College:

Stephanus: Normally I'm a shy person but I do my best to give a good presentation.

Onthatile: At pre-degree my English made me afraid to do presentation. I wish it was not part of the assessment.

Cony: My first presentation was done 3 years ago in Bio-entrepreneurship. I was afraid of the crowd. My English was an issue because I forgot some words in English. I forgot what I was going to say because I could not speak to the slides. After a while I became more confident.

i) Motivation

These were the responses I obtained when the French-speaking students were asked to divulge their sources of motivation to earn degrees. Some of them claimed they had personal motivation; the others ascribed the motivations in their lives to the roles played by their parents in sending them to school as well as the inadequacies in their parents' lives. Evidence is provided:

October: It is true that my parents are supporting me. I also have a part to play because my parents are not the ones to study for me. They are providing me with the opportunity to learn. For example I put on the alarm to wake me up so that I don't oversleep. They can't do many of these things for me. I think personal motivation is a key issue here. My father is my hero as well. He works in an American petrol company. He can't speak English but he said I must not be like him.

Marthe: My father is my motivator; although he did not complete his education he wants us to be better than him in all aspects of life. I am working towards that so as to make him proud. My father is my hero.

Violet: My father was my hero because he was in South Africa for medical treatment. Now he has passed away but I want to make sure that the vision he had when he was alive comes to pass. He wanted me to become a university graduate. My father liked to speak English but he could not, so he said I should come to South Africa to learn in English.

Cony: I am the one encouraging myself to get a good education because it is my route to becoming what I aspire to become in life. Although my parents are paying my fees, I also want to make sure that I reach my goal.

Rachel: I get my inspiration from the people around me, myself and my mum. I want to get to a certain level because I want to have status and I believe it is education that can give me the opportunity.

5.42.4 Satisfaction with life

Satisfaction with life was measured in terms of how the French-speaking students adjusted to the academic and social life on campus. They had different points of attraction which served to engender their development of a sense of belonging to Montana College. Satisfaction with life was also adept at deciphering whether they developed academic acculturation and academic identity. I present the cases of 4 of them as they spoke on the issue of life satisfaction:

Marthe: It is my third day here now. I love accounting and that is all I know. I have to follow the plan of the school.

Violet: I am enjoying this place. I am not enjoying the courses because of the way they are presented by the lecturers.

Cony: This school is good because of the environment. I enjoy this place and I feel at home.

October: I am enjoying this campus but it is difficult to keep up with the pace of the academic rigour.

5.43 Empirical evidence of hybridization of sociocultural factors in an ACOP

From the available evidence in Focus Group 1, it is lucid that the issue of English language was very prominent. It implies that language is important for the overall purpose of the French-speaking students in the ACOP. English was used to present, enact and assess the curriculum to them. They needed it to interact with the other stakeholders in the ACOP. It was a yardstick for the French-speaking students to develop academic acculturation because if they did not set out to learn the LOLT their stay at Montana College would have become inconsequential. The French-speaking students also needed the English to express how acclimatized they were in Montana college. It is presented that at various stages that the French-speaking students had to grapple with these three sociocultural factors, namely language, academic acculturation and identity for academic learning to take place. At each stage of negotiation among the three sociocultural factors, hybrids in the form of learning likely evolved, symbolizing the investments made to attain the LOLT, academic acculturation and identity. It is thus presented that the course of learning among the foreign language speakers in an ACOP is through the process of redress among the three sociocultural factors. The magnitude of learning is conjectured to depend on their proficiency in the LOLT to pave the way for access to the curriculum via the concomitant development of academic acculturation and academic identity among them. Similarly their potential to interact with more knowledgeable English-speaking stakeholders at Montana College was significant. Interaction with more knowledgeable English speakers seemed to have fostered the route to acquiring command of the English language. Withdrawal of the French-speaking students into their individual and group enclaves was found to have delayed the transition of some of them to English.

5.44 Presentation of findings from Focus Group 2

5.44.1 Biographical information of participants

In Focus Group 2 six French-speaking students were interviewed from the Chad Republic, DRC and Gabon. The French-speaking students were Caira, Anthonia, Princess, Frida, Petunia and Ennigrace. Caira, Princess, Petunia and Frida were from the DRC. Ennigrace was from Gabon. Anthonia was from the Chad Republic. All of them spoke French fluently but had linguistic issues with the English, especially on arrival at Montana College. Caira spoke French and Lingala, indigenous languages. Anthonia spoke Arabic and an indigenous Chadian language known as Sarakaba. Princess spoke Lingala and Swahili as additional languages. Frida, Ennigrace and Petunia spoke French, Swahili and Lingala. They all came to South Africa to study in English.

Table 5.3: Focus Group 2 respondents (non-South African French-speaking students interviewed)

Pseudonym	Year of study	Country of origin	Programme of study
Caira	Second-year	DRC	Commerce
Anthonia	Third-year	Chad	Journalism
Princess	Third-year	DRC	B.Com Accounting
Frida	Pre-degree	DRC	Foundation programme
Petunia	Pre-degree	DRC	Computer Science
Ennigrace	First-year	Gabon	Biomedicine

In the following section the emerging themes are presented to augment the semistructured interview finding conducted in 2012.

5.45 Curriculum experiences of French-speaking students

5.45.1 Linguistic transition as a curriculum issue in the ACOP

The following narratives were gathered as evidence that the French-speaking students needed to negotiate a transition from French to English in order to be privileged to participate in the activities of the ACOP (Montana College). Consequently linguistic transition was a curriculum issue among the French-speaking students. It kept them from engaging with more knowledgeable others and the presented, enacted and assessed curricula at Montana College:

Petunia: My own challenge is the issue of communicating in English. The problem is that when I am trying to speak, the words to use are just not there. To be precise I have issues with

the vocabulary in English. My problem is that I understand English but I can't speak it very well.

Caira: I was studying communication but I changed because I did not understand the English. I came back to this school to study Commerce. In Congo we were taught to write in English but to communicate is the issue.

Anthonia: I have an issue with the English because in the Chad Republic I was achieving distinction in English as a subject but the issue was to speak English.

Ennigrace: I was scared at first that students would laugh at me. The problem is that at times when I am speaking in English, I think in French so I get confused.

Princess: This is my third year at this institution. My case is worse because I don't relate with South Africans or the other students who could have taught me the use of English. I stay with the French-speaking students always. I can only listen to what they are saying but the issue is to speak English.

Frida: My major problem at this institution is the English. When others are speaking in English I wish to also speak like them but I cannot.

5.45.2 Attachment to academic institution as a symbol of academic acculturation and identity

The issue of attachment to Montana College was explored by asking the French-speaking students whether they were proud to be students of Montana College. I looked for points of connection between them and Montana College to figure out what attracted them to the academic institution because their points of connection to Montana College were indicative of academic acculturation and academic identity. It was found that the quest to earn degrees superseded the challenges which confronted them. I present the responses that I got from them during the focus group interview session:

Anthonia: I am not proud to be a student of this institution because the school fees are very high, but I have to earn my degree, I have no choice. I am compelled to go for lectures anyway.

Caira: I prefer this institution because we are not many as in the public universities. The number of students in each class is small but I still prefer this institution.

Frida: Yes I am proud to be a student of this institution.

Princess: I prefer this institution to the public institutions because we are not many in class.

Petunia: I enjoy the beauty of the school. The lecturers are very supportive and understanding.

Ennigrace: I like this school because I am making new friends who are helping me to learn English.

a) Identity Description

All of the French-speaking students described their identities based on their countries of origin. None of them indicated intercultural negotiation with the mainstream South African society. I present their cases on identity description:

Anthonia: I am Chadian and it is not possible for me to change my identity.

Princess: I am Congolese.

Petunia: I am a Congolese. I don't like South African languages. They don't speak in English to everybody. They speak in their languages. They must speak in English so that we can understand. South Africans speak in Zulu in the class and I don't like it.

Caira: I am Congolese. I love South Africa but not South Africans because they don't associate with us.

Frida: I am a Congolese.

Ennigrace: I am a Gabonese.

5.45.3 Sense of belonging to academic institution as a symbol of commitment to participate in the ACOP

The French-speaking students in this focus group interview were seen to have developed a sense of belonging to the ACOP (Montana College) primarily because of the opportunity to learn in English. The development of a sense of belonging among foreign language speakers could be a function of what an institution has to offer in return for their decisions to study and the commitments they make. I present their cases which symbolized their development of a sense of belonging:

Caira: I am here because I want to be bilingual. What I like about the students who speak in English here is that when I make mistakes in English, they don't laugh at me. In Congo if you speak French incorrectly they laugh at you.

Anthonia: Originally I didn't come here to study. I just came to visit. Later I decided to study when I saw that I had the opportunity to study journalism in South Africa. We don't have the opportunity to study journalism in the Chad Republic. I decided to study here so as to add another language because I speak French and Arabic. English is my third language. Although I knew some words in English at school, I was not fluent.

Princess: I am here to learn in English so that I can be bilingual.

Frida: I came to South Africa just to learn in English.

Petunia: I want to be bilingual to increase the opportunity of working in many places.

Ennigrace: I came here to learn in English. I must know English so as to achieve my future goal of becoming a career person because English is an international language.

5.45.4 Intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula

a) Word problems in Mathematics

Only one of the French-speaking students in this focus group interview indicated that she had a challenge with mathematical word problems. Her experience probably had to do with the issue of translating the word problems from English to French and back to English. In the process of doing this, it could be that she lost the meaning attached to such problems. I present her experience:

Ennigrace: When I just came I could not understand word problems but now I am a lot better.

b) New knowledge about learning facilitation

Caira was my student in 2012. I was her mathematics lecturer in the bridging Mathematics module. I did not know she had issues with Mathematics vocabulary until she spoke during this focus group interview. She could not follow my conversation and explanation during lecture periods until I took time to summarize what I had said on the board. Her experience was new because it provided information on how to facilitate learning among non-English-speaking students. As far as the French-speaking students were concerned this was new knowledge. She was supported by all the other French-speaking students in the focus group interview session. I present her case and those of others to support this claim:

Caira: Some of the times when you came to class revising what we did. I was always waiting for the time you would write it down so I can try to match the words with the French vocabulary that I know. When all the other students were nodding their heads that they understood what you revised with them, I always waited for the time you would write the words down. The moments you wrote on the board, I was always happy because I knew it was my time to learn.

All: You must write it out so that we can understand. This is how we learn in the class

c) Translation of curriculum content from English to French and back to English

Out of the six French-speaking students in this focus group interview session five engaged in the rigorous exercise of translating curriculum content from English to French and back to English in an attempt to understand curriculum content. They agreed that at times they did it unconsciously out of desperation to learn. Their cases are presented:

Anthonia: The way we write words in French is totally different from the way we write in English. This is why it seems as if when we are speaking the English, we speak in the opposite direction, so as we translate from English to French, the meaning is lost.

Caira: It is something that you don't plan to do. I translate from English to French before I can understand in English.

Princess: My frequent association with French-speaking students does not help me because I still translate from English to French and back to English.

Frida: You know I am new. If I don't translate from English to French, it would be difficult for me to survive here.

Petunia: I translate From English to French so that it can help me to understand. I think in French during the lecture period. I translate what the lecturer is saying into French in my head.

d) The fear of losing French as a language of communication

The French-speaking students minded losing their mother tongue despite their quest to learn in English. It was found that the issue of language has a cultural undertone inseparable from the speakers irrespective of the challenge confronting them. They spoke thus on the issue of retaining French as a language of communication:

Frida: I want to learn English and keep French. I don't want to lose French.

Princess: I cannot throw away French, despite that I want to learn in English.

Anthonia: I cannot throw French away because I want to add Spanish to my languages after English. I speak my local Chadian language as well. It is known as Sarakaba.

Petunia: I cannot lose my French because I want to be bilingual. I will keep the two of them.

Caira: French is my mother tongue; it is not possible to lose it.

Ennigrace: How can I lose my language? That is not possible because I speak it every day with my friends despite not in my country.

Consequently, it is presented that a curriculum experience of French-speaking students was the fact that they tenaciously held on to their French language as a language of communication.

e) Accent

I obtained responses from three of the respondents with respect to the issue of accents and pronunciation. These three French-speaking students had challenges with the accents of both white and black South African lecturers. One of them coped with the pronunciation as time elapsed meaning that interaction with more knowledgeable others in an ACOP is capable of yielding learning. I present their narratives:

Frida: I still have problems with my lecturers, especially in terms of their accents. It is very difficult to hear what the white lecturers are saying.

Caira: When a black lecturer is speaking, I understand but when a white lecturer is speaking I don't understand how they pronounce words. I understand at times but it may just be a word. I try to write the words down so that I can use the dictionary.

Anthonia: When I was in my first year, I used to have that problem but not anymore because I have grown to the extent of knowing how they speak and understand.

It is presented that a curriculum experience of French-speaking students was the issue of incomprehensible accents from both white and black South African lecturers at Montana College. It was found capable of slowing down the rate at which the French-speaking students understood the curriculum. It also probably delayed their transition experience from French to English.

f) Homesickness

All of the six respondents in the focus group interview session admitted experiencing homesickness. It is thus presented that homesickness was a hidden curriculum experience of French-speaking students at Montana College:

Anthonia: It is difficult to feel at home in South Africa because South Africans always feel threatened by the presence of foreigners.

Caira: When you travel with them in the Taxi, they expect you to speak Zulu. If you say you can't speak Zulu they ask if you are a white person.

All: We all miss home because this is not our country.

g) Motivation

Out of the six respondents of this focus group interview session who agreed that their parents motivated them to earn degrees, it was only Caira who asserted that she motivated herself to earn a degree:

Caira: I am the one motivating myself because I know that tomorrow my parents won't be there so I have to prepare for my future.

All: Our parents motivate us to earn degrees so as to become better citizens in the future.

h) Group work

The following were the views and perspectives of the French-speaking students with respect to the category of students they worked with during group work sessions:

Caira: I prefer to do group work with South African students. The reason is that when I do group work with French-speaking students we speak French and this does not help me.

Princess: I don't have South African friends so I do group work with French-speaking students because I don't like how South African students behave.

Anthonia: I work with South African students.

Frida: I don't have the French-speaking students as friends. I am alone in the class. I feel lonely in the class. My friend helps me in the class. She is from Zimbabwe, she helps me every time.

The French-speaking students were at different stages of interaction with the other stakeholders at the ACOP. Some of them realised the importance of working together with the English-speaking students to learn the English through interaction with them. The others did not interact with South Africans who could have found a common linguistic terrain to communicate with them (the English). It appeared that participation in group work among the French-speaking students was a function of how focused and determined they were to learn the English language.

i) The speed at which lecturers spoke during learning facilitation

Apart from the state of incommunicado that Frida found herself in, she also could not understand the pace at which her lecturers spoke in the class. She spoke thus:

Frida: My problem is how to speak in English. I can write the English. At times when I want to ask a question, I can't construct the English. The white lecturers speak too fast.

j) Boldness to ask questions in the class

The boldness to ask questions in the class was a function of how proficient the French-speaking students were in the English. It was also a function of the extent to which they had gathered the required dimension of linguistic capital via interaction with more knowledgeable others in the ACOP. I present their cases:

Petunia: I don't ask questions in the class

Ennigrace: I don't usually ask questions. I asked questions in the maths class because I knew how good I am in mathematics.

Anthonia: I ask questions, I even participate in class discussions

Princess: I don't have the courage to ask questions because I spend too much time with French-speaking students, maybe that is why I still have problems with spoken English.

k) Preparation before attending lectures

I present the perspectives of responses I got when I asked the French-speaking students whether they prepared before attending lectures:

Frida: Yes I read before going for lectures to prepare for what I would be taught. It is because I want to follow what the lecturer is saying.

Princess: I only study the day before I write a test.

Caira: I prefer to revise what the lecturer has taught.

These responses revealed the levels of preparedness among the French-speaking students before the enactment of the curriculum by the lecturers.

l) Linguistic incongruity

Anthonia revealed an avenue through which the French-speaking students forgot the use of English. She was of the opinion that whenever she travelled home, she stopped speaking English. After the holidays, she continued to speak with her friends. This experience is a symbol of linguistic incongruity. I present her case:

Anthonia: The fact that I go home on holidays is a major issue because when I go home, I speak French. When I come back I would have already forgotten the English that I learned. This inconsistency is a major issue.

m) Indecent dressing

A hidden curriculum experience of Caira was that the other students dressed indecently. She spoke thus:

Caira: In my country you cannot wear short skirts but here people dress indecently. They are supposed to cover their body.

n) Shyness

Shyness was a hidden curriculum experience of all the French-speaking students because of their inability to proficiently speak the English. To their amazement when they spoke English incorrectly they were not ridiculed by the other students. I present their concerns:

Ennigrace: We are very shy because of the English. We don't want the other students to laugh at us when we don't speak English correctly.

All: We are all shy because our English needs to improve. We brought a tradition from home because even when we made mistakes in French, our French-speaking counterparts laughed at us. We thought it is the same here but it is not. The other students have been very supportive.

o) Interaction

Frida understood my spoken English in the classroom during learning facilitation. She was challenged by an inability to express herself in the English. However I observed that she was always alone in the class whenever I gave them assignments to do in the class. It was during the focus group interview session that I knew why she kept to herself always. She lacked the ability to express herself in English. Caira interacted with her room mates. She learned words

in English. Anthonia believed it was important to interact with the South African students. She had issues with the way South African students spoke in their indigenous languages at intervals. For Princess the South African students were not friendly. Their cases are presented:

Frida: Yes I try to interact with the other students but the English is hard for me to speak. I understand your English when you are lecturing because it is very good. The issue is to speak but I can write.

Caira: When I was living at the residence of the school. I learned many things in the kitchen because I did not know kitchen utensils in English. The South African students that lived with me did not laugh when I made mistakes. They just corrected my English so that I could learn. They never laughed at me throughout my stay with them.

Anthonia: When you are with the other foreign students, it is much better than staying with South Africans. There were times that we spoke English together they just switched to their home languages. It is hard to make friends with the South Africans to the extent that they would have the patience to teach you English.

Princess: This is my fourth year in South Africa because they are not friendly

p) Compliance with the assessed curriculum in mathematics

I use Caira's case as an example of the fact that some of the French-speaking students excelled in Mathematics. She took two mathematics modules together because she came late. Each of the Mathematics modules was offered in each semester but she agreed to take them concurrently. She passed very well despite the fact that she needed the knowledge of BMAT 011 in BMAT 021. An important thing to note is that she engaged with the Mathematics curriculum until she passed. I present her experience:

Caira: In BMAT 011 I got 93% and in BMAT 021 I got 89%. I did the two at the same time but I practised maths a lot. Even though I could not understand all what you said in the class, I went back home to study and practise the mathematics. I also checked what you wrote on the board.

5.46 Empirical evidence of hybridization of sociocultural factors in an ACOP

The available evidence from Focus Group 2 reveals the importance of a hybridization of language, academic acculturation and academic identity for learning to take place. The French-speaking students needed to learn English in order to participate in the curriculum of the ACOP. They needed to possess a sense of belonging and academic acculturation to the ACOP. Finally they had to take responsibility for their learning by developing academic identity. It is thus assumed that learning seems to evolve when there is a hybridization of the

three sociocultural factors in an ACOP. In the next section I present findings from the third focus group interview, which was conducted with South African students at Montana College. This was done in an attempt to explore the perspectives of the French-speaking students' curriculum experiences and how they also experienced the curriculum at Montana College.

5.47 Presentation of findings from Focus Group 3

5.47.1 Biographical information of participants

In Focus Group 3 I had seven South African students as respondents. They were randomly selected from a cohort of South Africa students at Montana College. Their names were Jordan (male), Jacobus (male), Stevenson (male), Jan (male), Chesterton (male) and Momokete (female). Their biographical information is presented in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: Focus Group 3 respondents (South African students interviewed)

Pseudonym	Year of study	Country of origin	Programme of study
Jordan	Third-year	South Africa	Tourism
Jacobus	Third-year	South Africa	B. Com Marketing
Stevenson	Third-year	South Africa	B. Com Marketing
Jan	Third-year	South Africa	B. Com Marketing
Chesterton	Third-year	South Africa	B.Com Accounting
Mamokete	First-year	South Africa	Biomedicine

5.48 Curriculum experiences of French-speaking students from South African students' perspectives

5.48.1 Linguistic transition as a curriculum issue in the ACOP

a) Interaction

As far as the South African students were concerned the French-speaking students detached from them. They felt that the French-speaking students needed to take the initiative to come out of their comfort zones by becoming interested in what mattered to them. The six respondents agreed that they were willing to interact and associate with the French-speaking students as long as they also became willing to detach from their French-speaking territories to join them. The South African students believed that it was not a matter that pertained to the French-speaking students alone, but to all the students. Their responses pointed to the issue of self-esteem rather than attending to their requirements to negotiate a transition from French to

English in order to interact with the curriculum in the ACOP. I present their views with respect to the requirements needed by the French-speaking students to forgo their self-esteem in an attempt to embrace the necessity to interact with the South African students:

Jordan: They must be willing to leave their comfort zone. If they are not willing to leave their comfort zone then I would not also leave because we all have our powers in terms of speaking our own language. I would have to use my power to defend my language so we have to meet half-way to meet at the point of speaking in English.

Jacobus: If I go into the midst of the French-speaking students, I would feel uncomfortable at the beginning because we are all afraid of rejection. I am sure they feel the same way when they see us speaking in Zulu. The way friendship is built is that we meet ourselves through other friends. It is not just easy to bump into peoples' groups when they are conversing in their language. It is more than that. There has to be instances of connection to participate in other language speakers' conversations.

Stevenson: When you talk about language, there are different levels of engagement you find with different people, different cultures and religion. I see that French-speaking students have the challenge of processing English by translating it into French and back to English before they can understand us. This is a difficult process and I think this is why they detach from us because of the labour involved to translate what we say in English to French before they can understand us. The Zulus stick together because the language, culture and the lifestyle are the same. I think language, lifestyle and culture are inseparable.

Jan: It depends on who you are. If you are willing to join another group it becomes easy to penetrate those groups with a common point of interest, for example, soccer. The French-speaking students must be willing to go and talk about soccer with the other students.

Chesterton: Adding to what Jan has just said, it is a matter of self-esteem. The French-speaking students must be willing to associate with the other students by finding their way into their enclaves. It is also common between the blacks and the Whites. For example I have a friend whose boss speaks Afrikaans at their meeting. The French-speaking students should go out of their way to reach the South African students by becoming interested in what our groups enjoy. They are welcome to do this.

Mamokete: Sir, I think I have to agree with Chesterton. It is not about French-speaking students only. It is about everyone. I am an extrovert. Last year I made friends in two days. Your self-esteem counts. It takes courage to be an extrovert. You have to come out of your comfort zone. With the French-speaking students it is about them, not wanting to interact with us.

These findings point to the notion that the French-speaking students had to negotiate a transition from French to English by interacting with the South African students at Montana College. Furthermore, one of the South African students pointed to the fact that assumptions are usually made that South African students are proficient in the English. Stevenson said:

We often think that South African students are proficient in the English; some of us are not. This is because there are certain students who have been speaking Zulu all their lives. To relate to a French-speaking student would be challenging because they do not have a common language of communication. Such South African students also speak Zulu with the other Zulu-speaking students, so it is the same dynamics.

A probable reason why certain South African students kept away from the French-speaking students was because they also struggled with the use of English as a language of communication. From my observation during the focus group interview session with the South African students I found that all of them were eloquent with respect to the use of English language as a language of compromise. This probably contributed to the responses I got from them because they were caught unawares when I asked them why they kept away from the French-speaking students at Montana College.

5.48.2 Attachment to academic institution as a symbol of academic acculturation and identity

I took time to explain the concept of academic acculturation and academic identity to the South African students. Five out of the six of them agreed that the French-speaking students had academic acculturation and academic identity. They based their arguments on the fact that the French-speaking students had no choice other than to develop academic acculturation and academic identity at Montana College. They used the dimension of time to argue their cases from being third-year students. They spoke at the level at which the French-speaking students reached with them except for Mamokete who was in her first-year. Mamokete applauded the pre-degree programme in that it achieved its aim of preparing students for university. She cited a module referred to as *student skills* as an example of a module which taught them at pre-degree level to accommodate the other students. It also taught them how to work together in groups. It would have become a different experience if South African students from pre-degree level were interviewed. The experiences of the South African students interviewed in this focus group interview session pointed to an important issue that the French-speaking students were better equipped linguistically to go through the rigours of higher education. Jordan said, “At this stage I don’t think they have so much of linguistic challenges because they have come a long way, trying to adjust to the use of English”. I present their arguments:

Jordan: Over a period of time they adjust to this school. For a new student just coming in, it may be difficult to adjust. I would say they have academic acculturation and academic identity because they came here to earn their degrees. They are compelled to follow the principles that would make them earn their degrees.

Jacobus: To get a degree they are bound to have academic acculturation and academic identity.

Stevenson: I don’t agree with that because having a degree is not the same as understanding the degree. Although my level of interaction with them is so minimal, there is a difference between theory and practice. This shows up at the workplace.

Jan: I believe they have academic acculturation and academic identity because they have no choice. They are bound to succeed. It is like me going to Nigeria, I have to adapt.

Chesterton: They have to adapt to the principles here, so I am in support of the notion that they have academic acculturation and academic identity.

Mamokete: I think the pre-degree prepares a student for university. We always work as a team because that is where we adapt. Just like in student skills, we are taught how to accommodate the other students. They fit into the structure of this school by possessing academic acculturation and academic identity.

It is therefore presented that their attachment to the ACOP likely gave them academic acculturation and academic identity.

5.48.3 Sense of belonging to academic institution as a symbol of commitment to participate in the ACOP

I explained the meaning of a sense of belonging to an environment to the South African students. This is what they said regarding the French-speaking students at Montana College:

Jordan: They do have a sense of belonging because they survive on campus.

Jacobus: The ones that did not have a sense of belonging were those who left the school but as long as they complete their degrees, they have a sense of belonging to this institution

Stevenson: I am struggling to find a context in their sense of belonging. Like I said to you, as far as my interaction with them is concerned, I don't think I can answer that question because I don't relate with them. I think it is irrelevant because they came here to study. As long as they achieve that, having a sense of belonging or not is irrelevant.

Jan: I think at some point they do have a sense of belonging because the fact that they see French-speaking lecturers, gives them the courage to pose questions to the French-speaking lecturers. Seeing a lecturer from their country gives them a sense of belonging to this school.

Chesterton: I think they do have a sense of belonging because they find a common place to interact with their school work. Since the school caters for everyone, they adjust here.

Momokete: Why is it that the French-speaking students are the ones complaining? I think there are other foreign language speakers at this school. I think they are bound to have a sense of belonging to this school because life here is good.

The French-speaking students had a sense of belonging, produced by the fact that they had to earn degrees. Consequently, they adapted to the principles of the ACOP in an attempt to participate in the curriculum.

5.48.4 Intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula

a) Boldness to ask questions

Almost all of the South African students consented to the fact that the French-speaking students at Montana College asked questions. At pre-degree the issue of asking questions was

not common because all the students had issues with putting questions to the lecturers. The South African students believed that at third-year the French-speaking students had become more comfortable to ask questions. Mamokete was of the opinion that the extent to which students could ask questions largely depended on the lecturer. She seemed to imply that a good student-lecturer relationship could foster the capacity to ask questions. It is thus presented that at the pre-degree level the French-speaking students could not boldly ask questions. However at the third-year degree level, they asked questions, especially if a French-speaking lecturer was involved in learning facilitation. I present evidence to this claim:

Jordan: In my class I don't have a French-speaking student so I am not in a position to answer your question in this direction. In my class the number of students is small. We have small class-sizes here and we know each other.

Jacobus: It is difficult to know who is a French-speaking student or not. All of us are shy at times to ask questions. I do think for a French-speaking student, it is easier to connect with the lecturer better but this happens during consultation.

Stevenson: You find the same people asking questions in the class. I have seen a couple of French-speaking student asking questions in third-year. I did pre-degree but everyone was nervous. I was nervous despite the fact that I am an extroverted person. From pre-degree to date, I have developed confidence to the point that I ask questions. I have seen a number of French-speaking students putting questions to the lecturers. We must not assume that South African students are capable of speaking English fluently. It is the same dynamics at play here because in South Africa we have 11 official languages. What happens among them also happens among us. South African students also come from Zulu-speaking backgrounds and they can't understand English properly. We are assuming that South African students are free from linguistic challenge. This needs more research.

Jan: I went to an Afrikaner school. The teacher had to explain a subject both in Afrikaans and English. It depends on your level of understanding. I think they ask questions as far as third-year is concerned. They didn't ask questions in pre-degree because of their inability to put words together.

Chesterton: The Afrikaans-speaking students also have issues. The terminology is different, so we all have issues. South African students have their issues due to the English-barrier.

Mamokete: Some French-speaking students do ask questions in class. We did the human development module last year. We had debates which took 2 hours. The level of participation of French-speaking students depends on who the lecturer is? The role of the lecturer is vital at this point. Everyone would ask questions, depending on the lecturer.

b) Translation from English to French and back to English

Stevenson brought out an important concept which had been recurring in this study. It pointed to the rigorous exercise of translating words from English to French before the French-speaking students could understand English. I present evidence:

I see that French-speaking students have the challenge of processing the English by translating it into French and back to English before they can understand us. This is a difficult process and I think this is why they detach from us because of the labour involved in translating what we say in English to French before they can understand us.

The French-speaking students likely had issues with translating from English to French when they had to engage other students in English. Consequently they stuck more to their French-speaking counterparts because of the rigours involved in translating from English to French.

c) Accent

The South African students in this focus group interview agreed to the presence of different accents at Montana College. However, they did not agree it was capable of deterring a student from participating in the curriculum. They argued it was normal to have different accents on the campus. The issue they raised pointed in the direction of the French-speaking students adjusting to different accents on campus. I present their views:

Jordan: I have no issues with all accents here, even with the white and foreign lecturers. I hear what they say in the class.

Jacobus: There are some cases where I don't understand some pronunciations but I won't let my mind block such accents. I won't say no, the lecturer is not saying it correctly but I try to understand the lecturer at all costs. It is not an issue that I don't like the lecturer. My business is to tune myself to the point that I am able to understand what the lecturer is saying at all costs. There some words that take me time to understand but I make sure that I understand the lecturer.

Stevenson: I have had issues with the ways certain words are pronounced to the extent that I almost misinterpreted what the lecturer is saying, but as we know there is not one way to communicate. I look at the body language. The lecturers are well trained because they use all sorts of avenues to explain to us. I look at the body language of the lecturers. I think the French-speaking students should be able to interpret the way the lecturer communicates at tertiary level. It is true such cases arise. There are French-speaking lecturers on this campus. I have had issues with them as well but by virtue of the fact that I want to learn, I adjust to listening to them when they are communicating by looking at their body language and the examples which they give.

Jan: I don't have issues with the French-speaking lecturers. With the French-speaking students, I don't have issues with how they communicate because at third-year level they speak better than they did when we were in pre-degree. I think it is because we are now in third-year.

Chesteron: They need to adapt to how the lecturers speak. As a student I am compelled to adapt to the lecturer's accent.

Mamokete: I don't have any problems with the French-speaking lecturers. However they have issues with my accents. For example Erika did not know what a coat was. I had to explain it to her because it is pronounced differently.

Consequently, it is presented that there were issues in terms of the different accents that lecturers had at Montana College, and these are presented as curriculum predicaments.

d) Group work

Mamokete cited an example where Erika was in her group during group assignment. She said that Erika could not find words to use in the middle of sentences at times. Consequently, her contribution to the group assignment did not make meaning. I present Mamokete's experience with Erika (the French-speaking student in Chapter Five):

It is also about the way they write. The way they write is different from the way we write. For example in English comprehension they write differently. Their sentences don't make sense at all. We had issues with what they wrote in the assignments because there are some words that are not in French but in English. We help Erika in our group to comprehend the English. Some of them are arrogant and don't want to mix.

It is thus presented that there were certain words not present in French but in English. Such scenarios prevented Erika from writing articulately in the English.

e) Student-lecturer relationship

Four of the six South African students interviewed attested to the fact that good student-lecturer relationships existed at Montana College. I present their views:

Jan: I used to be shy when I was in pre-degree but now I am fine. I enjoy good student-lecturer relationship. I love my lecturers.

Chesteron: I am happy with the student-lecturer relationship that I experience here.

Jordan: I enjoy the student-lecturer relationship because I engage them in discussions and ask questions. Our classes are smaller so we are connected because they treat us nicely.

Jacobus: We have a good student-lecturer relationship. For example my tax lecturer is a Chelsea fan and I am also. We just chat about soccer to remove boredom in the class and eventually get back on track.

It is presented in this study that good student-lecturer relationships existed at Montana College and this likely influenced the acclimatization of the French-speaking students to Montana College.

5.49 Tentative summary

This chapter has presented the stories of French-speaking students at Montana College. Their stories were analysed under similar themes to detect commonalities and differences in their experiences. It was found that their sojourn in South Africa and within the academic

institution involved the following: (a) linguistic challenges, ranging from the LoLT to the incessant use of Zulu and Sotho languages; (b) They were found to possess academic acculturation and academic identity features; (c) They enjoyed an array of support mechanisms ranging from linguistic support, specialized consultation from lecturers, to student advisory support services rendered by French-speaking student advisors; (d) All of them (French-speaking students) tenaciously held to their respective country identities, and were not ready to negotiate for eventual settlement in South Africa; (e) They all testified to the cordiality and serenity at the academic institution.

The focus group interviews conducted with South African students revealed that the French-speaking students preferred to stay with their French-speaking peers because of the rigours involved in translating words spoken to them from English to French before they comprehended what their English-speaking students said. The South African students reached a compromise that the French-speaking students had to take the initiative to come out of their enclaves by seeking the points of interests of the English-speaking students in an attempt to improve their linguistic abilities. They cited soccer as an important sport that unifies people of different races.

Therefore, it was found that a combination of hidden curriculum issues like indigenous language use (Zulu and Sotho), acculturation, identity, unfriendliness towards them by the immediate mainstream society, high tuition fees, shyness and homesickness, to mention but a few, compounded the demands facing them (the French-speaking students) at the academic institution. Chapter Six further presents the stories of representatives of the private academic institution. These included lecturers, the Dean of the Faculty of Information Technology, manager of the pre-degree programme and 5 French-speaking student advisors.

CHAPTER SIX

PRESENTATION OF EMERGING THEMES AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY (PHASE 2)

6.1 Introduction

Chapter Five presented the first phase of findings and emerging themes of this study. This chapter details the second phase of findings obtained from representatives at Montana College. The representatives included five lecturers who lectured the French-speaking students, the Dean of Faculty of Information Technology (IT), five French-speaking student advisors and the manager of the foundation course (pre-degree department). From the representatives of Montana College, emerging themes obtained from all the 5 lecturers interviewed were used (Mr. Taylor, Ms. Esther, Ms. Thato, Ms. Matilda and Mr. Driessen). The interview transcripts of the 5 French-speaking student advisors were used to crosscheck the findings obtained from the French-speaking students of this study. Interview transcripts from the manager of pre-degree programme (Ms. Hendrick) and the Dean of IT Faculty (Ms. Du Toit) were also used to write this chapter. The chapter concludes with a summative assessment of concrete findings that would assist in writing the discussion chapter in chapter seven. The emerging themes from interview transcripts of representatives at Montana College are now presented with tinges of their biographical information. Table 6.1 presents an outline of Phase 2 respondents.

Table 6.1: Representatives of Montana College included in the research write-up

Representatives at Montana College	Representatives interviewed	Module Taught at Montana College/Role
5 Lecturers	(1) Mr. Taylor	Mathematics
	(2) Ms. Esther	Mathematics
	(3) Ms. Thato	Student skills
	(4) Ms. Matilda	English
	(5) Mr. Driessen	Quantitative Techniques
French-speaking student advisors	(1) Ms. Rosette (2) Mr. Clement (3) Mr. Fletcher (4) Ms. Sammy	

Representatives at Montana College	Representatives interviewed	Module Taught at Montana College/Role
	(5) Mr. Masada	
Dean of the IT Faculty	Ms. Du Toit	Dean (Head of IT Faculty)
Pre-degree manager	Ms. Hendrick	Foundation programme manager

6.2 Ms. Esther: “They do not bow down when it comes to challenges in Maths”

6.2.1 Biographical information

Ms. Esther (female) was a Nigerian pre-degree mathematics lecturer. She held an honours degree in marketing and was pursuing a master’s degree at the time of this study. She had 3 years lecturing experience at Montana College. She was a passionate lecturer who had the interests of her students at heart. The narrative that singled her out involved her experience that the French-speaking students did not succumb to discouragement when it came to challenges in mathematics. She spoke about the fact that they were respectful, a quality that differentiated them from their South African peers.

6.3 Curriculum experiences of French-speaking students from a lecturer’s perspective

6.3.1 Linguistic transition as curriculum issue in the ACOP

a) Word problems

A notable challenge of French-speaking students, according to Ms. Esther was language and it (English language) limited their comprehension of word problems in mathematics. She attested to the relational lives of some of them that they had the willingness to socialize with other students. However, their communication with the other students in English was a challenge. An outstanding curriculum experience common to non-South African French-speaking students, according to Ms. Esther was linguistic incompetence in the LoLT. This linguistic challenge is presented as a kind of discouragement, capable of excluding the French-speaking students from participating in the curriculum of Montana College, which in this case is an ACOP. Ms. Esther spoke on the French-speaking students at Montana College to show that linguistic transition was a curriculum issue among them at Montana College:

French-speaking students are intelligent with figures but are challenged when it comes to word problems. They are very respectful, and interact well. Some of them are laid back because of their challenge in English. The ones who interact among them are warm and want to go along very well with other students.

I took note of the last portion of Ms. Esther's narrative that those who interacted among the French-speaking students were warm and wanted to go along with the other students. This symbolized character trait, and may be implicated for the success of those who quickly got over their linguistic challenge because they interacted well with other students who had a better command of English.

b) Inadequately attended English curriculum

Ms. Esther pointed to the English offered at Montana College as a palliative measure instead of being remedial. She pointed to the assumption made by Montana College that the English offered to French-speaking students by external English schools was capable of addressing their linguistic concerns. However she reiterated the fact that there needed to be a rigorous follow up on the linguistic challenge confronting the French-speaking students. This finding presented the opportunity to decipher a gap in the English curriculum at the private provider of higher education. The support mechanism in terms of the English curriculum seemed incomprehensive. Consequently non-South African French-speaking students at Montana College seemed to experience an inadequately attended English curriculum. Ms. Esther spoke at length:

I think the English provision within the context of this school is based on an assumption that every student has a foundation in English. We need to put them through a course aimed at improving their linguistic challenge, and then it would be easier for them to go through their courses up to the third year.

In 2013 I discovered that an in-house English proficiency school had commenced at Montana College. In the course of my investigation it was discovered that non-English speakers needed to be properly prepared for the academic tasks ahead.

6.3.2 Empathy and approachability of foreign lecturers as support mechanism

One of the support mechanisms in place at Montana College was the fact that certain lecturers were also foreigners. The lecturers at the school were from diverse sociocultural perspectives, a scenario that seemed to address the sociocultural diversity of students on the campus. Ms. Esther identified the fact that her status as a foreigner assisted her to understand the challenges confronting the French-speaking students. She went further to explain mathematical word problems to the French-speaking students because she knew they were struggling with the English. She mentioned the virtue of approachability of lecturers as key to revamping the diminished confidence level of the French-speaking students. Her French-

speaking students asked questions on areas of the curriculum they were uncertain about during consultation sessions. A number of the French-speaking students mentioned this issue of approachability they received from lecturers as very supportive to them in Chapter Five. Empathy and approachability were support mechanisms identified as hidden curriculum experiences of the French-speaking students at Montana College. The opportunity that seemed to place the academic institution on a positive edge seemed to revolve around a carefully selected team of lecturers from socioculturally disparate countries. Ms. Esther confirmed the inferences made so far:

I am a foreigner, and I empathize with them. I further explain word problems to them, not because they don't understand but because they are not clear about what the questions they are supposed to answer is aiming at. I am approachable and my students feel free to ask me questions when they are challenged during consultation sessions with them.

6.3.3 Mathematical intelligence

Ms. Esther mentioned mathematics as the strong points of most non-South African French-speaking students at the school. According to her, maths did not pose a huge challenge to them. The major challenge was their incompetence at expressing themselves in the English. Their linguistic incapability also challenged their acumen to interact effectively with English-speaking students. This finding revealed a hidden curriculum experience of French-speaking students at Montana College as inability to express themselves in English. It also pointed to the challenge of low interactional engagement at the point of entry. Consequently, an obvious challenge and hidden curriculum experience confronting the French-speaking students at the school entailed diminished interaction with peers. Ms. Esther spoke on the issue thus:

Mathematics is not a challenge to them per se. It's just their interaction with fellow students, and sometimes when it comes to the extent of expressing themselves that they may be challenged. Consequently they sit together in the class with their French-speaking peers.

6.3.4 Isolation

Ms. Esther mentioned the reason for lack of linguistic improvement of certain French-speaking students as refusal to interact and integrate into the system in terms of mixing with English-speaking students. This suggests that interaction with English-speaking students was pre-requisite to revamping the linguistic challenge of French-speaking students. Refusal to engage, according to Ms. Esther often resulted in stunted comprehension and diminished expressive acumen. Ms. Esther responded to question posed on interaction:

The French-speaking students that are really not proficient in English do not improve in their command of English because they tend to separate themselves and sit alone in class, not mingling and associating with English-speaking students. I think they socialize more with their French-speaking counterparts than with English speakers.

Ms. Esther inferred character as another point of emphasis that could affect the relational abilities of French-speaking students. Introversion (an inherent state of aloofness) was identified as a source of demotivation to socialize among the French-speaking students. She argued that introversion predisposes people to maintaining the previously acquired knowledge they had without recourse to receiving new knowledge. Introversion was a hidden curriculum experience noted at Montana College. Ms. Esther recounted her experience:

Introversion will predispose them to becoming anti-social by pulling away from those who could assist them in terms of their linguistic ability because nobody knows it all. When they keep to themselves alone, they are limited to the knowledge they have acquired alone and would not be able to learn new ideas from those that are able to help them.

6.3.5 Non-interaction

The danger of eventual dropout from the academic institution was a huge effect as highlighted by Ms. Esther. She cited an example of one of her top students in the pre-degree programme as apposite to support her argument. This student, according to Ms. Esther refused to interact and improve her linguistic aptitude. She began to drop in her academic achievements because she did not work on her English comprehension and association with the English-speaking students. Her linguistic and relational anomaly became conspicuous in her second year as the academic requirements increased. According to document analysis and narratives from the French-speaking students in Chapter five, by the second year, French-speaking students began to overcome the bulk of their linguistic challenges. It seemed relevant to take the second year degree level as the threshold for transition from French to English language comprehension. This finding pointed to important information that the linguistic demands of the French-speaking students at the point of entry varied as they moved to higher levels in the degree programme. It also seemed to suggest that at a threshold, when the academic linguistic vocabulary became wobbled, total comprehension appeared lost by the French-speaking students. A basic understanding obtained through narratives of the French-speaking students in chapter five pointed to the colossal damage that could arise through introversion. Similarly it was pointed out in chapter five that the incessant use of French language when they stayed together in groups had a vast damage on their linguistic life span in English. Consequently, the expression of Ms. Esther seemed to corroborate the

notion that aloofness due to the inherent character of introversion could have a deleterious effect on the eventual use of the English language among French-speaking students. It may thus be affirmed that a valuable hidden curriculum experience among the French-speaking students at Montana College was aloofness which may have arisen from introversion. Ms. Esther's line of thought is presented to support the inference made so far:

I give an example of a French-speaking student who was one of my top students in mathematics but now she is in her second year. She had fallen drastically in her performance due to linguistic incapability. This was because she did not mingle with the English-speaking students. As the academic demands increased, her linguistic capital dropped due to non-interaction.

6.3.6 Evidence of participation during learning facilitation and shyness

In an attempt to understand how the French-speaking students at Montana College participated during the process of learning facilitation I asked Ms. Esther to reveal her experience in this regard. She said:

They are very participatory in class. I find one or two of them who are very bad in English, struggling to express their opinion in class. The ones that have a bit of English always want to be at the forefront of asking questions in class, but it could be challenging to understand them. You find those of them who are not very good in English sitting at the back of the class, not because they don't know the subject but because they want to hide their linguistic challenge. Inability to speak English makes them very shy to speak in public.

6.3.7 Boldness to ask questions

The French-speaking students in Ms. Esther's classes were not very bold to ask questions openly because of the fear of being ridiculed. They rather kept quiet and did not bother to put questions to the lecturer. Ms Esther recounted her experience:

In class they are not so bold to come up to ask and answer questions because of the tendency to be ridiculed; they keep quiet and would rather not speak at all. I have two of such students in my class who are French-speaking. They are my "A" students but their English is very bad. Sometimes, when they try to express themselves, the whole class tries to ridicule them. However, I deal with such students who ridicule them in class so as to encourage them to participate in class discussions.

6.3.8 Empathy as a foreign lecturer and approachability

The fact that Ms. Esther was a foreigner seemed to have placed the French-speaking students at an advantage. She knew their challenges ahead of time. Her experience was in line with the idea of internationalizing the classroom environment because her position as a foreign lecturer met their academic needs. She came prepared to the classroom to address challenges encountered by the French-speaking students in terms of their inability to understand word

problems in Mathematics. She saw herself as an approachable lecturer. In Chapter Five, Bradley mentioned that Ms. Esther as his hero because she was available to assist him and his French-speaking peers during consultation sessions. Evidence is provided:

Yes, I think the advantage the foreign students have with me is that I am also a foreigner. So I also identify with the challenges of being a foreigner. One of the strategies I used in times past was to go by the assessment I made about foreign students. I further explain word problems to them, not because they don't understand but because they are not clear about what the questions they are supposed to answer are aiming at. I believe that I am approachable and most of my students feel free to ask me questions when they are challenged.

6.3.9 Introversion

Ms. Esther spoke extensively on the issue of character traits as a hidden curriculum experience, capable of negatively impacting on the capacity of the French-speaking students to integrate to Montana College. I present her stance on introversion:

I think introversion is going to impact on them hugely because being an introvert, will predispose them to becoming anti-social by pulling away from those who could assist them in terms of their linguistic ability, and also knowledge because nobody knows it all. When they keep to themselves alone, they are limited to the knowledge they have acquired alone and would not be able to learn new ideas from those that are able to help them. Their inability to socialize may in the long run tend to impact on their academic endeavours.

From the evidence provided by Ms. Thato it is clear that a major challenge of the French-speaking students revolved around linguistic issues. Their inability to proficiently express themselves in the medium of English was found as the major reason that they detached from the other English-speaking students. Linguistic challenges also predisposed them to sitting at the back of the lecture hall in an attempt to avoid being in contact with the other students. They sat close to one another in the lecture halls in an attempt to stay connected to the other French-speaking students. I present another lecturer's experiences with respect to the French-speaking students at Montana College.

6.4 Mr. Taylor: "It seems that the mathematics curriculum of the French-speaking countries is well designed"

6.4.1 Biographical information

Mr. Taylor (male) was a Nigerian pre-degree mathematics lecturer at Montana College. All the four mathematics lecturers at Montana College were from Nigeria. He had been a mathematics lecturer at Montana College for seven years. He had diverse skills and could lecture cost and management accounting, investment analysis and economics. He held an

honours degree in mathematics and a master of business administration degree. A prominent narrative that characterized his storyline pointed to the notion that the mathematics curriculum in the French-speaking countries was adequately designed. He spoke thus on his experience with them, “It seems that the maths curriculum of French-speaking countries is well designed”.

6.5 Curriculum experiences of French-speaking students from lecturer’s perspective

6.5.1 Linguistic transition as a curriculum issue in the ACOP

Mr. Taylor reiterated that non-South African French-speaking students were focused and understood what he instructed them to do. He identified their challenge as the English language:

Immediately they arrive at the school. I don’t struggle before they understand what I teach them in class. Their challenge is the language.

Mr. Taylor’s assertion was proof that the French-speaking students needed to negotiate a transition from French to English despite their ability to excel in Mathematics. In the series of documentary analysis that I conducted at Montana College in 2012 I found that a number of the French-speaking students who excelled in Mathematics had serious challenges in the other modules that required the use of English. Some of them failed Student Skills and Human Development modules because they could not properly express themselves in English. The others who passed managed to pass not because they were not intelligent, but because they needed to negotiate appreciable transition from French to English. It is thus presented that the French-speaking students’ academic survival depended on their briskness at transiting from French to English at Montana College.

6.5.2 The need for interaction with English speakers on campus

Mr. Taylor attributed the delayed transition of certain French-speaking students to English language compliance level to inability to interact and integrate into the sociocultural diversity of the campus. He said that he noticed a number of French-speaking students walking alone, not interacting. During one of my observation trips on the campus, I noticed that whenever French-speaking students were in informal groups, most of the times they grouped with their French-speaking peers. It was not that they came together from the same French-speaking country, but French language unified them and gave them the impetus to loosen up. My

observation supports Mr. Taylor's observation for seven years. In Chapter 5 Amanda mentioned an instance that she was losing her commitment to speak the English language while in her third year of study at Montana College. She said previously, whenever she was with her French-speaking counterparts, she deliberately spoke English but after a while she found that she was losing her grip on English due to indulgence. French-speaking students seemed to lose their commitment to speaking the English language over time, especially towards the end of their academic career at school. Similarly, in one of the focus group interviews conducted in 2013 there was a French-speaking student from the Chad Republic who said that during the holidays the French-speaking students tended to forget the English because they switched to the mode of speaking in French. She said when they return to school they would have forgotten some of the words that they knew in English because of infrequent use of English during the holidays. This is taken as linguistic incongruity in this study. A curriculum experience that was noticed around the third year of stay among French-speaking students at Montana College was unsustainable use of the English language. Mr. Taylor's utterance is presented to support the inferences made so far:

I see some of them walking around alone, not interacting with others. They need to be brought together so they can interact with English speakers to enhance their English language proficiency.

6.5.3 Consultation with lecturers

As indicated in Chapter Five by almost all the French-speaking students, Mr. Taylor corroborated the claim made by the French-speaking students that the academic institution set consultation hours as part of the intended curriculum. Mr. Taylor expressed the fact that interaction with students was a valuable tool that he had always used in his seven years of experience as a maths subject specialist. He advertised the need to seek consultation to rectify unclear aspects of the mathematics curriculum to students at the point of entry. When the students came for consultation, he took time to understand their challenges and proffered solutions. This conspicuous aspect of the curriculum (consultation) fostered rapport between students and lecturers and gave the opportunity to ask questions without fear. Candy (a third-year student of biomedicine) mentioned Mr. Taylor's name as a mentor in her career path at Montana College during the interview conducted with her in Chapter five. Up till the time of the data collection, as I got around studying the academic institution, I found that the rapport still existed. There were occasions that I met Candy in Mr. Taylor's office seeking help with

third year modules, despite the fact that officially Mr. Taylor no longer lectured Candy. This was a demonstration of trust and respect for scholarship from a welcoming and understanding lecturer. A curriculum experience of the French-speaking students at Montana College was mentoring and consultation with students in dire academic need. Mr. Taylor's perspective is unfolded:

I allow interaction and consultation with them before and after classes. The school has institutionalized consultation hours, aimed at attending to their needs. I advise students to see me in case they have any challenge. At this point of consultation, I identify their lapses.

Mr. Taylor mentioned the ingenuity of mentoring and follow-up of students as resource for commitment and focus on the part of the students. He had a follow up plan for students he taught from pre-degree, and monitored them through to third year. This idea was not yet institutionalized by the academic institution. It was a deliberate attempt to mentor a few students who had the wherewithal to succeed. He mentioned accessibility as a key ingredient to student-lecturer relationship. He explained:

Once the students discover that you are accessible, they feel confident to bring their problems. Some of them still come to me for consultation apart from the module that I taught them. Those that I taught before still come back to me and I monitor their progress.

6.5.4 Evidence of academic acculturation and identity

A prominent evidence of academic acculturation and academic identity among the French-speaking students was found from the response of Mr. Taylor. They have been reported to take responsibility for their learning at Montana College. These would have been difficult had they not developed academic acculturation and academic identity. I present Mr. Taylor's experience on this matter:

I have found that these French-speaking students take responsibility for their learning. Anytime I give individual or group assignment, they always end up being the best. They put in the very best effort and it shows when I assess their work that they are good. This usually happens when I give them individual assignments. They are focused and are not distracted. They are always achieving "80" and above. Only very few of them perform below this standard.

6.5.5 Student-lecturer relationship

As far as Mr. Taylor was concerned, the first person to advertise a module to students is the lecturer. He was of the opinion that a lecturer has the responsibility of creating an amiable relationship with the students so that they would be encouraged to seek consultation. Consequently, it is presented that an amiable student-lecturer relationship was created by Mr.

Taylor at Montana College because it enhanced the academic potential of the students. Mr.

Taylor spoke thus:

The first person that should project the module to the students is the lecturer. Once the lecturer's projection is wrong, the students will be demotivated and discouraged. Consequently they will no longer come to class. When some of them come to class, they get the assurance that they are on the right track as a result of the level of interaction between them and the lecturer. Once the students discover that you are accessible, and that student-teacher relationship is unstrained, they feel confident to bring their problems for solution to be proffered. I make them feel at home. I do not threaten them and at the same time I make sure I don't lose control of the class.

6.5.6 Group work

A strategy that assisted the French-speaking students to improve their English speaking and interactive capacities was the group work initiative. According to Mr. Taylor what the French-speaking students could gain by associating with the other stakeholders in the ACOP was a determining factor. As long as the French-speaking students saw their stakeholders as important in terms of what they were able to gain from them, their participation became valuable to them. Mr. Taylor's experience revealed one of the defining features of a COP in terms of the offering stipulating what stakeholders are able to gain, share or lose as suggested by Wenger (1998). I present his argument:

Group work has been helping them and it helps them in terms of how to relate with other students in terms of what they can gain from the other students in terms of the language problems they encounter.

Cultural integration was an important aspect that created a sense of belonging among all the students at Montana College. Mr. Taylor pointed to the cultural day, usually referred to as the market day. Students from diverse African countries displayed their cultural heritage for the other students to see. It gave them a sense of acceptance. This was an attempt made by Montana College to internationalize the academic institution. I present Mr. Taylor's experience on the issue of cultural integration:

The institution has put in place a cultural day whereby students from Francophone meet with other cultures for social integration and interaction. This creates an atmosphere of belonging and identification. During this time different cultures are displayed and this gives the opportunity for the French-speaking students to learn from other cultures available on campus. On this day, all the students wear their traditional attires and display their diverse perspectives of life. This gives all the students the flavour of other cultures on campus.

6.5.7 Sitting arrangement strategy

Mr. Taylor's concerted effort to revamp the linguistic challenges of the French-speaking students was found to work for him. He chose to seat the French-speaking students close to the English-speaking students in an attempt to make them participate in the activities of the class. He chose French-speaking students to solve the problems and had to explain to the whole class. However, the French-speaking students usually did not say anything while solving the problems but always succeeded in solving the problems. A further attempt made by Mr. Taylor was that he compelled them to speak, in an attempt to improve their communication with the other students. He spoke thus on the seating arrangement and group work strategy:

I don't have any specific order regarding how my students sit but I try to make the French-speaking students sit next to the English-speaking students in the class. This strategy has improved their morale and confidence, especially through my regular practice of giving them group work in class. I mandate each group to choose a leader that would present solutions to problems. There have been times that French-speaking students came up to solve problems and made presentations in class. Some of them did not talk as they solved the problems on the board. After solving the problems, they returned to their seats. I just encourage them to explain to the class what they had done in an attempt to enhance their linguistic skills. This strategy has been working.

6.5.8 Strong work ethics

Mr. Taylor pointed to the strong work ethic common to non-South African-French speaking students, just as Ms. Esther reiterated. He compared the work ethic of French-speaking students with those of the other students and found that French-speaking students were outstanding regarding focus and dedication to academic work. He mentioned the fact that a particular French-speaking student regularly came for consultation, either to clarify unclear issues or to present problems she had personally solved for assessment, aside from class work. This scenario was a demonstration of commitment to and focus on academic work among French-speaking students, and it is regarded as a hidden curriculum experience aimed at achieving success. Mr. Taylor recounted his experience:

There is a French-speaking student that comes for consultation. When she comes for consultation, it's either she has unclear issues or she comes to show me what she has done in order that I may look at her work to guide her and assess her work.

Mr. Taylor also cited another instance of a French-speaking student who registered late because her visa was not processed to meet the deadline of resumption. Through consultation, the student coped and was able to sit for the maths examination. I traced the student's name on the master list and found that she got 84% in that same maths examination, and that was

the highest achievement for that semester. These instances seemed to show that the support mechanism at Montana College could assist focused students to succeed. It seems that both hidden and intended curriculum issues affect the overall performance of French-speaking students. The evidence is provided:

There was a French-speaking student who came in very late because her visa could not be renewed in her country. We had gone far into the semester curriculum. I advised her not to take the module but she decided to take the risk. I spent time to assist her and at the end of the day, she was able to cope with the work load.

6.5.9 Mathematical intelligence

Mr. Taylor described the academic performance of a French-speaking student in the assessment conducted at the pre-degree stage. He recounted how he marked the French-speaking student's mathematics examination strictly according to memorandum. The student scored 99% in the mathematics assessment while she was a student in the pre-degree programme. This was an indication of mathematical intelligence of French-speaking students, likely brought from the country or origin. Eventually, the French-speaking student was appointed as one of the pre-degree mathematics tutors as a result of her remarkable academic performance especially in mathematics. The French-speaking students at Montana College seemed to experience the mathematics curriculum with a demonstration of mathematical intelligence. Mr. Taylor's account is presented:

I had a French-speaking student that almost scored hundred percent in the examination. I had to strictly mark her paper and it was only a little mistake that made her score 99%. This lady is now in her final year and also one of our pre-degree tutors.

Mr. Taylor's experience for 7 years pointed to the fact that the French-speaking students usually passed their examinations. He said that they participated actively in the curriculum and adjusted to the academic environment. This symbolises academic acculturation and academic identity among them. It also epitomised the fact that they had a sense of belonging to Montana College. Mr. Taylor spoke thus on the issue:

My experience with the French-speaking students is that they have been responding positively to the curriculum both in the classroom and in terms of the assessments that we set for them. They easily adjust to the situation they find themselves in. For the past 7 years that I have been lecturing at this institution, their performance and participation in the curriculum has been wonderful, especially the moment they have been able to make the transition from French to English.

6.5.10 Power relations

An important hidden curriculum experience identified at Montana College was refusal of students to the academic institution when they owed fees. Drawing on the work of Lave and Wenger (1991), issues of power relations are ubiquitous and inconclusive to handle. The issue of delayed payment of fees was a serious one as it impacted on the survival of students, in terms of not being allowed to attend lectures and write tests and examinations. Every morning, I observed queues at the school gate as I was a passive observer for a year and a half. As students swiped their cards into the campus, those who were not up to date with payment of fees were denied access even when they had to write tests and examinations. It was a curriculum experience on the part of fees defaulters. From the beginning of the semester, class attendance began to drop gradually because some of the students had issues with the fees department. Mr. Taylor had this to say when he was asked to comment on the effect of late payment of fees, as it was an institutional policy to enforce payment of fees:

The school system blocks students that owe and deny them access into the campus. I advise students to liaise with their sponsors by telling them the impact of not paying on time, and that they should ensure that fees are transferred as at when due. The students feel that they should be given access to tuition when they owe, the management of the institution feels they should pay. This kind of power tussle is difficult to tackle.

Mr. Taylor's conclusion is presented as a confirmation of the suggestion of Lave and Wenger (1991) that issues of power relations in an academic institution is inconclusive. Lave and Wenger (1991) suggest that such issues are extinguished in the process of time. It is also presented as an attestation to the finding of Lave and Wenger (1991) that the issues of power relations are masked by the earnestness of the French-speaking students to earn degrees.

6.6 Ms. Thato: “At the beginning of the year they were afraid to talk”

6.6.1 Biographical information

Ms. Thato (female) was student skills lecturer at Montana College. She had an overall experience of three years at the school, but had only been a lecturer for four months. Prior to being a lecturer, she was student advisor for more than 2 years. She is a South African by birth, and had experience in terms of the entire school situation. She enumerated the importance of academic skills as a module by saying, “We teach students how to reference, write essays and to construct tertiary level assignments”. A prominent narrative of Ms. Thato

entailed her observation of the French-speaking students at the beginning of the first semester when she began to lecture student skills. She said that French-speaking students could not talk when they started to attend her classes, but by virtue of the module she lectured, they had to make presentations. Consequently, they began to talk more as they gained the command of English.

6.7 Curriculum experiences of French-speaking students from lecturer's perspective

6.7.1 Linguistic transition as a curriculum issue in the ACOP

a) Use of dictionary and strong work ethics

Ms. Thato encouraged the French-speaking students to prepare ahead of their presentation dates, because student skills as a module provided students with the opportunity to interact with the curriculum and the other stakeholders at Montana College. She noticed that the French-speaking students brought the English dictionary to class all the time. This was due to their diminished vocabulary and inability to swiftly construct sentences adequately in the English language. Ms. Thato noticed they had strong work ethic in terms of assignments given to them. They completed assignments well before the due dates of submission, as depicted in her words:

At the beginning of the year they were afraid to talk but in class I let everybody speak. They now talk more but they put more effort in terms of bringing a dictionary to class. They also put in more effort to their work. For example the first assignment we gave them they put in more effort and submitted before all other student.

The fact that the French-speaking students brought the English dictionary to the lecture halls and were afraid to talk in class became evident in this study that they had to negotiate a transition from French to English in order to go through the rigours of higher education. The presentation sessions became valuable because Ms. Thato said that they began to talk after a while, indicating that the strategy of making presentations on topics in class was helpful at revamping them from their state of incommunicado.

6.7.2 Consultation

A common and regular practice of French-speaking students was to book consultation ahead of due dates of assignment submission. This was done so that they could ascertain the quality of their assignments. Ms. Thato mentioned a flaw about their pronunciation. She engaged them by explaining the use of English to them, apart from being a student skills lecturer. A

curriculum experience from these findings pointed to the use of available skills and resources within campus by the French-speaking students. It could be affirmed that French-speaking students used varied assets on campus to address their linguistic challenges. Ms. Thato pointed to a part of the student skills curriculum which was aimed at addressing oral presentation in English. She was available to teach French-speaking students how to correctly pronounce words because it was vital for their curriculum in student skills. Ms. Thato wrapped the segment of questioning in that aspect up by saying they were more dedicated than other students, as noticed in the following narrative:

They show me what they have done so that I can correct their work before the due date of submission. Their pronunciation is not that great but they always come for consultation. They ask me how to say certain words in their oral assignments. The ones I know put in more efforts than the other students in the class.

6.7.3 Group work

Ms. Thato made concerted efforts to deliberately incorporate the French-speaking students into the midst of the English-speaking students in an attempt to foster interaction. When different language speakers are in the same group the strategy is that they would be compelled to use English as a unified means of communication. I present Ms. Thato's strategy:

When we are conducting group work in class I do divide the students by putting French speakers in the groups of English speakers. You know how these students are? The French-speaking students normally want to be in the same group with their French counterparts.

6.7.4 Word power as an intended curriculum experience of French-speaking students

Ms. Thato identified a lapse between pre-degree and first year. She said that French-speaking students who entered through pre-degree had the opportunity to further improve their grammar. Those who came in through first year mainly depended on the recommended English they took before getting to Montana College, which never sufficed for their sustainability in the entire degree programme. The only students that were at advantage were students who studied journalism and public relations. They had to do business English as I investigated further through a thorough assessment of the school curriculum. A prominent mechanism set to empower the linguistic competence of French-speaking students was a computerized module known as "word power". Word power was designed to assist non-English and English speakers with grammar. In essence, a support mechanism to alleviate the

linguistic concerns of French-speaking students at Montana College was the “word power” curriculum. Ms. Thato explained:

Some of them start their first year and they don't have the opportunity of doing bridging English. When they start with pre-degree, they are helped with word power which helps them with grammar. At the first year entry level they do not have the opportunity to do English unless they are doing journalism or public relations.

6.7.5 Linguistic incongruity

Valuable information was revealed by Ms. Thato, which seemed to provide the reason for the incessant use of the Zulu language on the campus by South African students. Ms. Thato said many of the South African students at Montana College came from black location schools where English was taught through the medium of Zulu. She ascribed the indulgence in Zulu language by South African students to the fact that some of the South African students also could not express themselves properly in English. She narrated her experience because she was student advisor to South African students and travelled to location schools where English was taught through the medium of Zulu. The fact that there were a number of South African students on campus who were linguistically challenged seemed to be a threat to the linguistic acceleration of French-speaking students. It likely meant that these South African students lacked the linguistic capital to relate to French-speaking students. From these findings it did not seem to be deliberate for South African students to intermittently switch to Zulu language inside and outside the class. The South African students seemed to be compelled when their linguistic reservoir was exhausted. Ms. Thato explained:

You get some students who are from South Africa who cannot speak English properly as well because they are from the black schools, referred to as the location schools. In the location schools, because I have been a student advisor before, English is taught through the medium of Zulu. South African students are not able to communicate with foreign students, not because they are rude but because they have issues with vocabulary in the English.

6.7.6 Remedy for linguistic challenge

A valuable suggestion emanated from discussion with Ms. Thato concerning additional route to tackling the linguistic challenge of French-speaking students at Montana College. She suggested that lecturers needed to encourage French-speaking students to speak more of English and less of French. She recommended that a culture of speaking among French speakers needed to be in terms of enhancing their comprehension of speaking and reading materials in English. She discouraged the use of French whenever French-speaking students were in their different groups with fellow French speakers. She advised:

We should encourage them to speak more English than they speak their home language even if they are together as French-speaking people, they should speak more in English. We should ask them questions in class so they could answer more in class. If they do all this they would be able to adapt and improve their talking skills as well.

Ms. Thato's narrative is taken as proof that the French-speaking students indulged in speaking French among their French-speaking peers, an indication of the importance of the French language to them and the ease of speaking it. This is an assertion that they needed to make the transition from French to English. From the first class I try to know them so that I can pick these challenges up from the onset. When I explain, I explain slowly and I don't rush so they can benefit from the class. I ask them whether they understand or should I do it again? I just repeat what I said before because of those who are scared to say they didn't understand.

6.7.7 Empathy in anticipation

Ms. Thato enacted the curriculum with the understanding that she was dealing with students from different sociocultural perspectives. She knew that the French-speaking students were shy because they were afraid to ask questions or contribute to class discussions at the onset. She employed the means of repeating whatever she previously had said in an attempt to cater for the academic needs of the French-speaking students that were too shy to ask questions. I present her strategy subsequently:

From the first class I try to know them so that I can pick their challenges up because I know that they are shy to speak in public. When I explain, I explain slowly and I don't rush so they can benefit from the class. I ask them whether they understand or should I do it again? I just repeat what I said before because of those who are scared to say they didn't understand.

6.7.8 Power relations

There were instances of student exclusion from tuition due to delay in payment of fees. Ms. Thato expressed the concerns of the French-speaking students that they missed out on tests and examination days. She raised concern that the students needed to be allowed into the school, despite the fact that they owed fees. Her line of thought seemed to be in the direction of giving them several warnings until they paid, instead of preventing them from tuition, tests and examination. It was however a sensitive issue as it was the policy of the school to use that measure to recover overdue fees. In terms of the argument of Lave and Wenger (1991), the use of power and control to the extent that fee defaulters were excluded from tuition is

significant. It was found to diminish the throughput rate at Montana College especially when the number of students who owed fees was significant. The fact that Ms. Thato considered that students needed to be given access to write tests and examinations is taken in this study as part of the dynamics of power relations. Ms. Thato was bound by law not to intervene on behalf of the students despite the fact that her views meant good to achieve a commendable throughput rate. The insensitivity of the management at Montana College is presented as a show of power relations. One of the white lecturers at Montana College presented an argument to the manager of the pre-degree programme that the students should be allowed to attend lectures so that they could pass their examinations and tests. The manager of the pre-degree programme wrote an email to all the lecturers in the pre-degree programme that it was a policy at Montana College that students who owed fees had to be excluded. She argued without that measure that staff would not be paid because of insufficient cash flow. The white lecturer was silenced as she also wanted to receive her remuneration when due. This scenario is presented as proof that issues of power relations in an academic institution are extinguished in the course of time as suggested by Lave and Wenger (1991). She expressed her views on the matter:

I think the students being excluded when the fees are not paid is a bit of a problem. I think they should let them into the school to attend lectures and give them to a certain point where they would have been given several warnings before being denied access to the school.

Ms. Thato pointed to the fact that French-speaking students found ways around surviving to pass their examinations, despite being excluded from school for defaulting to pay fees as at when due. When she was asked whether they passed, she had this to say, “All I can say is that they find a way around these problems and eventually pass their exams”. This seemed to demonstrate the commitment and focus of French-speaking students to academic excellence. Based on these facts, it seemed that French-speaking students experienced linguistic and scholastic exclusion. Their exclusion from tuition when in arrears of fees is taken as a hidden curriculum experience.

6.8 Ms. Matilda: “I taught them how to speak and write English”

6.8.1 Biographical information

Ms. Matilda was a female South African who taught English at Montana College. The English curriculum at that time was slashed into English and poetry. She had been at Montana College as a tutor since 2010 before she became a lecturer. She had two years

lecturing experience and was a dedicated lecturer. She held a degree in English language. The opportunity she had as an English tutor in 2010 gave her first-hand information about the French-speaking students at Montana College. Her prominent narrative in this study pointed to the linguistic challenge and willingness of French-speaking students to learn English. She pointed to their openness and willingness to learn. Ms. Matilda took the initiative of spending extra two hours with six pre-degree students from Gabon on a daily basis where she taught them how to read, write and speak the English properly as revealed in this short story:

They say they don't understand anything in English but that they are willing to learn. They take an extra initiative by going an extra mile. Working for pre-degree, I remember we had a session where I was taking six students from Gabon. I was spending two hours with them in a day. I taught them how to speak English, read and write.

6.9 Curriculum experiences of French-speaking students from a lecturer's perspective

6.9.1 Linguistic transition as a curriculum issue in the ACOP

a) Diagnostic assessment

A thorough analysis of the situation on ground level was conducted at the pre-degree level as students came in to the bridging English classes by Ms. Matilda. Bridging English was the name given to the module designed to assist pre-degree students comprehend English. It was aimed at assisting them through the entire degree programme. Ms. Matilda belonged to a team of bridging English lecturers who sat in meetings to discuss likely challenges in the bridging English curriculum. They knew French-speaking students were among their fresh intakes with linguistic challenges. According to Ms. Matilda, their initial target entailed preparing pre-degree students for diagnostic assessment. The outcome of the test revealed the next step to take. The students who did badly were given letters of consent to indicate their acceptance to be given additional help. She explained the strategy:

We sit as a team and talk about things that we might encounter in class. In the first two weeks we do the introduction and start preparing the students for the first test of the semester. After the results for the first test are out, we get typed letters ready according to the marks that the students get.

b) Linguistic resuscitation

The outcome of the curriculum review meeting as a result of the diagnostic assessment resulted in recommending to students who did not meet the set criteria, the need to attend remedial classes in English. There was a dedicated lecturer assigned to taking these students through the journey of learning English. The lecturer's duty involved teaching them to read,

write and speak. The English lecturer, according to Ms. Matilda also gave them exercises that were aimed at helping them to recuperate from their linguistic challenge. Ms. Matilda recounted:

We have a lecturer who has dedicated herself to that special English class. She gives them an extra English lecture an hour per day. She teaches them how to speak the language and gives them exercises.

c) The speed at which the lecturer spoke during learning facilitation

Opportunity to give feedback was a cordial relationship that likely existed between the English lecturers and the French-speaking students. Ms. Matilda said at times, the French-speaking students came back to give feedback after the lecture that she (Ms. Matilda) spoke too fast, and she took note of the feedback to make adjustments. She also gave instances of French-speaking students who came to express their linguistic deficiencies to her. Some of them, according to Ms. Matilda did not understand English at all when they came to the institution, despite attending the recommended English school for between six months to one year. Ms. Matilda evaluated the curriculum, based on the connectedness and facilities on ground at the department of English. She reiterated that the English department of the pre-degree programme had a sustainable support system in place, but it was not enforced because the English lecturers at that time used their initiatives. In this study, the opportunity to give feedback and to receive appropriate adjustment on the part of the French-speaking students was a symbol of the support mechanism at Montana College. Consequently, feedback given by the French-speaking students was a curriculum experience which addressed their linguistic concerns at the school. Ms. Matilda addressed the issue at hand:

I have many French-speaking students who have come up to me to say they don't understand the language. Sometimes they come give me feedback that when I am talking in class, I talk too fast. I think our department is actually doing something to alleviate their linguistic concerns.

d) Oral presentation

A concerted attempt to address the identified linguistic challenges of students at Montana College involved making presentations in class. This was part of the assessed curriculum of the foundation English module at Montana College whereby individual students had to prepare his/her speech about what they would want to become in the near future. This aspect of the curriculum initiated a response that made students to get committed to improving their reading, writing and speaking skills. A particular novel entitled: The "Alchemist" was used to

facilitate the process. French-speaking students benefitted from this aspect of the curriculum. Oral presentation in the English curriculum seemed to be a support mechanism and an intended curriculum experience to augment the English language skills they had acquired before coming to the academic institution at the pre-degree level. She rehearsed the effort taken:

Students make oral presentation which is also one of our assessments. Each student is given a topic about dreams where they go and prepare a speech. That topic was derived from one of the novels we use which is the “Alchemist”. In the Alchemist, we talk about dreams and how to go about achieving dreams because a life without dreams is not likeable. When we give the students this topic, they go and think about what they would like to achieve in life. This pushes them to work on their language because they would not want to stand in front of the class and not be able to construct one sentence in English. If they can’t do this in pre-degree, what are the chances that they would be able to do it in the first, second and third year or at the place of work?

A complementary module to bridging English was referred to as “word power”. Word power was added to the English curriculum to reinstate the ability to spell and pronounce words in English. Ms. Matilda cited the havoc done by social chat rooms which seemed to have made students lose their spelling acumen. She said students no longer spelled words correctly because of abbreviations they got used to, in social chat rooms. Ms. Matilda’s analysis paved the way for another curriculum experience of French-speaking students. This was exposure to a complementary module in English known as “word power”. She gave this illustration to buttress what she was trying to pass across:

For foreign students, word power also helps them. For example if they have to say “a chair” or a “lecturer”, they will know how to type it and not only how to say it. They are too exposed to face book, mix it, blackberry messenger etc.

The abovementioned were indications that the French-speaking students needed to negotiate a transition from French to English at Montana College. Without the transition, their presence in the ACOP would not be target oriented because they came to Montana College to study in English.

6.9.2 Linguistic incongruity

A probable reason why South Africa students code-switched was divulged by Ms. Thato. She mentioned that the social chat rooms had disintegrated the linguistic predispositions of South African students. This explains why they spoke in Zulu when not in tune with the correct vocabulary, especially when conversing with the non-English-speaking students.

Consequently the French-speaking students took this practise as an indication of rudeness and exclusion. I present Ms. Thato's experience on this issue:

South African students who have gone to good schools are too exposed to Facebook; mix it, blackberry messenger and all those things. After a time, when they type their work, they hardly use full sentences. Now, word power helps them to come back to reality where they now have to use formal language. So for foreign students, word power also helps them, for example, if you have to say "a chair" or a "lecturer", you will know how to type it and not only how to say it. This is a preparation for whatever or wherever they end up going as they move on with their lives. These chat rooms also make the South African students to lose their vocabulary and at times they are not able to speak with the non-English-speaking students without code-switching.

6.9.3 Isolation, loneliness and homesickness as excuses for not interacting with peers

Ms. Matilda pointed to homesickness as a challenge confronting the French-speaking students. These challenges seemed to prevent them from interacting with English-speaking students as they needed to do. Inasmuch as support mechanisms had been put in place, she pointed to the need to make them realize that they needed to mix and interact with English-speaking students in order to gain better command of English language. Some of them formed the habit of staying all the time in the companies of other French-speaking students, a scenario that predisposed them to speaking French incessantly. Ms. Matilda also exposed the notion that because a number of the French-speaking students knew the xenophobic history of South Africa, they seemed to have formed the opinion that they had to stay away from South African students. It seemed as if no matter the support mechanisms put in place, Ms. Matilda pondered, all effort to revamp their linguistic challenge would become futile. Consequently, it seemed as if hidden curriculum issues in the forms of isolation, loneliness and homesickness were experienced by French-speaking students at Montana College. A summary of Ms. Matilda's words is presented:

The whole issue of missing home and not being able to make friends are the problems associated with inability to mix. I think the other attitude of the French-speaking students to this place is an issue.

6.10 Mr. Driessen: "They usually turn out to be very excellent students"

6.10.1 Biographical information

Mr. Driessen (male) was a lecturer at Montana College. He is from Nigeria, and had been a lecturer in the faculty of commerce for seven years. He lectured in business management, statistics, quantitative techniques, strategic management, and corporate governance from pre-

degree to third year. The prominent narrative that characterized Mr. Driessen's storyline bordered on his experience with the French-speaking students that the moment they could address their linguistic challenges, they turned out to be brilliant students. Mr. Driessen spoke about their potential:

Once they can have that grasp of spoken and written English they usually turn out to be very excellent students.

6.11 Curriculum experiences of French-speaking students from a lecturer's perspective

6.11.1 Linguistic transition as a curriculum issue in the ACOP

From Mr. Driessen's perspective the major challenge of the French-speaking students bordered on negotiating the transition from French to English. He mentioned that the moment they are able to cross the transition line from French to English they usually turn out to be excellent students. He emphasized the issues of spoken and written English as pivotal to their transition experience. The fact that they had a different dimension of understanding apart from those of the other people in the academic institution was also highlighted by Mr. Driessen. He cited the issue of coming to a different sociocultural environment as another challenge they faced – a scenario which subjected them to the feeling of homesickness. He provided evidence to his claim that once they have crossed the transition line from French to English they perform excellently. He corroborated his statement by citing the case of a Gabonese student who was the overall best student at Montana College. Consequently, the linguistic transition of the French-speaking students is presented as a curriculum issue in this study. Mr. Driessen's argument is provided:

I see that the situation with the French-speaking students is threefold. The first is the barrier of spoken and written English. The fact that they are French-speaking, their understanding is a bit different. The way they understand things is a bit different from the way other English-speaking people understand. The third aspect is the fact that they travelled from a far place to South Africa which happens to be a totally different social, educational and economic environment from where they are coming from. This sometimes poses a challenge because they indicate symptoms of homesickness. There are certain students from these French-speaking countries who absolutely excel in what they do because first of all, their English is sound. Once they can have that grasp of spoken and written English they usually turn out to be very excellent students. Two years ago, the overall best student at this institution was from Gabon, so I don't have any reservations about them once they can grasp the spoken and written English.

6.11.2 Oral examination

Mr. Driessen made a valuable suggestion that may be diagnostically useful to identify the linguistic preparedness of French-speaking students by subjecting them to going through an initial examination to assess their spoken, reading and writing capabilities in English. He meant that Montana College did not ascertain the effectiveness and practicability of the English that French-speaking students learned at the independent English schools recommended by the Montana College. According to Mr. Driessen, the academic institution could be afforded the opportunity to identify French-speaking students who were in dire need of remedial action to alleviate their linguistic challenges. He suggested that the students could have been well prepared before subjecting them to experiencing the curriculum headlong without adequate preparation. He implied, during the discussion that the dropout rate among French-speaking students could drastically diminish, although the French-speaking students rarely dropped out. More specifically for the context of this study, he implied that the French-speaking students could have been rescued from the linguistic trauma they found themselves in. A curriculum need, according to Mr. Driessen might involve a pre-assessment of the French-speaking students' abilities to cope with the English language. Therefore, it could be affirmed that French-speaking students needed to have been taken through an in-house assessment in terms of the English language comprehension before being subjected to academic rigours. He spoke on this issue frantically:

I think an examination in English language should be given to these students. They should also be allowed to take oral examination in English so that their spoken English capability may be assessed. This would enable the institution to sift the French speaking students who would be able to cope with the general curriculum.

In 2013 Mr. Driessen's suggestion had been implemented. Montana College began to attend to the linguistic needs of the French-speaking students by offering a specialized English course to them prior to the commencement of the Foundation programme. This has been found to assist in alleviating their linguistic challenges. However, it was found during the focus group interviews conducted in February 2013 that some of the French-speaking students did not attend the English school at Montana College for too long because of cost implications. They complained that it was too expensive to learn English at Montana College.

6.11.3 Interaction

An invaluable observation made by Mr. Driessen in his seven years of lecturing at Montana College entailed the scenario that involved French-speaking students who were weak in the

use of English, interacting with English-speaking students. This was in an attempt to revamp their lapses in the English language. He also mentioned the advantage of learning the English vocabulary apposite for each module. It seemed to take boldness and character to take initiative to look for English-speaking students who could help them. Mr. Driessen mentioned the fact that by the time the French-speaking students got to the end of their first year, after the pre-degree programme, their command of the English became better. He also mentioned that the French-speaking students got better acculturative status relevant to enable them to have the commensurate academic acculturation and academic identity. It seemed as if some of the French-speaking students had a hidden curriculum experience of identifying and interacting with more knowledgeable English speakers who could alleviate their linguistic adjustment processes, although this was not the case for all of them who were naturally shy. Evidence was provided by Mr. Driessen:

French-speaking students who are very weak in English usually have friends who speak English very well. By the time they are getting to the end of their 1st year they become more comfortable and confident because they would have been able to understand the system and the language of the school as well as the language of the subjects they are being taught. They are shy because they are linguistically challenged.

6.11.4 Empathy

Mr. Driessen mentioned the perspective of empathizing with the French-speaking students in terms of his willingness to learn French language. This idea seemed to work for him because the French-speaking students likely became aware that they were not disadvantaged by having to learn the English language. This idea likely brought a feeling to the French-speaking students that they could also pull through the unconventional curriculum in the English language. He got a response that pertained to the French-speaking students' putting in more effort to their scholarly work. A hidden curriculum experienced by the French-speaking students, likely involved empathy and concerted effort from their lecturers to also be committed to lifelong learning. The scenario was as follows:

They tend to be more determined when they see that the lecturer is trying to learn their own language. They put in their best to make the lecturer proud by becoming more committed to learning what they have to learn in their modules.

6.11.5 Student-lecturer relationship

A philosophy that seemed ubiquitous at Montana College was the healthy relationship between students and lecturers. This could imply that the atmosphere at Montana College was the type that supported the diverse student population, out of which likely became a resource

to French-speaking students. Mr. Driessen advocated a healthy and scholastic relationship between students and lecturers. He seemed to have seen this idea as a philosophy, relevant and capable of allowing students to have access to consultation with lecturers. The environment of the private provider of tertiary education seemed to assume a community based milieu where students came into higher education and got the right support they needed to graduate. Mr. Driessen's comments are presented:

I am a strong and ardent supporter of good relationships between lecturers and students so that they can be who and what we took them into this school to be in the first place through the pre-degree to the third year.

6.12 Ms. Du Toit: “Sometimes, the foreign students tend to be better than the South African students”

6.12.1 Biographical information

Ms. Du Toit (female) was the Dean of the Faculty of Information Technology (IT) at Montana College at the time of conducting this study. She is a white South African who was going through her doctorate programme. A prominent narrative that was noticed about her experience was in terms of the notion that at times, foreign students were better than the South African students. She gave a statistic of the percentage of foreign students that came into the IT faculty as about 50%. Out of the 50% of foreign students that came into the IT faculty, about 10% were French-speaking students.

6.13 Curriculum experiences of French-speaking students from the Dean of the IT Faculty's perspective

6.13.1 Linguistic transition as a curriculum issue in the ACOP

a) Word problems

Ms. Du Toit pointed to the issue of word problems in IT programming where the French-speaking students misconstrued information because they experienced challenges in terms of conceptualizing scenarios before applying the cases in context. She narrated her experience as the Dean and as a lecturer because she also taught them programming. Her role as the Dean also involved lecturing to the students:

French-speaking students have issues with word problems because the English is coming in, where they need to conceptualize the problem they have to solve. They sometimes don't understand the message or the question being asked. I have had experience in programming for example when I asked a French-speaking student to identify a file for me whether it is a file or a record. I would tell them it is one student's information. Of course a student's information is a record. They would then say it is a file because they see the “student's” as more than one. They don't read the question to understand the case at hand. This issue goes on and on because

in programming a student needs to identify when we are talking about a field or a record. This is the terminology that we use when we are talking about student's information and they seem not to understand it quickly.

b) Verbal communication

At the IT Faculty a module designed to assist non-English-speaking students to communicate verbally was cited as an example. This was to show how timid some of the French-speaking students could be when they had to speak in English. This particular student passed the written test but was afraid to attempt the oral Extra English test. Consequently he could not write the examination because he failed to comply with the requirement of the extra English module. She narrated her experience thus:

I have a French-speaking student at the moment that is doing a module known as Extra English for the third time because he is afraid of speaking English. He did the test in that module but didn't do the assignment because in the assignment they are supposed to speak English. Because he didn't do the assignment, he cannot have Due Performance (DP) and he can't write the examination. First time around he passed the test and now he couldn't do the assignment in which they need to verbally speak.

c) Strong work ethic

Ms. Du Toit proposed a probable reason to explain the dedication and academic commitment of French-speaking students. She pointed to the fact that the French-speaking students seemed to be under severe pressure to complete their degrees within a stipulated period of three years. It seemed to her that the French-speaking students used the available support system in place at the academic institution as means to an end. They also seemed to have the mindset to return to their home country within the stipulated time. She initiated the discussion thus:

They are sometimes under pressure because they have three years to complete their degrees. They have three year visas, so it may be because they have visa specifications to finish in three years. A number of them complete their degrees in 3 years.

d) Experience of French-speaking students with Business English

The indication from Ms. Du Toit's explanation pointed to the fact that linguistic challenge among French-speaking students persisted during the first year at Montana College. She pointed to their failure to achieve set standards in business English, a module designed to teach students how to write curriculum vitae, essays and send fax messages. She said that the French-speaking students attempted business English two to three times before they passed. Taking the art of writing business letters for example, they need vocabulary and skill to do it

properly. They seemed to be divergent from the acquisition of the skills and knowledge they needed to acquire about the English language. Ms. Du Toit pointed to the challenge the faculty faced in terms of the business English module which French-speaking students attempted more than once as constituting a hindrance to graduating cum laude. A regulation of the academic institution entailed any student who could qualify for cum laude or magnum cum laude award not to have done any supplementary examinations. She said the issue of language came in the way of French-speaking students obtaining outright excellence and predisposed some of them to becoming frustrated. Ms. Du Toit spoke on this issue:

They sometimes fail business English and sometimes do it two or three times before they can pass. Sometimes they lose their cum laude or magnum cum Laude because of the English that they fail or repeat. To pass cum laude, they are not allowed to do supplementary examinations and this challenge comes between them and their success.

6.13.2 The pre-degree programme

A concern that bordered on the effectiveness of the pre-degree programme to see whether it was addressing its original purpose was raised with Ms. Du Toit. She gave a few examples by showing me some pictures of some of the French-speaking students who participated in a Microsoft competition and excelled by winning a prize. These French-speaking students started on the pre-degree programme and they excelled through to third-year. Ms. Du Toit mentioned the important fact that the French-speaking students were not first English language speakers; however they had made the necessary transition from French to English. Furthermore, Ms. Du Toit gave a second example of a pre-degree student who was the best overall student in third-year in early 2012. It seems the pre-degree programme was remedial in nature. She spoke at length:

I have a few examples of foreign students that are doing very well. If you look at the wall, there are pictures of a few students from pre-degree. We entered them into a Microsoft competition and they won a prize at the competition. They all started as pre-degree students and English is not their first language. This year, our top graduate was a pre-degree student and he had magnum cum laude.

6.13.3 Curriculum alignment

The issue of curriculum alignment from pre-degree through to third-year was a major issue. Ms. Du Toit elaborated on the intensive discussions that the IT Faculty adopted with the pre-degree department. At the discussion sessions, the IT faculty requirements were usually presented to the pre-degree manager. Such requirements were taken to the pre-degree department and deliberated upon for action and authentication to fit specific departmental

needs. During one of my familiarization periods as the study was being conducted, I was privileged to attend a series of meetings at the pre-degree department to ensure curriculum alignment. Ms. Du Toit mentioned mathematics as a module of importance for the IT Faculty. Specific topics were deliberated upon as apposite for the curriculum of mathematics because those topics needed to be taught so that the students could survive as they got to the degree programme. She elaborated:

We usually have discussions with the pre-degree manager, we tell her our requirements so as to prepare them correctly. One of my staff members usually has discussions with the pre-degree in terms of the requirements for mathematics so that they can pass mathematics at first year level.

6.13.4 Linguistic recovery

As far as the Dean of the IT Faculty was concerned the three years that French-speaking students spent on their degrees was not sufficient. She stressed the point that it takes a turnaround time of about five years for linguistic adeptness to be reached. However, the French-speaking students were only at IT Faculty for three years. It was very expensive for them, as I gathered from them in terms of cost during the interview sessions with them (the French-speaking students). Consequently, they returned to their countries immediately after completing their studies. The issue of finance also seems an issue of power relations at this juncture, capable of inhibiting the full proficiency of the French-speaking students in the English language. This shows that power relations are capable of evolving in different aspects of education. The implication of this scenario is that when the French-speaking students return to their countries the moment they stop speaking in English, there may be a tendency to revert to French. This finding thus makes the suggestions of Lave and Wenger (1991) more relevant to the field of education. If the French-speaking students were willing to stay for a much longer time the constraint of finance came up to prevent them from staying to learn the English properly. I present MS. Du Toit's argument:

It takes almost five years to master the English language. Sometimes, the problem that we have with these students is that they are here for only three years and it is not enough time for them to pick up all these skills. It takes around 5 years turnaround time to conceptualize the language, so if they are here for only three years this might be a problem.

a) The speed at which lecturers spoke in the classroom and their accents

I asked Ms. Du Toit a question which was based on the issue of multiculturalism on campus. I asked if the issue of diversity could be responsible for the slow pace at which the French-speaking students understood English. This is what she said:

Yes I agree with you but this does not apply to only French-speaking students. It applies to other foreign students. The Chinese and Japanese students also struggle with the English as well. Sometimes it depends on the lecturer as well. If the lecturer is talking too fast then they can't understand. So sometimes the rate at which the lecturer talks also has an influence on the student's understanding of the module. Sometimes the lecturers are not always South African, or English is not necessarily their first language. For example if they talk with an accent, it is also difficult for South African students to understand their English. It is also difficult for other foreign students to understand. We sometimes address this issue of pronunciation of the English language by sending the lecturers for training.

It thus implies that the issue of accent or the pace at which lecturers speak during learning facilitation is not peculiar to foreign students alone, but also to the South African students as well. How fast the lecturers spoke and the issue of accent are taken as hidden curriculum experiences. These are capable of affecting the learning experience of French-speaking students since they are the focus of this study.

6.14 Rosette: “The foundation programme or pre-degree does help students to stabilize”

6.14.1 Biographical information

Rosette was a female student advisor at Montana College at the time of this study. She is from Gabon in central Africa, a Francophone country (French speaking). She held a national diploma in business management but her position as student advisor at Montana College was marketing. Her role was to recruit students from the Western and central countries in Africa to Montana college. Student advisors acted like mediators between parents of French-speaking students and Montana College. During the interview session, Rosette mentioned the role of student advisors at Montana College:

Each student here has got a student advisor attached to him/her, which means that we act like liaison between the parent, students, lecturers and the academic institution. We advise them to have English-speaking friends, so that they can learn very fast. We also tell them to enrol in a recognized English school before coming here.

She (Rosette) had working experience of seven months as student advisor as at 2012. Once a year, student advisors travelled to make presentations in the target French-speaking countries where they recruited students. Her prominent narrative pointed to the effectiveness of the pre-

degree programme. She attested to the fact that the pre-degree programme assisted students to stabilize academically before they entered the mainstream degree programme. She spoke on the effectiveness of the pre-degree programme, “The foundation program or pre-degree does help students to stabilize”.

Another prominent role of student advisors entailed looking after the interest of French-speaking students at the college. Parents saw this as advantage to send their children to South Africa to study because of the role of the French-speaking student advisors. She mentioned the responsibility attached to student advisors briefly:

As a result of the fact that this institution is private, we do a kind of follow up on our students, which is totally different from what is available at public institutions.

The French-speaking students came in to Montana College basically because they could not meet the requirements of the public universities in South Africa. Consequently, they sought admission to Montana College via the pre-degree programme. This is what Rommy said when I asked her to divulge the reasons for the influx of French-speaking students to Montana College:

The main reason is because it is more difficult for them to be admitted to other public institutions for example, the University of Johannesburg (UJ), or the University of Pretoria (UP) or the University of Witwatersrand (Wits). Because here it is a private institution and those institutions need matriculation exemption. So it is quite tough for most of them to attain 60% average from their matriculation examination.

6.15 Curriculum experiences of French-speaking students from French-speaking student advisor’s perspective

6.15.1 Linguistic transition as a curriculum issue in the ACOP

Rommy expressed the issue of linguistic transition among the French-speaking students as a challenge at Montana College. French-speaking student advisors mandate the French-speaking students to study English for at least one year before starting the pre-degree programme. Rommy speaks on the issue of the requirement of French-speaking students to transit from French to English:

The challenge of the French-speaking students is the comprehension of English. We inform them that they should study English for a minimum of one year so that they would be capable of coping with the curriculum of study.

6.15.2 The effectiveness of the pre-degree programme

Romy reacted to my question on whether the pre-degree programme was meeting the educational needs of the French-speaking students at Montana College. She responded thus:

Yes it does because you find some of the French-speaking students, if they go straight to the first year degree programme after writing the Baccalaureate which is equivalent to matriculation examination here, they fail. Therefore the foundation programme or pre-degree does help them to stabilize.

It implies that the pre-degree programme is remedial because it provides the French-speaking students with the opportunity to develop their linguistic skills before reaching the degree programme.

6.15.3 Display of intelligence in mathematics

Rosette opened up a discussion which pointed attention to a disparity in the French and science curriculum offered at Montana College and the curriculum of French-speaking countries. She reiterated that French-speaking students saw the mathematics curriculum in the pre-degree programme as repetition because the French curriculum which they were given back home had taken them through the concepts which they had to do at Montana College. Rosette's story on the issue of disparity in the curriculum is presented:

French-speaking students in the science field do complain that it is like they are repeating what they did in their countries at the college. They complain that the mathematics curriculum to them is not very high at the pre-degree level.

6.15.4 Small class sizes

Rosette pointed to an advantage gained by the French-speaking students, and reasons that encouraged them to study at Montana College. She mentioned small class size and personalized contact. Consequently an opportunity derived by French-speaking students at Montana College was small class-sizes and personalized contact which seemed to assist them to readily book for consultation to see lecturers when they had academic challenges. She had this to say when she was asked to itemize reasons why French-speaking students chose to study at Montana College:

The students are not many in class, so the lecturers have a one-on-one contact with the students. Small class size was an opportunity for the academic institution, and this advantage enhanced the sociocultural diversity within the campus community.

6.15.5 The pre-degree programme

Rosette spoke extensively on challenges confronting Gabonese students, since her work jurisdiction was among them. According to Rosette, Gabonese students saw the pre-degree programme as a challenge because they felt it was wasting their time. Apparently, the Gabonese students were taken through the pre-degree programme because the academic institution was unsure of the curriculum of their country. Secondly, they had linguistic challenges. According to document analysis conducted in the study, Gabonese students were placed on the pre-degree programme to help them stabilize, especially in acquiring the required level of English language necessary for them to cope with first year through to third year modules. The set time recommended by Montana College to learn English before starting the pre-degree was six months to one year, depending on their capability to adjust to receiving tuition in the English language. Rosette explained:

One of the challenges of Gabonese students is the fact that they do not see the need to do the pre-degree programme. The second challenge is that unlike other students from Nigeria, Zimbabwe etc. who are already learning in English, these French-speaking students have an additional year to study English.

6.15.6 Shyness, reading and speaking English as curriculum issues

The French-speaking students, according to Rosette, had issues with listening and speaking in English. She revealed this challenge when I asked her to highlight the challenges confronting the French-speaking students at Montana College. Furthermore, she was of the opinion that by the third-year degree programme, they got better with the use of English. She said that the French-speaking students kept quiet because they were afraid that when they made mistakes in English, people would laugh at them. Consequently they were shy to speak in the public. She spoke thus:

Another problem with French-speaking students is listening and speaking the English language. Their linguistic challenge gets better by the third-year degree programme. French-speaking students are shy to speak because if they make mistakes, they feel that people will laugh at them. I want to assure you, writing the English is not a problem for the French-speaking students. The problem with them is listening and speaking English.

Therefore, the listening and speaking abilities of French-speaking students at Montana College are presented as curriculum issues.

6.15.7 Power relations between the French-speaking student advisors, management and the French-speaking students at Montana College.

A very challenging experience negotiated by the French-speaking students was in terms of their accommodation on getting to Montana College. Each year the school residence gets filled up because of its proximity to the campus. Eventually the French-speaking students who had been informed they would get accommodation before they came to Montana College were confronted by uncertainties because of the limited space in the hostels. The French-speaking student advisors on the other hand become incapacitated because they usually promised the French-speaking students that there was accommodation. The dilemma at such times was to get safe accommodation for the French-speaking students elsewhere. The management of Montana College made the French-speaking student advisors sign undertakings to market the school accommodation. If they were caught looking for accommodation for any of the French-speaking students they could be sacked. The French-speaking students on the other hand are left with the feeling that they had been deceived because they were promised accommodation before they consented to coming to study in South Africa. This situation is an expression of the power dynamics at work in Montana College. The situation of the French-speaking student advisors was a predicament because they wanted to please parents and at the same time the school authorities. As suggested by Lave and Wenger (1991) such power relations fizzle out with time. However, it did not help the marketing strategy of the French-speaking student advisors to recruit more students from French-speaking countries. Rosette laments:

Many of the French-speaking students were turned away and you can imagine coming from a foreign country and getting here, they are not able to get accommodation. Also as student advisors we are not allowed to find alternative accommodation for them. And we are the ones who bring them here, so you see the position we are in now? If they get to know that I look for accommodation for them, I could be sacked. We are the ones who go to them in their countries and we convince them to come to study in South Africa so you can imagine what we face.

6.15.8 Sense of belonging

Rosette spoke on the sense of belonging of French-speaking students as a 50-50 issue. She was of the opinion that the French-speaking students who did not have the vital sense of belonging to Montana College were those who were not doing well academically. She mentioned loneliness and homesickness as issues capable of preventing them from adjusting and developing a sense of belonging to Montana College. Rosette speaks on the development of a sense of belonging among the French-speaking students:

It is 50-50 issue because the students who are complaining are those ones who are not performing well. The French-speaking students who are doing well say it is great studying here because if a student focuses and does what is required, the student passes. The other French-speaking students who find it difficult to adapt may find it difficult to identify with this institution. There are some of them who are not serious and as student advisors, we cannot follow them about. The fact that some of them are away from home and alone may be responsible for their failure to identify with this academic institution.

6.15.9 Power relations exercised in terms of charging interest on fees owed in arrears

It is mandatory for the parents of French-speaking students to pay fees when due. When fees are in arrears it attracts a penalty in the form of interests. Consequently fee defaulters are denied access to the academic institution. The resultant effect on the fees defaulters may be significant. Rosette explained elaborately during the interview:

If we take the sponsored students from Gabon for an example, the government pays a certain amount which is R28000 and the remaining amount is paid by the parents. Usually contracts are signed with the school. Late payments attract interest at this institution. Consequently the student does not gain access to the school. Not having access to the school affects their academic work.

Late payment of fees is thus presented as a curriculum issue at Montana College and it has been implicated as a possible cause of failure at Montana College.

6.15.10 Fluency in English

A notable advantage among the French-speaking students who decided to study in English was unravelled by Rosette. She said French-speaking students who decided to study in South Africa had a competitive edge over those who studied in France. According to Rosette, French-speaking students became bilingual and had the chance of competing for jobs wherever English was spoken. On the other hand, their French-speaking counterparts who went to France remained monolingual. A curriculum experience of French-speaking students from this narrative was the opportunity to be bilingual for competitiveness in the global world. Rosette argued:

Those who come to study in South Africa and do not see pre-degree as a challenge have English compared to other students who studied in France or at a local university in Gabon. They would be fluent in English compared with those who studied in Gabon or who went to France.

6.15.11 Opportunity to comply with the curriculum

Stability in terms of the South African academic calendar was an advantage to the Gabonese students of Montana College. According to Rosette the academic calendar in Gabon was

always disrupted. Students did not have consistency in the academic calendar because of a number of issues. She spoke about the friendliness of the academic community, an indication of satisfaction with life among the French-speaking students. Her voice also seemed to point to the school environment as a community within a larger South African community which enabled the French-speaking students to concentrate on their studies. The fact that French-speaking students had the opportunity to complete the degree programme in the set time without disruptions was the opportunity they had at Montana College. This opportunity became a strong marketing initiative for the college because it provided revenue that was very encouraging. Rosette outlined the benefits:

Usually in Gabon, there are disruptions in the academic calendar but here there is no disruption in the academic calendar. The environment here is also friendly, making it easy for students to concentrate and pass.

6.15.12 Power relations and the yearly escalation of fees

A notable challenge to the influx of French-speaking students to Montana College in the near future was the yearly escalation in school fees and living expenses in South Africa. This was one of the issues confronting the French-speaking student advisors when they went for marketing every year in French-speaking countries. Out of the five student advisors interviewed in this study, all of them unanimously spoke that the tuition was posing a challenge to the influx of French-speaking students into South Africa. Rosette said the registration fee at Montana College, which amounted to R800, was enough to pay the tuition for the whole year in a Gabonese public university. Therefore yearly escalation of fees and living expenses were challenges confronting the sustainability of French-speaking students at Montana College. I present Rosette's voice on the issue of fees and living expenses to portray the concerns of parents and guardians of the French-speaking students:

There is a rise in inflation in South Africa, so this is one other challenge to students. The cost of living is getting higher, and every year the tuition increases. The registration fee paid by French speakers at this school is enough to pay the registration fees of the Gabonese students back home for a year.

6.15.13 Introversion as a track to dropping out of school

An important issue relating to academic failure was unveiled by Rosette. She mentioned introversion as a character trait that predisposed French-speaking students who were linguistically challenged to dropping out. She spoke thus on the issue:

An introverted student may find it a bit difficult to survive if the ability to interact is not there. If the student always stands aloof, it would be difficult to seek help from another student. Such a student suffers in silence and may drop out of school.

Consequently, the character traits of French-speaking students are presented as a curriculum experience at Montana College because they prevented them from interacting with more knowledgeable others.

6.15.14 Reduced intake of Gabonese students in 2013 as evidence of financial power relations

In 2012 when I interviewed Rosette she said that the Gabonese government was going to stop giving the French-speaking students scholarships to South Africa. During the second round of interviews in February 2013 I asked Rosette why we had very few students from Gabon. The students from Gabon this year are very few and were not on a government scholarship. She reminded me that she said so in 2012 that it was because of the escalating fees. I present her forecast in 2012 in terms of the intake for 2013:

From 2013, the Gabonese government will no longer send students here on sponsorship because they say it is too expensive.

Consequently, the escalating fees at Montana College are hidden curriculum experiences of French-speaking students at Montana College.

6.16 Mr. Clement: “This institution has all the African nationalities here, and it makes the institution an international institution”

6.16.1 Biographical information

Mr. Clement is from the DRC, a French-speaking student advisor at Montana College. He covered the DRC, Congo Brazzaville, Benin, and Central Africa. He came to South Africa in 1998 and had since not visited the DRC. He was already a South African citizen as at the time of this interview. He started working at Montana College on the 29th of June 2010. He preferred to live in South Africa instead of the DRC. When I asked him to reveal his preference in terms of where he preferred to live, he said, “First, I have been in South Africa for a long time and I see it as my second home”. I inquired whether he would like to be referred to as a South African or Congolese he said, “I prefer to be referred to as a Congolese but professionally, I would prefer to be referred to as South African”. He kept his Congolese identity intact despite being a South African citizen. A prominent narrative which describes his story points to the advantage of internationalising Montana College. He said, “This

institution has all the African nationalities, and this makes the institution an international institution. The students have people to talk to and share things.”

6.17 Curriculum experiences of French-speaking students from French-speaking student advisor’s perspective

6.17.1 Linguistic transition as a curriculum issue in the ACOP

a) Linguistic challenge

Mr. Clement’s description of the French-speaking students gave an indication of their challenge at Montana College. He said:

Most of these French-speaking students still struggle with the language when they come to this institution. When they come here, we try to assist them by relating with them in areas in which they experience challenges.

His role as a student advisor was that he had to see to their day-to-day survival at Montana College. Furthermore the student advisors act as parents to the French-speaking students at Montana College. They liaise with the parents of these French-speaking students directly by giving them feedback on the welfare and academic performance of their children. He spoke further on his role as a student advisor:

When these students come to South Africa, they have got nobody else except us. They take us as student advisors and as parents at the same time. We are a link to the parents first before being a link to the students. My relationship is more with the parents than with the students. The parents call us to ask if their children are doing well at school. There is a relationship that we build with parents which is beyond our professional duties.

The French-speaking student advisors recommend that the French-speaking students had to learn English for a period of one year in order to cope with the academic rigours at Montana College. The reason for the recommendation is because they were previously studying in French and had to make a transition from French to English in order to excel at Montana College. Mr Clement spoke thus on the issue of linguistic transition:

We tell them to register to learn English so they can learn here. Fortunately we now have an in-house English school at this place. If they can afford it they would be within the vicinity of the campus so they can begin to adjust gradually before they start the pre-degree programme the following year.

It is thus presented that the French-speaking students had to negotiate a transition from French to English to attempt to cope with the academic rigours at Montana College.

b) Accounting module as a curriculum challenge

Mr Clement pointed to the curriculum challenge of certain French-speaking students in accounting. He mentioned this issue to reveal the extent of disparity in curriculum between the curriculum of the French-speaking countries and that of South Africa. He said:

The second challenge apart from English is that most of them do not understand accounting properly. For most of them I think it is because they did not do accounting at the secondary school level, and because of their challenge in English. Accounting is offered in the French-speaking countries, but we tend to register them because of their marks in mathematics. Then we do not have a kind of pre-requisite here that says if they did not do accounting at the secondary school level, they would not be registered here. We tend to use their marks in mathematics. Most of them are good in mathematics but what we forget is that accounting and Mathematics are two different subjects.

It is thus presented that an assumption made by Montana College was in terms of assuming that high marks in mathematics could replace accounting as a subject. This finding thus presents an opportunity to make recommendations to Montana College with respect to admission requirements for French-speaking students aspiring to study accounting, in order not to complicate their academic ambitions to earn degrees.

6.17.2 Attachment to academic institution as a symbol of academic acculturation and identity

Mr Clement gave an indication of the acculturation and identity of the French-speaking students to Montana College. He told me when I inquired about how they had adjusted to the academic environment that “Most of them are comfortable, I would say about 90% of them are comfortable at this institution”. His comment was a pointer to my inquiry in terms of academic acculturation and identity. It is thus presented that the majority of French-speaking students experienced a sense of belonging which gave them academic acculturation and identity at Montana College.

6.17.3 Intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula

a) Mathematics curriculum

A common finding in this study among the French-speaking students is that they excelled in mathematics at the pre-degree level. Mr. Clement supported the claims made by the other stakeholders that most of the French-speaking students at Montana College had academic excellence in the pre-degree Mathematics. According to Mr. Clement, they had gone through similar topics and even harder topics in the French curriculum. Consequently, when they

reached Montana College it became an advantage to them. It thus seems that the linguistic incapacity they had was lessened in the Mathematics curriculum because they were already familiar with the concepts being taught in the Mathematics curriculum at Montana College. He spoke on the issue of repetition of the Mathematics curriculum at Montana College thus:

I would talk about the French-speaking students from the DRC. Most of them are very intelligent. When they come to pre-degree, they are actually learning most of the things they have learned back home. And here, if you don't have an equivalent result to matric, you cannot proceed to first-year. The French-speaking students are doing very well in the pre-degree but what limits their potential in the other modules is the language problem.

It is presented that at Montana College that the French-speaking students negotiated the mathematics curriculum that they had followed in their countries. This was an advantage to demonstrate academic excellence in Mathematics despite their initial linguistic challenge.

b) Evidence of compliance with the assessed curriculum

Evidence was provided to show that the French-speaking students at Montana College actually survived the linguistic challenges they had. Mr. Clement pointed to the case of a French-speaking student who had survived the threats of the LOLT in his third-year as at that time. He was applauded for doing well at Montana College. Similarly, before Mr. Clement granted the interview I had with him when I met a couple of pre-degree students. He pointed to them as some of the success stories they had at the pre-degree level. They were all committed and excelling in their studies despite the linguistic challenge they had. I provide evidence to this claim from Mr. Clement's words:

When they get to 1st and 2nd year, they try to improve a lot even better than in the pre-degree. I have got a DRC student that is doing his final year now. As we are speaking he is doing very well. Also, the pre-degree students I was talking to the other time are doing very well despite the English language challenge.

Mr. Clement gave the reason that the French-speaking students from the DRC excelled. He said that the curriculum in the DRC was more difficult and better than in South Africa. In the DRC students had to write all subjects they enrolled for to qualify for admission into the next level. This idea likely gave them the resilience, sense of belonging and academic identity they engaged at Montana College. The academic rigour they negotiated at Montana College was also seen to have evolved the tenacity to take responsibility for their learning at the college. They likely saw Montana College as a place to utilise their previously acquired training. I present Mr. Clement's argument on this issue subsequently:

The education in the DRC is better than in South Africa in terms of the curriculum. This is because a student writes every subject in the examination. If a student takes 12 subjects he must write all of the subjects, not as it is done here where only a few subjects are written. So the pre-degree level is an easy terrain for them. If they do not pass pre-degree it means they have been neglecting their studies. All of the ones I know have not been failing despite the English challenge.

It is presented that once the French-speaking students cross the transition line from French to English they demonstrate the capacity to achieve excellence at Montana College.

c) Market day celebration as evidence of strategy to internationalize the ACOP

I asked Mr. Clement to explain the importance of the cultural/market day at Montana College. This is what he said:

On the cultural day, all of them bring their different cultures for display. For example, students from Congo bring their clothes and other things available in that country for other students to see. This also brings an awareness of what Africa is to South Africa.

Students from all over Africa get the awareness of the cultural dispositions of the other countries. It seemed as if this strategy was responsible for the understanding and tolerance at Montana College towards the other cultures. On that day the awareness of an internationalized campus is usually created. Consequently, students have been found to develop a sense of belonging to Montana College because of the display of several African cultures.

6.17.4 Sense of belonging to academic institution as a symbol of commitment to participate in the ACOP

It was a strategy employed by the management of Montana College to have institutionalized the student advisory unit as an avenue to internationalize Montana College. The French-speaking students were seen to have developed a sense of belonging to the academic community of Montana College because of the influence of the French-speaking student advisors. Thus, they felt at home because they saw the French-speaking student advisors as guardians and counsellors at Montana College. Mr. Clement provided this useful information:

They do socialize and have not come to complain about discrimination to us. This is a professional environment and the relationship is cordial between all of us. When you look at those French-speaking students, most of them are here because of some of us. Some of them ask us to talk to their parents when they have pressing needs and their parents see us as their guardians here in South Africa. Many of them come to us to greet us, not because of any special reason at times, but just to greet. This kind of relationship gives them a feeling of being at home.

I present the curriculum experiences of the French-speaking students from another student advisor's perspective.

6.18 Mr. Fletcher: “We guide foreign students in their study according to their marks and we follow them through their career path”

6.18.1 Biographical information

Mr. Fletcher is from the DRC, a French-speaking student advisor who had one year work experience at Montana College. In the DRC he studied construction and specialized in project management. His duty was to recruit French-speaking students from the other French-speaking countries of Africa to register at Montana College as students. He travelled to the French-speaking African countries once a year to create an awareness of Montana College as a private provider of higher education within an international context. He specified his role as a French-speaking student advisor thus:

First of all, we help them to integrate easily in this school because when they come here they need to be comfortable. When they know there are people here who speak French it helps them to easily stabilize here. Secondly we are here because when they struggle they can easily come to us and we liaise with them so as to get their problems solved.

It seems the presence of the French-speaking student advisors at Montana College created the development of a sense of belonging to Montana College among the French-speaking students. Furthermore, he said that the role of the French-speaking student advisor was to follow the French-speaking students through till they graduated, otherwise they could dropout because of the linguistic challenge. He spoke thus:

Our system at this institution is unique. We have a system that allows student advisors to work here. The reason why I am saying this is because when these students come from the DRC, if we don't follow them up, there is a high chance that they may fail. This is an advantage that we have over the other institutions

It implies that the faculty is constantly aware of the challenges confronting them as foreign students.

6.19 Curriculum experiences of French-speaking students from the French-speaking student advisor's perspective

6.19.1 Linguistic transition as a curriculum issue in the ACOP

The French-speaking students at Montana College had linguistic challenges according to Mr. Fletcher. He said that this was the most challenging experience they had to confront because

they had a limited time to learn the LOLT in order to graduate at Montana College. He spoke thus:

The most difficult issue that the French-speaking students confront is the English because they have a limited duration to learn it, and this affects them. They get better each year they spend here if they obey what we tell them. We tell them to make friends with the English-speaking students and not to talk with their fellow French-speaking students all the time.

Mr. Fletcher's expression was an indication that the French-speaking students had a challenge necessitating their requirement to transit from French to English. Since Montana College is taken as an ACOP it is thus presented that linguistic transition was a curriculum issue for the French-speaking students at this college.

a) The English curriculum in the DRC

Mr. Fletcher provided valuable evidence which assisted in knowing the difference between learning English as a subject in the DRC and communicating in English. I inquired whether he had prior learning of English before he got to South Africa in 2003. He answered in the affirmative but reiterated that the English he learned at the high school in the DRC was academic. He mentioned that the English he learned at the secondary school level terminated at the school because it was not exercised through the medium of speaking it regularly. He mentioned that the English he learned ended at the school because he spoke French daily afterwards. Consequently his narrative provides a remedy for the French-speaking students who came to Montana College, namely, that the best avenue to learn the English is to communicate relentlessly with other English speakers. I provide evidence in Mr. Fletcher's words:

What we learned in English at school ended at school because when we got out of school in the DRC, all the English we learned stayed at school because once we got out of school, we stopped speaking English, but continued to speak French. So the French-speaking students learned to write the English but did not communicate in English. There is a difference between reading and writing. Communicating in English is the key to learning English well.

b) Translation of curriculum content from English to French and back to English

Mr. Fletcher confirmed the experience of the French-speaking students in terms of having to translate curriculum content from English to French and back to English. He said they always needed more time to do this because it was a time consuming-exercise. He said that speaking the English was completely different from thinking in that language. He spoke emphatically thus:

It is one thing to speak the language; it is another thing to think the language. When they are being taught they have to have enough time to first understand what the lecturer is teaching. They translate what the lecturer is saying to French before they now process the information. The more they move from one class to the other, the better they become with the language

c) Transition from French to English

I was curious to explore the turnaround time to negotiate a successful linguistic transition of the French-speaking students from Mr. Fletcher's point of view. I asked him if it took up to 4 years to cross the transition line from French to English. This is what he said, "No it should take one year but it depends on whether the French-speaking student is spending more time with French-speaking students or English-speaking students". He gave valuable information that expounded my understanding that the turnaround time for transition was a function of how detached the French-speaking students were from their French-speaking peers at Montana College. When he mentioned this point, my mind went to Andre's story in Chapter Five the third-year French-speaking student from Gabon who spoke eloquently in English after a short while. Mr. Fletcher's point on the turnaround time of one year made sense because Andre's storyline confirmed what he mentioned as the probable turnaround time. Mr. Fletcher's argument seemed reasonable because Andre was very sociable and interacted with more knowledgeable others who could teach him English in the ACOP.

Mr. Fletcher's words were confirmation that the French-speaking students translated curriculum content from English to French and back to English. Consequently it is reiterated that the French-speaking students needed to negotiate a transition from French to English in order to comply with the tenets of the curriculum at Montana College. It is also showed that a maximum of one year was sufficient to negotiate the transition provided they interacted with more knowledgeable others in English.

6.19.2 Sense of belonging to academic institution as a symbol of commitment to participate in the ACOP

The French-speaking student advisors created a basis for the development of a sense of belonging among the French-speaking students of Montana College. Mr. Fletcher said, "We are here because when they struggle they can easily come to us and we liaise with them so as to get their problems solved". This perspective of attention seemed to have continuously given them the fortitude to face their challenges as they negotiated the rigours of higher

education at Montana College. Consequently the French-speaking students had a sense of belonging to Montana College because they knew they were not alone and that there were other French-speaking members of staff available to shoulder their concerns.

6.19.3 Intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula

a) Evidence of compliance with the assessed curriculum

Mr. Fletcher did not agree with the notion that the educational standard in the DRC was of a lower standard. He mentioned the fact that in the DRC students had to take more than 12 subjects in their final secondary school examinations and they passed. He sternly argued his case thus:

In the DRC a student can take up to 13, 14 or 15 subjects in the final year at the secondary school level. The standard is higher in the DRC than in South Africa. So if they are saying our students are coming from a country with a lower educational standard, I don't agree. Our students are more resilient and focused under normal circumstances. The evidence is there because they come here to excel despite the fact that they are learning English.

a) Strong work ethic

Mr. Fletcher revealed valuable information that the French-speaking students at Montana College brought the culture of hard work and resilience to that college. He said that the French-speaking students were used to the strong work ethic that they had to pass all of the subjects they took. He mentioned this during the interview session with him:

French-speaking students have a good record that they work hard here. In this country if a student fails in a subject, he is allowed to go to the next level but in the DRC it is not possible. If they don't pass all their subjects they won't go to the next class. So, French-speaking students come to this country with that culture of hard work.

Strong work ethic was a hidden curriculum experience of French-speaking students at Montana because it was a carry-over effect from their home country to Montana College.

b) The fear of losing French as a language of communication

As far as Mr. Fletcher was concerned the French-speaking students did not have to forget French as a medium of communication. He mentioned that as much as they wanted them to know English they had the obligation not to forget French as their mother tongue. The strategy he used was to mix French and English together during conversation with them in order to remind them to learn English and not forget French. He agreed that it was a dilemma and to keep a balance was challenging. He spoke on the issue subsequently:

The essence is not for the French-speaking students to forget French. Although we want them to learn English, they must not also forget French. At times we mix English with French

because it will help them not to forget French. It is tricky to maintain a balance but that is how it works.

c) Power relations

Mr. Fletcher's argument about the retention of French as a medium of communication and the issue of learning the English among the French-speaking students may be viewed with the lens of power relations suggested by Lave and Wenger (1991). The dilemma of keeping both the English and French was seen as such. The requirement of the French-speaking students to study in English was contrasted with the linguistic capital they brought from home (French). The tactic of reaching a balance became an educational dilemma because the French-speaking students needed the medium of English to understand the curriculum. The quest to retain the cultural identity of the French-speaking students also became important. However, as suggested by Lave and Wenger (1991:115-116), in the continuity-displacement contradiction where stakeholders exercise their authority over one another the issue of power relations eventually gets smothered. The fact that the French-speaking students graduated from Montana College provided evidence that the issue of linguistic power dynamics eventually got extinguished in the course of the struggle to learn the English and the quest to retain French as a language of communication. However, it was found in this study that the quest to be bilingual among the French-speaking students was likely responsible for the creation of a balance between the two means of communication.

6.20 Ms. Sammy: "I sell the idea that our classes at this institution are small to parents"

6.20.1 Biographical information

Ms. Sammy was a French-speaking student advisor from Cameroon. She had been working at Montana College for one year as at the time of conducting this study. She had lived in South Africa for seven years, and studied B.Com Marketing in Cameroon. She mentioned the significance of French-speaking student advisors at Montana College by saying, "To convince a French-speaking student to come here, we are needed to communicate with them in French". This was a strategy employed by Montana College to draw French-speaking students to South Africa and this could only be achieved when the parents of French-speaking students knew they were also from French-speaking backgrounds. Furthermore she said, "We prepare them before the classes start in February so that they would not come late and start learning English very late". The French-speaking student advisor's role was thus seen as

pivotal to the successful completion of degrees among the French-speaking students at Montana College.

Furthermore a prominent narrative which singled her storyline out was the exhibition of her role as a student advisor. She employed the tactic of selling the benefits of studying at Montana College to the parents of the French-speaking students before they released their children to come to study at Montana College. The small class size initiative was the gimmick because parents wanted their children to receive personalized attention from the lecturers.

6.21 Curriculum experiences of French-speaking students from French-speaking student advisor's perspective

6.21.1 Linguistic transition as a curriculum issue in the ACOP

a) Shyness and accents of Cameroonian students

Important information emerged during the course of interviewing Ms. Sammy. She mentioned that the Cameroonian students at Montana College were shy because of the language. They were required to negotiate a transition from French to English. Consequently, they were shy to speak English or ask questions because they had a premonition that they would be laughed at when they spoke English because of their accent and because of their feelings of incorrectness when they spoke in English. Ms. Sammy spoke elaborately on the issue of shyness and accent:

When French-speaking students come to the campus, they are very shy because they cannot speak the language, so they are afraid because they feel people will laugh at them when they speak English. At times the other students recognise that they have a different accent. Consequently they keep quiet in the class. When time goes by and they have interacted with the other students, they improve in their English-speaking ability.

It is thus shown that the French-speaking students needed to negotiate a transition from French to the English at Montana College.

b) Linguistic transition as an advantage

Ms. Sammy elaborated on the advantage of bilingualism among the French-speaking students from Cameroon. She mentioned that about 30% of the population in Cameroon speaks English, while the remaining 70% speaks French. She said that the fact that an individual who speaks English lives in the midst of French-speaking people was an advantage because they were afforded the opportunity of learning French. However, it was not automatic to

write French. According to her, the Cameroonian students who studied at Montana College, who were bilingual had the advantage of learning fast because they were not linguistically challenged. It is only implied that they already crossed the transition line from French to English. She spoke thus:

In Cameroon about 30% of the population speaks English, and 70% speaks French. If you are an English-speaking person in Cameroun, the fact that you live in the midst of the French-speaking people makes you learn French. The problem is that you won't be able to read and write in French. We also see people that can speak English and cannot speak French at all. French-speaking students who speak English will have an advantage of learning as other English-speaking students at the school learn without linguistic challenge.

c) Lack of independence among the French-speaking students as a hidden curriculum experience

It was insinuated in 2012 that over-dependence on student advisors by certain French-speaking students at Montana College was becoming a burden to Ms. Sammy. It was likely to be as a result of loneliness and homesickness. The French-speaking students booked appointments to see the French-speaking student advisors for every flimsy reason. Due to workload the French-speaking student advisor was overburdened. Ms. Sammy complained:

As a student advisor, I see the French-speaking students do not want to be independent. Each time the French speaking students have problems, they run to student advisors. We tell them they have to be independent, and that it is only when they cannot solve problems that they have to run to us.

d) Homesickness

On February 2013 when a second round of interviews was conducted I raised the issue again with Ms. Sammy to explore whether the French-speaking students were homesick. She said, "In fact the major reason for wanting to see us is because they have refused to grow up. Some of them miss their family members all the time". I got confirmation of the insinuation which I made in 2012. It is thus presented that the likelihood of loneliness, homesickness and continued assurance of a sense of belonging predisposed some of the French-speaking students to see the student advisors too frequently. Loneliness and homesickness are thus presented as a curriculum experience of the French-speaking students at Montana College.

e) Escalating fees as evidence of financial power relations

Just as Candy (a third-year Biomedicine student at Montana College) lamented in Chapter Five, Ms. Sammy also lamented because of the school fees which escalated yearly. She saw a disadvantage because the escalation prevented certain French-speaking students from coming

to study at Montana College. Apart from the escalation, the most challenging aspect of the issue was that a down payment of 50% had to be paid by foreign students, with the rest paid in 10 monthly instalments. She mentioned that the registration fee at Montana College was sufficient to pay tuition for a whole year in any of the public Cameroonian universities. She lamented thus:

Foreign students are asked to pay 50% of the total fee before they can start. Imagine if the school fee is R40000 and a student has to pay half of that amount before being allowed to register. The balance of the fee has to be paid in 10 instalments. Imagine, the registration fees here are sufficient to pay the tuition for the whole year in Cameroun public universities. It is expensive here and so not everyone in Cameroun is capable of sending their children to this institution.

Furthermore, Ms. Sammy lamented that, “In Cameroun the government does not grant bursaries to students, and so if parents are not rich, their children would not be able to come to this institution”. This was another indication of power relations and the effect of globalization. This kind of power relation was an indication of affordability. Only those who were ready to cope with the financial implication were allowed to study. For example in the course of the interview, Ms. Sammy said, “We registered 50 students from Cameroon in 2012. Many of them ran away because they could not pay the 50% down payment”. It thus becomes the survival of the fittest. The Cameroonian students who came to study at Montana College were seen as those who were ready to financially commit to serious academic life.

6.21.2 Intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula

a) Excellence in the Science curriculum

Cameroonian students were reputed for their excellence in the Science curriculum they were exposed to, at Montana College. The Science curriculum was the same as what they did at the advanced level General Certificate of Education examinations in Cameroon. Consequently, they excelled in the fields of Biomedicine and Biotechnology. They were also applauded for the sociocultural diversity they brought to Montana College, a scenario which prepared them for the workplace. My question in terms of the benefit brought by the Cameroonian students to Montana College conveyed this finding. Ms. Sammy spoke with enthusiasm on the Cameroonian students’ achievement and sociocultural diversity:

French-speaking students contributed to the sociocultural diversity of the campus. Secondly, if we look at students from Cameroon, they excel in Biomedicine and Biotechnology. What they had in the first-year of their study here, they already did at the advanced level in Cameroun. It is just like repetition and they are doing well in this university. The sociocultural diversity they bring to the campus prepares them for the work environment.

b) Small class sizes and consultation with lecturers

The small class-size initiative at Montana College was of immense importance to the achievement of the French-speaking students at Montana College. Ms. Sammy mentioned that the freedom of the French-speaking students to seek consultation from their lecturers assisted in consolidating their learning. They were also reported to always work as a team solving problems together. She spoke thus:

I think the fact that there are few students in class is helping the French-speaking students. At other universities, there are many students in class. They work as a team, and face challenges together. Whenever they have challenges in their studies, they are allowed to see their lecturers for more explanation.

I present the story of the next French-speaking student advisor at Montana College.

6.22 Mr. Masada: “They find it difficult to mingle with other English-speaking students.”

6.22.1 Biographical information

Mr. Masada is from the DRC who lived in South Africa for 10 years because he was a student at Montana College. He came to South Africa in 2002 to study. He studied B.Com Management at Montana College to gain access to tuition but was registered at the University of South Africa (UNISA) at the same time. He came to Montana College because of the opportunity to receive lectures which were not available at UNISA. He was a French-speaking student advisor at Montana College for 3 years as at the time of this interview. A prominent narrative describing his story line pointed to a challenge with respect to the inability of the French-speaking students to relate with the other English-speaking students, a scenario found to delay their transition from French to English at Montana College.

6.23 Curriculum experiences of French-speaking students from French-speaking student advisor’s perspective

6.23.1 Linguistic transition as a curriculum issue in the ACOP

A prominent challenge negotiated by the French-speaking students at Montana College was in the area of their inability to comprehend the English. The fact that they could also not mingle with the other English-speaking students was as a result of their states of incommunicado because they lacked the vocabulary to express themselves in the English. Mr. Masada spoke thus on their linguistic challenge:

At the very beginning when they come to South Africa, it is a bit of challenge for them because of the barrier of English. They find it difficult to mingle with the other English-speaking students. Also, it becomes challenging because most of the things done here are in English,

ranging from lectures, to socializing with the other students. It is difficult for them to understand, hear and most importantly, write in English. A student should be able to speak, hear and write the English language properly.

6.23.2 Intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula

a) Personalized attention and consultation

Mr. Masada revealed personalized attention and the opportunity to seek consultation from the lecturers at Montana College as advantages seen by the parents of French-speaking students prompting them to send their children to South Africa. This according to him drew the French-speaking students' parents' attention to send their children to Montana College despite the cost. He said that the lecturers knew the students because they were not many in the class. I present his elaborate explanation on the issue:

I would say that this institution is a private institution and everyone is looking for an institution where there is a proper follow up on students when it comes to academics. For example, like the lecturers knowing the students. This kind of personalized touch can only be found at the private university because in the public universities, you find too many students in the lecture room and lecturers do not know them. Secondly, for students who have challenges with their courses, it is difficult for them to approach their lecturers at the public institution. At this private institution, students get individual attention from their lecturers, and parents see this as an advantage sending their children to this private institution.

b) Compliance with the curriculum in record time

A major strategy used by Mr. Masada was the fact that if parents released their children to study at Montana College the duration would not exceed 3 to 4 years. The stable economic and political stability in South Africa was used as a marketing strategy. He spoke thus on the strategy:

So, I tell them that if they have to come here to study, it would be accomplished within 3 to 4 years. I also tell them I also studied at this institution, although it was a long time ago. I also tell them that we have improved a lot as an academic institution.

Consequently, a curriculum experience of the French-speaking students was that they were liable to complete their studies within 3 to 4 years.

c) Shyness

The French-speaking students according to Mr. Masada were shy because of the fear that they were unable to communicate with the English-speaking students eloquently. They resorted to keeping quiet. However, Mr. Masada said his role was to constantly encourage them not to go into their French enclaves because of this issue. I quote his words:

They have the fear that they do not know how to communicate in English. I try to talk to them that the only way they can learn is only if they communicate with English-speaking people. I advise them to put away shyness so they can learn.

d) Strong work ethic

An issue which likely gave the French-speaking students at Montana College the fortitude to adapt and focus was the yearly expenditure incurred to study at Montana College. Mr. Masada pointed to the huge sacrifice made on the part of the parents to get them educated in South Africa. It was one of the roles of the French-speaking students to ensure they complied with the principles at Montana College to ensure they earned degrees. He spoke about the sacrifice made by the parents:

Most of the French-speaking students are very serious. I always tell them that they do not have a choice because their parents spend a lot of resources on them to come here. This expenditure ranges from the ticket they bought to travel here, to accommodation, school fees which are very high, and of course stipend or allowance on campus. The French-speaking students spend around R150, 000 a year, which is a huge sacrifice from the parents. They have to realize that some of their friends do not have that kind of opportunity to travel and study outside the country.

It is thus presented that the communication of the financial rigours incurred by the parents of French-speaking students likely gave the French-speaking students academic acculturation, identity and a sense of belonging to participate in the activities of Montana College.

e) Evidence of compliance with the assessed curriculum

Mr. Masada was keeping track of the academic performance of French-speaking students because it was vital to his marketing strategy. He needed to show parents that the French-speaking students achieved at Montana College. He mentioned the pass rate of French-speaking students at Montana College and concluded they were not performing badly at Montana College: I present his findings:

I tried to check last year compared with South Africans with respect to the pass rate and we realized that the pass rate of the French speaking students was up to 85%. You must understand that I am part of the student affairs unit and I am not involved with academic issues. When it comes to mathematics and other subjects, they are not doing badly.

f) The fear of losing French as a language of communication

Mr. Masada was of the mindset that the French-speaking students should not forget French as a language of communication because they all had the intention of returning to the DRC. He explained that the issue of globalization was becoming an advantage in the DRC because

there were many foreign companies who were willing to employ people who are bilingual.

He spoke passionately about the issue thus:

We must not forget our language because we want to remain bilingual. Our French-speaking students must not forget French because we are in a globalized world. For example I recently visited the DRC and I found that I spoke English more than I spoke in French. It is because the awareness is spreading, and there are foreign companies in the DRC now that employ people who are bilingual. All the members of my family speak English, so the issue of forgetting French does not arise.

I present the curriculum experience of the French-speaking students from the perspective of the manager of the pre-degree programme.

6.24 Ms. Hendrick: “The pre-degree provides an adjustment time in a supportive environment”

6.24.1 Biographical information

Ms. Hendrick (female) was the manager of the foundation programme at Montana College, and a White South African. She was manager for three years as at the time of the research study. She confirmed the percentage of foreign students who registered yearly for the pre-degree programme to be around 30% of the total intake, out of which less than 7 per cent were French-speaking students. When she was asked to give reasons why students enrolled in the pre-degree programme, she said, “The pre-degree programme was originally started to assist students who didn’t meet with the degree criteria, to have an access path to those degrees”. From her comments, it showed that students who did not have the right entry requirements found Montana College as route to higher education. The prominent narrative which characterized her passion for the pre-degree programme entailed the fact that the programme was meeting the needs for its inauguration. She said the environmental conditions were favourable for the survival of foreign students, and gave the students an adjustment period to rediscover themselves in their new socioculturally diverse context. She argued:

The pre-degree programme provides an adjustment time in a supportive environment particularly for foreign students to re-contextualize themselves in a different culture and higher institution.

A cogent reason for establishing the foundation programme was unveiled by Ms. Hendrick. She pointed to the pre-degree programme as meeting the needs for its inauguration. The programme was initiated in response to the needs of students who could not meet entry requirements for the mainstream degree programme. She said that the programme had expanded and given Montana College a huge portion of the market from a business

perspective. This statement pointed to the notion that a valuable opportunity derived by Montana College was in the direction of having more students in the mainstream degree programme through the foundation programme. Mrs. Hendrick responded to questions directed at deciphering the reasons for establishing the pre-degree programme:

The pre-degree programme was originally started to assist students who didn't meet with the degree criteria, to have an access path to those degrees. The programme has expanded and given the school access to a bigger section of the market. The programme has increased the number of students entering our degree programme.

6.25 Curriculum experiences of French-speaking students from the perspective of the pre-degree programme manager

6.25.1 Linguistic transition as a curriculum issue in the ACOP

The first challenge outlined by Ms. Hendrick was the fact that the French-speaking students studied in another language, namely French as shown in the following narrative:

I think the French-speaking students have several challenges, one of the problems is most of them completed their secondary studies in a different language.

Ms. Hendrick pointed to their potential to succeed at school, but that the barrier of the English language was prominent among them, predisposing them to struggling to get through their academic work. She described her experience:

Most of them have the intellect and capabilities at succeeding in higher education. The language is a barrier to understanding several of the concepts.

She gave an example of the challenging nature of language by citing the fact that a student that did well in maths could fail a module that required essay writing. According to her, the drastic change in medium of instruction was a challenge to the French-speaking students:

We see a good student get a distinction in Maths, but significantly fails a module that requires essay writing.

Ms. Hendrick's assertion pointed to their inability to constructively engage in written tasks, apart from their challenge of not being able to speak English properly. Consequently, it is presented that a curriculum experience common to the French-speaking students at Montana College was an inability to communicate effectively in the medium of English.

a) Disparate scientific terminology and inability to relate as curriculum issue

The French-speaking students were also noted for their inability to learn subject specific terminology in academic discourses. They lacked the right dimension of academic and cultural integration because they found it challenging to build on the terminology they had

acquired in the French language. This was complicated by the contest to relate with English-speaking students, an avenue that could assist them to negotiate for linguistic amendment.

Their linguistic experience was thus a cascading scenario. She spoke thus:

Other challenges involve learning the proper terminology in academic interactions because they cannot just build on what they did in secondary school - there is a cultural barrier.

b) Homesickness

Homesickness was a limiting factor which seemed to challenge the French-speaking students at the campus. According to Ms. Hendrick parental support mechanism was lacking since they were distant from direct parents:

They often feel far away from home, so they feel that they lack family support and this varies substantially from student to student. They obviously experienced homesickness and this seems to affect their academic stability at times.

6.25.2 Curriculum alignment with other faculties

Curriculum alignment with other faculties that were fed by the pre-degree programme entailed having workshops which consisted of pre-degree lecturers and lecturers from other faculties that were fed by the pre-degree programme. Ms. Hendrick gave an example of how this was done by citing the example of the maths curriculum that deliberations were made with stakeholders in the departments where maths was the pre-requisite for other modules. She said that the pre-degree maths curriculum was given to faculties for their input and comments as to how their needs were being met. This action was weighed against the pass rate of students in each module. The exercise pointed to the fact that French-speaking students negotiated a thoroughly considered and executed curriculum experience, capable of fostering their eventual survival on campus. Ms. Hendrick spoke thus on curriculum alignment:

We did a curriculum review process two years ago, and had subject specific workshops. For example, we took the Maths curriculum, met with Maths lecturers and Statistics lecturers in each Faculty. We asked them to comment on our curriculum and the performance of the pre-degree students in their main degrees.

Furthermore she spoke about an on-going effort to enhance the quality of the maths curriculum for the science faculty. An indication of curriculum responsiveness was unveiled because the idea of curriculum alignment resulted in creating a special stream of maths module in the second semester of 2012:

We are currently continuing a discussion with the Science Faculty where they feel they need a more advanced level of Maths, particularly for their program and so we're creating a specialized stream in the second semester for those students who want to study science.

6.25.3 Intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula

a) The pre-degree programme

The opportunity derived by Montana College from the pre-degree to third year programme was in the area of providing a tremendous dimension of market for the institution. Many students enrolled in the pre-degree programme, and after completion, fed the available six faculties on campus. This created an enormous market for the school and returns on investment to the diverse shareholders of the academic institution. Ms. Hendrick spoke on the opportunity derived by the institution from the pre-degree to third year programme:

The pre-degree programme has given us access to a bigger section of the market, so both from a business perspective and an academic perspective, it has increased the number of students we can cater for and increased the number of students entering in to our degrees.

Consequently, the pre-degree programme served the purpose for which it was inaugurated because it prepared students for the degree programmes.

b) Mathematical intelligence

Pre-degree students were identified as having strong points in terms of outperforming their South African counterparts in mathematics. Ms. Hendrick attributed the strengths of French-speaking students to the consolidation they had in the maths British curriculum in their country. Secondly, many of them had a taste of the advanced level maths curriculum, so the pre-degree maths they did at Montana College was not too challenging for them. She presented the strengths of French-speaking students using these words:

French-speaking students tend to significantly outperform the South African students in Maths because they followed the British curriculum and had often gone on to the 'A' levels and not just the 'O' levels in maths and some of them have done exceptionally well.

6.25.4 Delayed transition from French to English

French-speaking students were identified as groups of students that mainly indulged in interacting with other French-speaking students on campus. Ms. Hendrick mentioned the danger involved by saying that they seemed to miss out of the essence of studying in an international environment. They did this by deviating from the available sociocultural diversity present on campus. Refusal to communicate with English speakers could also limit the potential of the French-speaking students in the area of briskly acquiring the use of

English. A basic understanding that evolved from the sociocultural diversity on the campus involved the notion that when French-speaking students spoke with peers from other countries, they spoke in English and their understanding in English was enhanced. In the event of perpetually mingling with friends from other French-speaking countries, their linguistic capital was de-emphasized and disenfranchised. Ms. Hendrick presented her views:

A lot of these students spend too much time speaking French to people from the same countries and not enough time speaking to people of different cultures to get their internationalization that is possible within the programme.

6.25.5 Adjustment of the English curriculum to assist listening and hearing skills

A remedy was proffered through the adjustment made to the English curriculum by introducing a film study. The film study was to be proceeded by commitment of students to watching television programmes aimed at enhancing the speed of acquisition of listening and spoken English. Ms. Hendrick revealed the adjustment process in the English curriculum:

In the English curriculum, we have a film study that's done but we recommend that students start watching TV in English so they can start to pick up speed and language flow even before they do the film study.

This was a curriculum responsive measure to assist the internationalization of Montana College because the percentage of non-English speakers was significant. It was aimed at tackling the pace at which lecturers spoke and the issues of accents. It is thus presented that the French-speaking students experienced curriculum responsive measures aimed at improving their linguistic proficiency at Montana College.

6.25.6 Oral presentation

An extra initiative which was as a result of feedback from the on-going curriculum alignment process at the pre-degree department led to the inauguration and enactment of a pilot oral presentation programme. Ms. Hendrick inducted an oral presentation facility in conjunction with the English lecturers in the pre-degree English curriculum to aid the presentation skills of students. The idea was birthed as a result of the identification of the linguistic challenges of foreign students and South African students. The idea that eleven official languages were allowed in South Africa was also seen as a contributory factor to the linguistic challenge of French-speaking students. The linguistic challenge of South African students seemed to have aggravated the linguistic incapability of French-speaking students because the South African students seemed to lack the appropriate linguistic capital to engage the French-speaking

students in communication and interaction. Consequently, South African students also stayed at the end of a continuum that placed the French-speaking students at the risk of their state of English language incommunicado. South African students thus spoke Zulu and Sotho in class and within the campus, evidence that they also needed linguistic assistance. Ms. Hendrick gave a concise shot to the scenario at hand:

What we've done in the language curriculum has taken foreign students into account. However, we've found that it was focused on reading and writing. So this year, we've piloted an initiative to deal with more of the oral aspects of English.

Thus the French-speaking students had enough resources at Montana College to alleviate their linguistic challenges. The oral presentation exercises were targetted at revamping them from their states of aloofness and incommunicado triggered by shyness and the feeling that they would be embarrassed when they made mistakes while speaking English.

6.25.7 Mentoring programme as a curriculum responsiveness initiative

In response to the curriculum needs of foreign and local students that were linguistically challenged in the LoLT, a mentoring programme was set in motion. Students who were struggling with the English language were linked to lecturers to assist in alleviating their linguistic challenges. This was to intensify a follow up programme that was aimed at revamping the linguistic inadequacy of French-speaking students with respect to reading, speaking and writing the English. Ms. Hendrick spoke thus on the mentoring programme:

Our last aspect is a mentoring programme that we've been working on where we try and link students to specific lecturers who follow French-speaking students up to help them prepare for specific assignments or proof read their work.

6.25.8 Small class size as a tool for student-lecturer relationship

Small class-size was an advantage that seemed to foster healthy student-lecturer relationship at Montana College. Ms. Hendrick reiterated the small class-size as a tool that assisted lecturers to know students, and it helped lecturers to identify weak students that needed academic assistance. She gave instance that in public universities, large classes led to students being lost in the crowd until they dropped out. She buttressed the fact that small class-size was instrumental to the connectedness that existed between students and lecturers. In essence this idea seemed to engender a community tie that fostered remedial actions among weak students. Ms. Hendrick spoke passionately and enthusiastically on the issue of small class-size and relationship of lecturers with the students:

We do try and keep classes smaller, particularly in lectures and tutorials to create a sense of students not being lost in a crowd. It is much easier for a lecturer to get to know a student in a group of 60 than in a group of 600. And so we've tried to tap into that in terms of connectedness.

6.25.9 Tutorial classes as a curriculum responsiveness initiative

The observation session I had during the tutorial classes revealed the smallness in tutorial class sizes (maximum of 30 students in a tutorial class), which enabled tutors to have connection with and closeness to weak students that needed academic help. I was the head of the Mathematics tutorial classes in 2011 and this gave me the opportunity to recognize the situation of the French-speaking students. They kept to themselves throughout the periods that I facilitated the tutorial classes. The interesting thing was that they did not know that I was observing them while I tutored for a whole session. Where there were two French-speaking students in the tutorial classes, they stayed together because of the linguistic challenge. At times they brought in their friends who had crossed the transition from French to English for the class to explain concepts to them during lecture periods. Tutors were trained to accommodate weaknesses among students by becoming friendly and approachable. Intermittent tutor training sessions were held to establish rapport between lecturers and tutors. The set up was revealed thus by the pre-degree programme manager:

In using our tutorials, we've tried to develop student tutors and lecturer tutors to build more intimate relationships from an academic perspective and so the tutoring groups we've made twenty- five or thirty. So the individual problems can be dealt with.

The additional advantage to tutor the French-speaking students was that it gave tutors the opportunity of working closely with them. They were more open when the other students were not there. They made grammatical errors but were not embarrassed as long as they were not asked to speak to the entire class. We used such opportunities to tell them that if they were not willing to make grammatical mistakes they would not learn. Consequently, the tutorial classes became additional resources to reach the French-speaking students in an attempt to revamp them from their inability to communicate.

6.25.10 Consultation with students as a curriculum responsiveness initiative

Consultation with students was clarified by the pre-degree manager as part of the intended curriculum at Montana College. Consultation times, according to Ms. Hendrick were unique at the pre-degree department. Pre-degree lecturers were specially trained to be available to needy students because the pre-degree programme fed six other faculties, and had to prepare

students for the degree programmes ahead. Evidence of consultations had with students were documented and assessed by the pre-degree manager to ensure compliance of lecturers with the set curriculum. Consultation duration was a minimum of 30 minutes and maximum of one hour at a stretch, depending on the needs of students. Needy students were allowed to see lecturers and tutors for up to fifteen hours a week. Ms. Hendrick spelt out the academic policy with respect to consultation with needy students:

It's a general policy of the institution that we make consultation times available. The consultation times and how we manage the access is specific to the pre-degree programme. So we try and encourage our lecturers to be a bit more available than their counterparts in other faculties.

6.26 Summative conclusion on findings in Chapters 5 and 6

This chapter has presented the stories of representatives of the private tertiary institution in an attempt to triangulate data obtained from the French-speaking students in Chapter 5. A number of issues in chapter five were corroborated by the voices of the representatives of the private provider of higher education (Lecturers, French-speaking student advisors, the Dean of the IT faculty and the manager of the pre-degree programme). Language was a prominent discourse which seemed to be pivotal to every other curriculum experience (intended or hidden) negotiated by the French-speaking students at Montana College. It was discovered through the diverse narratives presented that once the French-speaking students crossed the transition from French language to English; they usually outperformed their South African counterparts. French-speaking students were seen as part of the cultural investments on the campus, in terms of the dissimilar sociocultural perspectives they brought to the academic institution. French-speaking students were identified as students who brought a wealth of focus and tenacity to achieve; to the community of lecturers, students and staff of the academic institution. Issues which pointed to power relations also dominated the experiences of the French-speaking students in the ACOP. Equipped with these salient findings, Chapter 7 presents the discussion on findings made in the research study, and provides the connection between these and the two literature chapters (Chapters 2 and 3).

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE DISCOURSE

7.1 Introduction

In Chapter Six emerging themes and findings obtained from representatives of the private tertiary institution were presented. These findings were aimed at triangulating data obtained from the French-speaking students in Chapter Five. This chapter presents a platform of discussion on the emerging themes, and showcases how answers were proffered to the research questions of the study. The chapter also discusses findings of the study in relation to conceptualizations made in the theoretical chapters, to explore the curriculum experiences of non-South African French-speaking students. The theory of hybridization of sociocultural factors in an Academic Community of Practice (ACOP) is empirically discussed to proffer a holistic explanation on the complicated events in an ACOP in the midst of multiculturalism. Issues relating to power relations in the ACOP also form a major debate to reveal the avenues through which the “continuity-displacement contradiction” evolved at Montana College drawing on Lave and Wenger (1991:115). In an attempt to answer the research questions of the study hypotheses are taken into consideration. A précis concludes the chapter in line with how contributions have been made to the voluminous literature.

7.2 Main research question

What are the curriculum experiences of students from French-speaking countries in an academic community of practice? In an attempt to answer the main research question, hypothesis 1 is proposed subsequently.

7.2.1 Hypothesis 1

The curriculum experiences of French-speaking students entail delayed transition from French to English, which is the medium of instruction as a result of their reluctance to effectively engage with the demands of the academic community of practice in which they found themselves.

7.3 Confirmation/disconfirmation of hypothesis 1

The fact that the French-speaking students came to South Africa to learn in English predisposed them to the challenge of having to learn in another language. At the point of entry to Montana College they were legitimate peripheral participants, drawing on Lave and Wenger (1991). A vivid observation from their narratives throughout Chapter Five and the narratives of the other stakeholders in Chapter Six indicates their willingness to study in the English language. All of them had to negotiate their linguistic capitals in French with the English language, used to facilitate learning at Montana College. They all admitted that they had issues with the learning of English despite attending English proficiency schools for a period of 3 months to one year. They needed to take centripetal strides immediately they arrived at the ACOP by engaging with the specified curriculum of study and associating with the other stakeholders.

I take the case of Felicia as an example in Chapter Five section 5.3.1. She could not read the module outline efficiently to know when she had to write a test in the bridging Mathematics module despite having been taught English as a subject in her home country and at the English proficiency school she attended prior to starting the pre-degree programme. The French-speaking students throughout Chapter Five had delayed transition from French to English because they were shy to relate with more knowledgeable English-speaking students in the ACOP. The observation that was conducted on Felicia proved that she could not associate freely with the other stakeholders in the ACOP. Those who could interact had crossed the transition line from French to English because they dared to interact with more knowledgeable others as suggested by Reyes (2007). Shyness and an inability to boldly ask questions during learning facilitation were indications of reluctance to interact with the other English-speaking students because they were afraid that when they made mistakes in pronouncing words in English their peers would embarrass them. Their French accents also contributed to their reticence in the ACOP. The excuses they gave that the South African students spoke Zulu and Sotho also seemed to have slowed down their transition from French to English. During the focus group interview session with the South African students the South African students admitted that the French-speaking students generally did not take initiatives to become their friends. The South African students also gave excuses that the French-speaking students also spoke in French when they grouped with their French-speaking counterparts, a scenario which looked like linguistic power relations in the ACOP,

drawing on Lave and Wenger (1991:115-116). The circumstances of South African students with the French-speaking students symbolized “the continuity-displacement contradictions” proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991:115-116). The French-speaking students’ posture in terms of speaking French with their French-speaking friends and the scenario that Zulu-speaking students also spoke Zulu to their Zulu-speaking friends typified issues of linguistic power relations because the two groups stayed at both ends of a continuum. I argue that the effrontery to break the linguistic barrier between them through the tool of interaction can foster a balance between the two dimensions of linguistic power relations. This scenario appeared like what I refer to as a kind of cold war in terms of dissimilar languages.

The lecturers who taught them revealed their states of incommunicado and the challenges they faced with them. The French-speaking student advisors pointed to their reluctance to initially interact with the other English-speaking students. The manager of the pre-degree programme maintained that those who did not excel among them did not excel because they refused to interact with the English-speaking students at Montana College. The Dean of the IT Faculty cited an instance in which a certain French-speaking student refused to engage in an oral English examination because he could not have the courage to speak English, which was a part of the assessment of that module. Consequently the French-speaking student failed that English module a number of times because of his lack of courage to communicate in the English. The argument of Lave and Wenger (1991) that stakeholders in a COP need to legitimately and peripherally participate in the core of the activities of the COP becomes vital at this juncture. The French-speaking students needed to centripetally engage with the activities of the COP to attain an identity status which would describe them as such.

Pronunciation of words by South African lecturers and the rate at which the white lecturers spoke during learning facilitation were found to have delayed their transition experience from French to English because they were hindered by these issues and prevented from actively engaging with the planned and enacted curricula at Montana College. Instead of indicating their concerns they kept mute and did not inform their lecturers about their concerns. Some of them had issues with the way certain foreign black African lecturers pronounced words in the class. They did nothing to alert their lecturers that they could not understand what they said during the course of learning facilitation. Their situation was taken in this study as refusal to actively engage and participate in the ACOP with the other stakeholders who could have

interacted with them as experts to the extent that they could gradually commence their transition from French to English. Consequently it is argued that the French-speaking students had delayed transition from French to English, which is the medium of instruction, as a result of their reluctance to effectively engage with the demands of the ACOP in which they found themselves. As I argued in Chapter Two section 2.4.5 that legitimate peripheral participation may be viewed as a battleground for conflict and harmony, the experiences of the French-speaking students in terms of the dynamic forces they gave as excuses for not initially interacting with more knowledgeable others was valid. This study agrees with Wenger (1998:56) that the association in a COP may entail conflict and harmony, intimacy and politics, competition and cooperation. The envisaged factor that could evolve harmony was their stance to take the initiative to interact with the curriculum and the other stakeholders in the ACOP. It therefore implies that the proposed hypothesis is confirmed that the French-speaking students had delayed transition from French to English which was a requirement for their sustainability in the ACOP (see Chapter Five sections 5.3.5, 5.9.4, 5.14, 5.16, 5.30.4, 5.42.3, 5.45.4; Chapter Six section 6.3.6, 6.15.6, 6.21.1 and 6.23.2 for examples).

7.4 What are the curriculum experiences of students from French-speaking countries in the ACOP?

A thorough analysis of the findings in Chapters Five and Six revealed the following as curriculum experiences of the French-speaking students at Montana College. These were fragmented into the intended and hidden curricula for lucidity. I present their intended curriculum experiences as follows subsequently.

7.4.1 Intended curriculum experiences of French-speaking students in the ACOP

a) Academic acculturation and academic identity

In Chapter Five section 5.3.2, Felicia mentioned the fact that Montana College met her academic needs. She was happy to be a student at Montana College because she was learning words that were not available in French in English – an epitome of academic identity as suggested by Halic et al. (2009). She also pointed to the mode of learning facilitation as an advantage. She compared the learning of mathematics at Montana College with how she was taught in Gabon and found that she learned better at Montana College. Consequently she was found to possess academic acculturation and academic identity which are evidence of the

intended curriculum experiences. Similarly all the French-speaking students of this study were found to be in possession of academic acculturation and academic identity because of their goals to earn academic degrees in the ACOP (the domain). They needed to develop academic acculturation and academic identity to enable them to take responsibility for their learning. Academic acculturation and identity thus became curriculum experiences of the French-speaking students at Montana College because they commenced the path of gradually regaining their academic self-esteem.

b) Linguistic transition

In Chapter Five section 5.6.1 Bradley was found to require a transition from French to English. He chose to commence the process of interaction with the other English-speaking students by virtue of his character and knowledge he had that it was the way to go in order to learn the English. In Chapter Five section 5.6.4 Bradley was found engaging with his dictionary, an indication that he determined to cross the transition line from French to English. Miriam, in Chapter Five section 5.9.1 engaged her English dictionary, an indication that she needed to transit from French to English. Erika, in Chapter Five section 5.12.1 engaged her English dictionary in anticipation to learn new words in English. Belinda said in Chapter Five section 5.14.1 that she put in a double effort to learn curriculum content because she engaged in translating curriculum content from English to French and back to English. Consequently the other students learned faster than she did at Montana College. A spectrum of the linguistic experiences of all the French-speaking students reveals that linguistic transition was a curriculum experience common to them at Montana College. Without the transition they were not capable of interacting with the curriculum of study and could not interact with more knowledgeable others in the ACOP. Consequently this study supports the notion of Norton (2000:11), that a conscious effort towards the learning of a target language in a community symbolizes an investment in the learner's definition of identity. All the French-speaking students deliberately came to South Africa to learn in English. Every effort they made was geared towards attaining an identity of becoming learned in English. Since the pre-degree programme is synonymous to the academic offerings of the community college described by Bailey and Weininger (2000:14), it is argued that the French-speaking students arrived with reasonably strong underlying levels of education but with diminished language skills as was the case in the study conducted by Bailey and Weininger (2000:14). According to one of the pre-degree Mathematics lecturers at Montana College (Mr. Taylor), the French-

speaking students arrived at Montana College with strong mathematical capabilities. He said, “It seems that the Mathematics curriculum of French-speaking countries is well designed” (see Chapter Six section 6.4.1). Similarly, in Chapter Six section 6.10.1, Mr. Driessen, one of the lecturers at Montana College argued, “Once they can have the grasp of spoken and written English they usually turn out to be very excellent students”. They used the pre-degree programme to strengthen their language until they were eventually capable of earning degrees. The findings of this study support Bailey and Weininger (2000) in that aspect.

The findings of this study support the scholarly output of Ramburuth and Tani (2009) that when diverse language backgrounds are brought together in the multiculturally diverse classroom, language barriers become prevalent. In Chapter Five section 5.3.4 Felicia mentioned the incessant use of Zulu by South African students in the classroom. In Chapter Five section 5.9.1 Miriam mentioned the incessant use of Zulu by South African students during group discussions. In Chapter Five section 5.12.1 Erika also mentioned the incessant use of Zulu in the classroom. The relentless use of Zulu thus created language barriers between the French-speaking students and South African students. Consequently the French-speaking students at the ACOP experienced delayed transition from French to English, a scenario which was found to impede their degrees of interaction with the curriculum of study and the other stakeholders as they commenced legitimate peripheral participation. At the point of entry to the ACOP they could not take strides in a centripetal direction into the core of activities. This finding supports the work of Lave and Wenger (1991) that interaction is vital for learning to ensue in a COP. However as they began to interact with more knowledgeable others and the curriculum of study learning commenced and they gradually gained confidence to participate actively with the vocabulary they acquired in the course of interacting with more knowledgeable others.

c) Group work and individual presentation of topics

It was mandatory to participate in group work and individual presentation at Montana College. Certain modules such as the student skills and bridging English modules were designed to encourage communication among all the students at the pre-degree level. Felicia, in Chapter Five section 5.3.4 indicated her participation in individual presentation of a topic and association with the other stakeholders in a group. Miriam, in Chapter Five section 5.9.5 engaged in group work with the other stakeholders in the ACOP. Erika, in Chapter Five

section 5.12.4 participated in group discussions with her classmates. Belinda in Chapter Five section 5.14.4 preferred to do group work with the French-speaking students due to linguistic issues although this had the disadvantage of slowing down her linguistic transition experience from French to English. In Chapter Five section 5.16.4 Zelda participated in group work with the other stakeholders in order to learn in English. For Marilyn in Chapter Five section 5.18.1, she preferred to work with the other foreign students because they could speak together in English to avoid the South African students who intermittently spoke Zulu. Similarly, Beatrice in Chapter Five section 5.20.4 related her experience with South African students, who were engaged in group work with her. She said that South African students also had linguistic challenges in the English. Consequently, they code-switched during group work sessions but she called them to order by asking them to speak in English. Beatrice also did presentation on specific topics (Chapter Five section 5.20.4). Almost all the French-speaking students interviewed engaged in group work and individual presentations. Consequently, group work and individual presentation of topics were the intended curriculum experience of French-speaking students at Montana College. The idea of engaging students in group work and presentation of topics entails the fortitude of brokering as suggested by Wenger (1998:108). Brokering is the dynamics involved when people leave their comfort zone to engage in an enterprise. Group work and presentation of topics were initiatives to facilitate brokering among the French-speaking students. This study supports Wenger (1998:108) that brokering facilitates the movement of participants by compelling them to leave their comfort zones to interact with more knowledgeable others.

d) Inability to speak eloquently in English

In Chapter Five section 5.6.4 Bradley revealed that he could write and read the English but could not communicate effectively. Caira, in the focus group interview session deregistered from a course because she could not communicate in English (Chapter Five section 5.45.1). In Chapter Six section 6.19.1 Mr. Fletcher, a French-speaking student advisor mentioned that the French-speaking students learned to write English but could not communicate because there was a marked difference between writing, hearing and speaking English. Similarly, in Chapter Six section 6.23.2, Mr. Masada, another French-speaking student advisor mentioned that the French-speaking students did not know how to communicate in English because of shyness. Therefore, inability to communicate in English among the French-speaking students became an intended curriculum challenge among them. This finding makes the finding of

Chow (2006:109) relevant that acquisition of the language of communication in the host society is the briskness at which students comply with tenets of academic activities because English is required for the extraction of facts and information in an academic institution. Using the lens of Lave and Wenger (1991), inability to speak eloquently in English could hinder the participation and interaction of the French-speaking students with the curriculum and the other stakeholders in the ACOP. Consequently the process of learning may be hindered. According to Lave and Wenger (1991:49) the process of learning via enhanced involvement in communities of practice pertains to the entire person operating in the world of other people. This can be fostered when there is a currency of communication like a commonly agreed language of communication. At the periphery of the ACOP the French-speaking students could not get involved with the world of the other stakeholders because of linguistic challenge. Consequently, the French-speaking students could not initially engage with the other stakeholders for learning to take place. This likely resulted in delayed transition from French to English. The findings in this study agree with Lave and Wenger (1991:49) that the process of learning takes place through enhanced involvement of participants in communities of practice by the enhanced involvement of participants in the world of the other stakeholders.

e) The student advisory unit

The services rendered by the student advisors had an impact on the intended curriculum experiences of the French-speaking students at Montana College. Ornella, in Chapter Five section 5.22.4 mentioned that the student advisors assisted in solving certain problems which confronted them at Montana College. One of such problems was the issue of fees which, if unpaid, prevented them from gaining access to Montana College and subsequently from the intended and enacted curricula. The same findings were obtained from the other four French-speaking student advisors in terms of their roles at Montana College. Consequently the roles played by the French-speaking student advisors at Montana College was such that their presence assisted the French-speaking students to engage with the dictates of the ACOP, especially when they had challenging issues to resolve. It is therefore argued that the French-speaking student advisors' roles were intended curriculum experiences of the French-speaking students at Montana College. The role of French-speaking student advisors involved working for the common good of the ACOP by liaising with the French-speaking students in ways that guaranteed their survival. For example, the French-speaking student advisors

ensured that the French-speaking students interacted with English-speaking students in order to gather the required vocabulary to interact with the ACOP. Secondly, they enrolled them in English proficiency schools so as to learn English. These were attempts aimed at working to bring joint commitment to the ACOP for learning to take place. Wenger (1998:74) suggests that the kind of association which brings about joint commitment in a COP involves doing work. Consequently the French-speaking student advisors' roles support the argument of Wenger (1998:74) because they brought the dividends of joint commitment to the ACOP.

f) Student-lecturer relationship

All the French-speaking students interviewed in Chapter Five as well as the South African students interviewed in the focus group interviews attested to the fact that the lecturers at Montana College were cordial in terms of how they related to all the students. I cite Brandon in Chapter Five section 5.39.4 as an example. He said that his lecturers were approachable, a situation which gave him the fortitude to connect with the curriculum of study. He said that lecturers were welcoming as far as seeking consultation sessions to sort out academic issues were concerned. These were indications of engagement with more knowledgeable others as suggested by Reyes (2007). Consequently, student-lecturer relationships existed at Montana College and were taken as intended curriculum experiences of the French-speaking students at Montana College. Using Wenger's (1998:108) lens to analyse the scenario, it was found that the French-speaking students and their lecturers co-produced knowledge during consultation and learning facilitation. The lecturers and French-speaking students understood their roles. The issue of power relations between them was found to be normal because they co-produced knowledge in non-coercive manners. There were no traces of the "continuity-displacement contradiction" between them and their lecturers during the processes of learning facilitation and consultation sessions, drawing on the scholarship of Lave and Wenger (1991:115-116). This study agrees with Leibowitz (2009:262) that interaction between lecturers and students is vital because learning is coproduced by students and lecturers.

I use Ms. Thato's narrative in Chapter Six section 6.7.7 to indicate that she had empathy in anticipation of the requirements of French-speaking students to understand concepts. She said, "I explain slowly and I don't rush so they can benefit from the class. I ask them whether they understand or should I do it again?" The fact that she did not rush concepts in class was an indication that she knew that the French-speaking students needed special attention

because they were limited in understanding as a result of their linguistic challenges. Her efforts were in tune with the notion that she was particular about engaging them in class discussions so that they could follow academic concepts. Ms. Thato's role was that of an expert in an ACOP actively engaging the beginners in the activities of the ACOP. Her actions seem to corroborate the argument of Lave and Wenger (1991) that experts in the COP actively engage new entrants into the community until they are capable of participating in the activities of the community in a centripetal direction as they wade their ways to the domain. At tertiary level the experiences of French-speaking students with their lecturers seemed to counteract the findings of Rodriguez (2009:18) at secondary school level that facilitators of learning are rarely prepared to understand the multifaceted lives and associations that their students have with many terrains, cultures and languages. I argue based on the evidence available in this study that lecturers at Montana College were well furnished with the circumstances surrounding the French-speaking students' curriculum issues. Consequently strategies were put in place to cushion their challenges; an indication of preparedness which depicted that faculty understood the multifaceted challenges confronting them.

This study is at variance with the study of Gopal (2011) that faculty is seldom prepared to teach cross-culturally because there were a number of indications at Montana College which depicted the preparedness of faculty to teach cross-culturally. A prominent example was the institutionalization of the student advisory unit which catered for the French-speaking students from inception. Another example is the prior information that the French-speaking students needed to attend English proficiency schools to beef up their linguistic capital which they needed for scholastic interaction and engagement with the curriculum. The findings of this study regarding the preparedness of faculty members to teach cross-culturally departs from the finding of Serpell (2007) that as students in an African sociocultural perspective transit to higher education, they do so with a view to adjusting to a future world of which their lecturers have diminished knowledge of circumstances surrounding their pursuit. However, the finding of this study in terms of the rapport between the lecturers and students supports the finding of Whannell et al. (2010), that the relationship status between students and lecturers could affect their engagement in the COP. This study also agrees with Dillon (2009:345), that it is vital for a facilitator of learning to have a foreknowledge of the situation of students. The lecturers at Montana College were not oblivious of the situation of French-speaking students. They had a foreknowledge of their predicaments and this gave them the

fortitude to confront the prevailing issues. The finding of Teven and Hanson (2004:40) is therefore supported by this study that a good facilitator of learning never embarrasses students or is verbally abusive towards them. The majority of French-speaking students improved tremendously over a turnaround time of about four to five years in their linguistic adeptness as long as they associated with English-speaking students, lecturers and tutors during consultation as well as during presentation of assignments and group work.

In this study the actions taken by lecturers regarding the policy of the academic institution seemed to comply with the findings of Dall'Alba and Bamacle (2007:683) that the culture of learning is not restricted to the heads of individuals but entails integrating dimensions of knowing, acting and being within an extensive assortment of practices. The reason for this line of agreement with Dall'Alba and Bamacle is that the assorted dimensions used to stimulate learning, varying from lecture periods to tutorials, consultations and presentation of assignments all seemed to point to the school of thought that there could be a number of ways to address challenges of the curriculum in a multiculturally diverse academic institution.

g) Tutorials and consultation sessions

The manager of the pre-degree programme mentioned the ingenuity of establishing tutorial groups among the students as a means of fostering engagement with the curriculum and more knowledgeable others. In Chapter Six section 6.25.8 she argued that tutorials were “to create a sense of students not being lost in a crowd”. Similarly, she said that the institution had developed “student tutors and lecturer tutors to build more intimate relationships from an academic perspective with students”. In Chapter Five section 5.20.3, Beatrice mentioned the usefulness of tutorials in the ACOP. She said, “I like this institution because of the attention given to students during tutorials and consultation sessions”. Ornella, in Chapter Five section 5.22.3 mentioned the versatility of tutorial sessions as a means of engaging with the curriculum and experts in the ACOP. She said, “The lecturers help us with tutorials and many activities in the class”. The instances are many where tutorial classes assisted the French-speaking students to engage with the activities of the ACOP. It is therefore argued that tutorials and consultation were intended curriculum experiences of the French-speaking students at Montana College.

h) Small class sizes and personalized attention

Rosette, one of the French-speaking student advisors at Montana College, in Chapter Six section 6.15.4 mentioned small class sizes as an advantage at Montana College. This initiative was an intended curriculum experience because it was a strategy employed by Montana College to create an avenue for the engagement of students with the lecturers and the other stakeholders. She said that small class-size “enhanced the sociocultural diversity within the campus community”. Rosette meant that the smallness of classes facilitated the engagement of students with different cultures to interact and learn from one another. Ms. Sammy, another French-speaking student advisor, used the small class size initiative as a marketing strategy to parents to bring their children to Montana College in Chapter Six section 6.20.1. In Chapter Six, section 6.25.8 Ms. Hendrick, the pre-degree programme manager commented on the issue of small class sizes at Montana College as a tool for student-lecturer relationship. In Chapter Six, section 6.25.9 I observed the importance of tutorial classes as I tutored the students. This provided the opportunity for the French-speaking students to forcefully engage with the other stakeholders despite the linguistic challenges they had. Although their transition from French to English was slow tutorial sessions compelled them to liaise with the tutor and the other students. It was found that at tutorial sessions the French-speaking students began to learn new words in English. There were many instances during the interview sessions that the participants mentioned small class sizes as versatile. Consequently I argue that small class-size initiative was an intended curriculum experience of the French-speaking students at Montana College because it was part of the designed curriculum to enhance the extent of interaction among the stakeholders in the ACOP.

i) The Word Power module

Word Power was one of the modules designed to enhance the linguistic capabilities of students at Montana College. In Chapter Six section 6.7.4, Ms. Thato mentioned Word Power as an avenue that was used to revamp the linguistic challenges of students. She said that it addressed the inadequacies of language to the extent that the students could comprehend the English and apply it to their studies. The French-speaking students were beneficiaries of this initiative. Word Power was a computer based English comprehension module which addressed certain intricate linguistic challenges relating to comprehension and vocabulary. It

is argued that word power was a curriculum experience of the French-speaking students at Montana College.

j) Oral presentation

In Chapter Six section 6.9.1, Ms. Matilda pointed to the use of oral presentation to improve the communicative capacity of students at Montana College. The French-speaking students participated in the initiative because they needed to develop their abilities to communicate effectively in English. Almost all of the French-speaking students interviewed in this study attested to the fact that they engaged in oral presentation at one time or the other.

k) Mentoring initiative

In Chapter Six section 6.5.3 Mr. Taylor, one of the lecturers at Montana College mentioned mentoring as an initiative used to monitor students' progress. Each student had to choose a mentor to follow up his/her progress. During a number of observation sessions that I conducted I met Candy, the third-year Biomedicine student interviewed in this study in his office. She was taught by Mr. Taylor in the pre-degree programme. She constantly came to Mr. Taylor for counselling and mentoring. In Chapter Five section 5.27.2 Candy said, "I can never forget my pre-degree Mathematics teacher. He helps me with my modules even now that I am in third-year". The manager of the pre-degree programme, Ms. Hendrick, pointed to the mentoring initiative as an intended curriculum experience of students at Montana College (see Chapter Six section 6.25.7). Consequently, I argue that the mentoring initiative was an intended curriculum experience negotiated by some of the French-speaking students at Montana College.

l) The pre-degree programme

In Chapter Five section 5.6.2 Bradley valued the pre-degree programme as an academic path useful for adjusting to a new academic environment because he was from a French-speaking background. He said, "The pre-degree courses are essential courses that would help me cope with first-year modules". Belinda saw the pre-degree programme as a remedial route because of her experience with the public universities. She applied for admission to do medicine but her application was declined because of her linguistic challenge and because she did not meet the required number of points. She used the pre-degree programme to improve her academic skills to be eligible to do medicine at a later stage (see Chapter Five section 5.13.1). In

Chapter Five section 5.16.1 Zelda saw the pre-degree programme as a planned curriculum experience, especially because she saw the student skills module she took as important. She said, “We were taught how to manage our time so as to succeed and this has assisted me a lot to pass my examinations”. Marilyn also applauded the pre-degree programme as useful. She said, “The pre-degree programme helped me with English and subjects like student skills, to manage stress and plan my time to know how to work” (see Chapter Five section 5.18.3). There are many more instances where the French-speaking students pointed to the versatility of the pre-degree programme. I argue that the pre-degree programme was a bridging curriculum experience of the French-speaking students at Montana College because it gave them the opportunity to interact with more knowledgeable others and the curriculum of study.

The pre-degree programme, as a curriculum experience of the French-speaking students served to address issues of curriculum and learning as suggested by Winter and Dismore (2010:266). They suggest that introducing bridging modules to foundation students may prove beneficial because it is capable of addressing issues related to curriculum and learning. The linguistic transition of the French-speaking students from French to English was vital for learning to take place among them. They needed the transition to comprehend curriculum content. Consequently I argue that the pre-degree programme addressed issues related to curriculum content and the academic learning of the French-speaking students.

According to Otten (2009:410), learning takes place through participation and engagement. Learning is understood by Otten to take place through actions and interactions that reproduce and transform the social and cultural structure of a community. The French-speaking students could only participate in the curriculum with more knowledgeable others in the ACOP by virtue of their acquisition of the English. I use Marilyn as an example. She said, “The pre-degree programme helped me with English and subjects like student skills, to manage stress and plan my time to know how to work”. Her interaction with the pre-degree programme, comprising experts (e.g. the lecturers) assisted her in learning the English. Similarly, the student skills module was instrumental to her acquisition of the skills to manage academic stress and the wherewithal to manage her time for learning to take place. These events were orchestrated by her engagement with the other stakeholders in the ACOP for the appropriate dimension of learning to take place. This experience is in support of the mindset of Wenger (1998:163) regarding academic identity that it is a connection “of multi membership”. The

learning of English, student skills and the other modules were subsets of the bigger ACOP which provided the opportunity for them to develop academic identity. Academic identity in this sense gave them academic self-esteem to become what they had purposed to achieve in the end (the domain). Consequently this study agrees with Otten (2009:410) that learning takes place via engagement and interaction in an ACOP. Their interaction and engagement with academic modules was fostered by their development of academic identity.

m) Use of the English and French dictionaries

It was common practice for the French-speaking students to use English or French-dictionaries to learn vocabularies and compare as they intermittently translated curriculum content from English to French and back to English (see Chapter Five sections 5.6.4, 5.9.1, 5.12.1, 5.14.1, 5.22.1, 5.27.1, 5.30.4, 5.45.4 and Chapter Six section 6.7.1 for evidence of this claim). The use of dictionaries became curriculum experiences they confronted in the ACOP.

n) Word problems

As a result of the inability of French-speaking students to briskly cross the transition line from French to English they experienced difficulty in deciphering mathematical word problems (see Chapter Five sections 5.3.1, 5.9.4, 5.14.4, 5.44.4 and Chapter Six sections 6.3.1 and 6.13.1).

o) Use of the library

Some of the French-speaking students used the library to strengthen their linguistic proficiency. They read books written in English in an attempt to interact with the curriculum stipulations at Montana College (see Chapter Five sections 5.33.4, 5.39.1). Others relied on interaction with more knowledgeable others to strengthen their linguistic proficiency. The use of library facility became a curriculum experience of some of the French-speaking students at Montana College.

7.4.2 Hidden curriculum experiences of French-speaking students at Montana College

A number of hidden curriculum experiences were exhibited by the French-speaking students at Montana College. Some of them were academic in nature while others directly or indirectly influenced their academic experiences in terms of the curriculum of study. I subsequently present their hidden curriculum experiences:

a) Proactivity

In Chapter Five section 5.3.4 Felicia said, “If I don’t study ahead of time, it means I will lag behind in my studies and it will be more difficult to understand my studies”. The reason why she became proactive was because she had not yet made the transition from French to English. It was more difficult to understand curriculum content. Consequently, she spent more time ahead of normal lecture periods to familiarize herself with topics designated for learning. In Chapter Five section 5.12.4 Erika said, “I study before attending each lecture. When I study before attending lectures I am able to ask the lecturer questions and he explains to me”. She wrapped that segment of interview up by saying, “It is better to work ahead of time”. In Chapter Five section 5.16.4 Zelda recounted her experience by saying, “I prepare before going to the class because I don’t want to be lost”. In Chapter Five section 5.18.1 Marilyn said, “I study before attending classes because I don’t like when lecturers ask questions, and I am not able to respond. I read ahead because of the language and to know what I will be taught better”. Ornella said in Chapter Five section 5.22.4, “If I go to the class without preparing and the lecturer starts to explain, it would be hard to understand”. These are evidence that proactivity was a hidden curriculum of the French-speaking students at Montana College because it gave them the fortitude to negotiate ahead of time with the intended curriculum. Proactivity was thus seen as a common practice among the French-speaking students in the pre-degree.

b) The fear of losing French as a language of communication

The French-speaking students, particularly those who were not originally bilingual feared to lose French as a language of communication. In Chapter Five section 5.3.4 Felicia said, “I don’t want to forget French because I think it is a good language”. In Chapter Five section 5.6.4 Bradley said, “My parents don’t want me to lose French. I can’t lose French because it is natural for me to speak it”. In Chapter Five section 5.9.4 Miriam said, “Why would I lose French? The fact that I want to learn other languages does not mean I want to lose French as a language”. Erika said in Chapter Five section 5.12.4, “No (in a loud voice), I am not going to lose French”. In Chapter Five section 5.22.3 Ornella declared her linguistic identity, “French is my home language. I cannot lose it no matter what”. In Chapter Five section 5.25.2 Elijah responded, “No, I am Congolese, if I have to lose French it means that I am going to lose my Congolese identity”. Elijah’s response to my question was unique. His expression gave an understanding that language and ethnic identity are synonymous. Candy

minded losing French as a language of communication. In Chapter Five section 5.27.4 she asserted, “It is better to keep both languages; my parents don’t want me to lose French because my mum also studied in French”. This was a strong indication of familial linguistic inclination and power relation from parents to offspring. Amanda regretted in Chapter Five section 5.30.4, “I don’t want to forget French. The fact that I speak English is making me forget French gradually”. In Chapter Five section 5.33.4, Andre said, “Once I learn a language, I must not lose it because it gives me the opportunity to know the culture behind the language”. Brandon declared in Chapter Five section 5.39.4, “It is not possible for me to lose French as a language. The fact that I speak up to 7 languages should prove that I am a lover of languages”. In the focus group interview conducted with 7 French-speaking students in Chapter Five section 5.42.3, all of them unanimously said they were not ready to lose French as a language of communication. In the second focus group interview session with another cohort of French-speaking students, it was found that they were not ready to lose French as a language of communication (see Chapter Five section 5.45.3). Mr. Fletcher, one of the French-speaking student advisors corroborated the utterances of the French-speaking students in terms of how tenaciously they were attached to French by saying, “The essence is not for the French-speaking students to forget French”. Mr. Masada, a French-speaking student advisor said, “We must not forget our language because we want to remain bilingual” (see Chapter Six section 6.23.2). I therefore argue based on the evidences in this study that a hidden curriculum experience common to the French-speaking students was that they minded losing French as a language of communication.

c) Homesickness

Almost all of the French-speaking students interviewed in this study experienced homesickness. I present instances as evidence to this claim. In Chapter Five section 5.6.4, Bradley mentioned homesickness as a major challenge he experienced at Montana College. He lamented, “Apart from the English, the problem I face is homesickness. As a foreigner, I always miss home”. In Chapter Five section 5.9.4 Miriam said, “I am sometimes homesick”. Erika was asked to divulge the challenges confronting her at Montana College. She said, “It is homesickness; I miss my twin sister and my family members”. Belinda expressed homesickness as a challenge thus; “I miss my family but I have an obligation to study, so that I can achieve my goal of becoming a neurosurgeon” (see Chapter Five section 5.14.1). Beatrice seemed to have been pushed to the extent that she did not miss home too much,

however, she missed her son. In Beatrice's case she was a mature student who focused on succeeding at all cost because she was working while in Cameroon until she decided to opt for further studies in South Africa. She expressed homesickness in this manner, "I don't really miss home because I am here for a purpose. If I start to think about Cameroon, It is like I don't know why I am here. However I miss my son" (see Chapter section 5.20.4). In Chapter Five section 5.22.4 Ornella expressed the challenge she had by saying, "I am homesick because I am away from my family members and friends". Elijah said, "I experienced homesickness when I came at first because I left old friends" (see Chapter Five section 5.25.4).

Candy phoned her parents regularly, yet she had homesickness. In Chapter Five section 5.27.4 she said, "I miss everybody in my family because of homesickness". Similarly, Andre expressed feelings in terms of homesickness in Chapter Five section 5.32.1. Precious was not left out of the feelings of homesickness (see Chapter Five section 5.36.4). See Chapter Five sections 5.39.4, 5.42.3, 5.45.4 and Chapter Six sections 6.9.3, and 6.21.1 for more evidence. Consequently, it is argued that homesickness was a hidden curriculum experience of the French-speaking students at Montana College. In Chapter Three I speculated that homesickness could affect the concentration of the French-speaking students. My speculation may be true to some extent because their attention to focus on the curriculum of study at Montana College was intermittently challenged.

This study, however, supports the finding of Gu et al. (2009) that despite the fact that foreign students were in constant touch with family members and associates via emails, short message services and discussions over the phone, they still experienced homesickness. The claims of French-speaking students that the South African students incessantly spoke Zulu likely aggravated their feelings of homesickness. This study thus agrees with the finding of Summers and Volet (2008) that diminished communication between the host and foreign students could heighten the feelings of homesickness. This study supports the work of Tartakovsky (2007) that homesickness is an emotional response to cross-cultural transition and that it may result in a reduction in social participation and increased psychological suffering. It is thus argued that homesickness as a result of the incessant use of the South African languages predisposed the French-speaking students to searching for their ethnic identity.

d) Shyness

The French-speaking students were shy at Montana College, an experience which seemed to affect their participation in the ACOP. Some of them could not ask questions because they could not openly express themselves in English. I present instances from their narratives to corroborate this claim. In Chapter Five section 5.3.5 Felicia expressed her concerns because of shyness by saying, “Whenever I don’t understand a concept, I prefer asking the lecturer after the class or my friend because I am shy”. Miriam exhibited shyness by not being able to ask or answer questions in the presence of the whole class. She related her experience, “I don’t like standing in front of many people because I am a shy person”. Belinda was afraid to ask questions in the class because she was shy. She narrated her experience, “I am a shy person and I don’t want to be ridiculed. I would have asked questions in French if I was studying in the DRC because I am comfortable with French as a language”. Zelda said, “I am shy to ask questions in the class because it is my behaviour. I am afraid that other students would laugh at me when I ask questions in English”. Amanda’s case was different because she had crossed the transition line from French to English. She no longer experienced shyness as a third-year Information Technology student. Her experience was an indication that once the French-speaking students made the transition from French to English they overcame traces of shyness because they would have acquired sufficient vocabulary to participate in the ACOP (see Chapter Five section 5.30.4).

Four of the French-speaking students in the first focus group interview conducted indicated that they were shy (see Chapter Five section 5.42.3). Those who were not shy had made the transition to English and could communicate with their peers. In the second focus group interview session all of the French-speaking students agreed they were shy at one time or the other. The French-speaking student advisors also mentioned issues pertaining to shyness among the French-speaking students (see Chapter Five section 5.45.4; Chapter Six, section 6.15.6. 6.21.1, 6.23.2 and 6.25.6). I argue based on the available evidence that the French-speaking students at Montana College experienced shyness. Consequently, shyness was a hidden curriculum experience common to them, especially as new entrants into the ACOP. It was found to slow down their interaction with the curriculum and the other stakeholders because they could not boldly ask questions in the lecture rooms, but resorted to privately seeking consultation from the lecturers.

I agree with Rubin et al. (2011), in their book entitled *Social withdrawal and shyness*, that there are many reasons why people may detach from communal participation and that there are diverse terms used to describe the different dimensions of loneliness. In this study a major reason for the detachment of some of the French-speaking students was because of their linguistic challenge. Such dimensions found in this study related to reticence and outlandishness. The experience of outlandishness was revealed among the French-speaking students when I interviewed the South African students in Focus Group 3. Some of the South African students mentioned that they were not aware that there were South African students around them in the class. This was likely due to the outlandishness of some of the French-speaking students, particularly those who had protracted linguistic challenges. They did not announce their presence through rigorous participation in the core of the activities in the ACOP.

The findings of this study agree with Rubin et al. (2011) that “social withdrawal” ensues when people exhibit traces of shyness. The findings of this study agree with Nelson et al. (2008), that unnecessary silence and diminished confidence are symptoms of shyness and loneliness. This study agrees with Tackett et al. (2013) that shyness may be linked to poor association between people as was the case with some of the French-speaking students in Montana College because of the English. I support the borrowed concept of Cowden (2005), in a study conducted on worry and the associated relationship to shyness that individuals who are shy may not possess interactional skills, may exhibit self-distrust, may be encumbered by their nervousness, or display magnified feelings of biased assessment about themselves. Consequently, low levels of interactional skills may have predisposed the French-speaking students to experiencing delayed transition from French to English at Montana College.

e) Motivation to earn degrees

The French-speaking students at Montana College had different sources of motivation that kept them going in the midst of the linguistic challenges which they experienced. Felicia was motivated to pursue higher education by her family members who were university graduates. She said, “Everybody in my family has been to the university before. I also want to have a degree so that I can have a good job like every member of my family” (see Chapter Five section 5.3.4). Bradley came to Montana College because of parental influence. He said, “My parents decided that I should come to a developed country to pursue my studies” (see Chapter

Five sections 5.5.1 and 5.6.4). Miriam came to Montana College to study because in the DRC international degrees were valued (see Chapter Five section 5.9.4). Erika said, “It is my dream to be a medical doctor because my parents motivate me to be a doctor” (see Chapter Five section 5.12.4). Belinda did not want to be excluded in her family. She said, “I don’t want to be the only one left out in my family because everybody is a university graduate” (see Chapter Five section 5.14.4). Zelda wanted to be like her parents who were university graduates. She said, “I also want to be a university graduate” (see Chapter Five section 5.16.4). Marilyn was motivated by her economics lecturer to work hard in order to earn a degree (see Chapter Five section 5.18.1).

Beatrice did not have any member of her family who previously had attended a university. She personally motivated herself to further her education (see Chapter Five section 5.20.4). Ornella’s source of motivation was her parents (see Chapter Five section 5.22.4). Elijah was motivated by his father who was a lawyer (see Chapter Five section 5.25.4). Candy said, “My dad went to the university in Congo. My uncles studied in France, other members of my family went to the university” (see Chapter Five section 5.27.4). Amanda’s parents were her role model and source of motivation (see Chapter Five section 5.30.4). Brandon had good examples to follow in his family to earn a degree (see Chapter Five section 5.39.4). The French-speaking students in the Focus Group 1 had different sources of motivation (see Chapter Five section 5.42.3). In Focus Group 2, only Caira indicated that she was the source of her motivation in life. All the other French-speaking students had diverse sources of motivation to earn degrees (see Chapter Five section 5.45.4).

It is argued that the findings of this study agree with the research of Wang et al. (2009) that students from different backgrounds have diverse motives for aspiring to further their education. Parental motivation was the leading factor among the French-speaking students of this study to pursue higher education. Wang et al. (2009) reiterate that the motivation of students to excel is based upon external or internal motivation and the positive and negative influences in their lives. In this study parental motivation was categorized as internal motivation. The motivation received by the French-speaking students from their lecturers was classed under external motivation.

McCaslin (2009:143), in a study on the co-regulation of student motivation and emergent identity posits that immigrant students view school as a place of resignation and social futility. McCaslin argues that the school may be perceived as a terrain where others do not care and do not help and self-reliance is the best shot that such students have at their disposal. The experience of Caira in Focus Group 2 makes the assertion of McCaslin relevant because she had self-motivation. Although Caira was not an immigrant her experience in this regard seems to concur with the findings of McCaslin (2009) because she seemed to have become self-reliant to earn a degree. My prediction in Chapter Three that the motivating factors among French-speaking students would assist them to engage with the curriculum of the ACOP in an attempt to reach the domain seems relevant. The motivation they possessed made them attend lectures, seek consultation with lecturers and tutors until they reached the stage of full participation which is the attainment of degrees.

It therefore implies that role modelling is of the utmost importance in the pursuit of a degree among the French-speaking students. Furthermore when students are motivated to pursue higher education they seem to acquire the potential to overcome challenges until they achieve their goals as was the situation of the French-speaking students of this study. The findings of this study in terms of motivation to earn degrees seems to be supported by the work of Wooley and Brown (2007), in a study of supportive adults and the school engagement of middle class students in the United States of America. Wooley and Brown (2007) argue that the engagement of students in the academic environment seems to hinge on interest, sense of belonging, motivation, the extent of communication and the commitment of students to attending lectures. My conceptualization that the effort of supportive adults tallies with the role of experts in a COP (e.g. lecturers and tutors) becomes valid based on the findings obtained so far. It therefore seems to imply that motivation from parents is a hidden curriculum factor as far as the education of the French-speaking students were concerned at Montana College. Similarly, the motivation received by the French-speaking students from the lecturers was a hidden curriculum experience because it was not deliberately set into the curriculum of study, but facilitated the planned curriculum until the French-speaking students reached the domain. It therefore implies that the argument of Wenger (1998) that in a COP there are subsets of COPs is relevant in this study. The hidden curriculum experiences of the French-speaking students with respect to motivation from parents and lecturers who were role models to them, were subsets of the larger COP at Montana College. This study therefore

agrees with Wenger (1998) that in a COP there are subsets of a bigger COP. These subsets of COP were seen to work for the common good of the larger COP. The argument of Wenger (1998:74) that I proposed in Chapter Two section 2.3.4 that communities of practice work in terms of proffering learning for a common good becomes apposite. This is because the parents and lecturers worked latently and manifestly for the good of their children to earn degrees, an accomplishment of the domain.

f) Boldness to ask questions and complexities of non-interaction with South African students

The level of acquisition of English through interaction with the stakeholders at the ACOP determined the extent to which the French-speaking students could boldly ask questions during learning facilitation. I present instances from the French-speaking students to build up an argument. Miriam was bold to ask questions in the class probably because she had an outgoing character as I observed during the interview and during my experience of teaching her mathematics for a semester (see Chapter Five section 5.9.4). Belinda was afraid of asking questions because of her diminished vocabulary in English. She said, “I don’t want to ask questions because I am not sure of what I am going to say in English” (see Chapter Five section 5.14.1). Marilyn could not ask questions because of her low communication skills in English (see Chapter Five section 5.18.1). Beatrice was moved to ask questions because she was bilingual and had not been in touch with academics for a long time and was a mature student. She was thus aggressive to learn during learning facilitation (see Chapter Five section 5.20.4).

Ornella could ask questions in the class because her lecturers were friendly, however, she did not reach this stage immediately she got to Montana College. She had gone through stages of linguistic transformation because she was in her second year at the time of this study (see Chapter Five section 5.22.4). Elijah recounted his experience when he came to South Africa. He said, “When I came to South Africa 6 years ago, I could not ask questions. Now I ask questions” (see Chapter Five section 5.25.4). Candy said, “You know, up to first year of study, my English wasn’t good and when I asked questions, I felt I could ask incorrectly” (see Chapter Five section 5.27.4). The fact that Amanda was in the third-year IT programme seemed to have given her the courage to openly ask questions in class because she had likely gone through a series of linguistic metamorphoses (see Chapter Five section 5.30.4). Precious

said, “It is difficult for French-speaking students who are not good in English to ask questions in class. But now that we are in third-year, I don’t think there is any French-speaking student who would be afraid to ask questions” (see Chapter Five section 5.36.4). In Focus Group 1, Petunia, Ennigrace and Princess could not boldly ask questions in the class whereas Anthonia could. Anthonia said, “I ask questions, I even participate in class discussions”. My observation on Anthonia showed she was outgoing and had a reasonable command of English. She was studying journalism at Montana College. She likely developed the charisma to fit into her chosen field of study to interact with the other stakeholders via the tool of English (see Chapter Five section 5.42.3). Princess said, “I spend too much time with French-speaking students, maybe that is why I still have problems with spoken English”. Princess was in her third year of study. However, her experience seemed to limit the expression of Precious that it was not likely to have any French-speaking student in the third-year degree programme with linguistic challenges. Spending too much time with French-speaking peers could have predisposed Princess to the state of not being capable of articulating words in English together to ask questions in the class. Princess was in a state of diminished interaction with more knowledgeable others who could have assisted her with the use of English. The situation that Princess found herself in was a practical example of what lack of adequate communication with more knowledgeable others in the ACOP could imply. It implies that as Princess came into Montana College via legitimate peripheral participation she could not interact with more knowledgeable others to reach the state of full participation in the ACOP.

According to Lave and Wenger (1991:49), the process of learning via enhanced involvement in communities of practice pertains to the entire person operating in the world of other people. Princess could not operate in the world of the South African students to the extent that it could reach the stage of earning her the linguistic capital she needed to expend in the ACOP via interaction with them. Consequently, she lacked the relevant vocabulary to ask questions from lecturers in the lecture rooms. This was likely responsible for her state of reticence as far as curriculum enactment was concerned. This argument has been made based on my understanding of Tennant (1997:77), that it is futile to make claims about knowledge out of context. Consequently, I make knowledge claims based on the scenario at hand, especially because some of the French-speaking students said they were afraid to ask questions in the class. My resolution about such students is that they had not stayed long and

related well with more knowledgeable others in the ACOP to the extent of gathering sufficient linguistic capital via association with more knowledgeable others in the ACOP. Furthermore, Princess did not negotiate the pre-degree programme which could have probably given her the opportunity to negotiate the student skills module where students were taught interpersonal skills. She came directly to the degree programme because she had obtained good marks in her matriculation examinations. Her experience reveals the ingenuity of the pre-degree programme, which gave the French-speaking students who negotiated it adequate adjustment time in a welcoming environment. It thus becomes obvious that it is possible for certain participants in the ACOP to remain without actively getting involved with the tenets of the ACOP.

The second aspect of Tennant (1997:77) inclines my understanding in terms of perceiving the stakeholders in the ACOP as subsets of the larger ACOP. The experience of Princess has made it clear that she needed to interact with the South African students to acquire the necessary linguistic capital she needed to ask questions in English from lecturers during learning facilitation. The fact that she could not ask questions in the lecture room also possibly undermined her potential to actively participate in the curriculum of study with the lecturers who were experts in the ACOP. It becomes challenging to accurately say that the French-speaking students were generally not bold to ask questions. I posit that they could ask questions from the lecturers when they became confident that they had acquired enough vocabulary to communicate in English, and this tendency likely became stronger as they approached the third-year degree programme. This assertion excludes the likes of Princess because she seemed to have deliberately formed an opinion on the South African students not to interact with them. My argument becomes valid when I juxtapose the findings from the South African students with those of the French-speaking students. In Focus Group 3 I endeavoured to interview a cohort of South African students. I posed a challenging question to them to explore reasons for their minimal interaction with the French-speaking students. I was shocked at what I found.

In Chapter Five section 5.48.1, the South African students that were interviewed stated instances of French-speaking students that played soccer with them and interacted well with them in English, although they were few in number. They accused the French-speaking students of incessantly staying with their French-speaking counterparts on campus. The South

African students said the French-speaking students were equally guilty of the accusations levied against them because they also stayed with their French-speaking peers and spoke French. At such instances the South African students said they too were excluded from their discussions because they could not speak French. This was a show of what I refer to as linguistic power relations (to be discussed in full in this chapter). It was an exhibition of the “continuity-displacement contradictions” proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991:115-116). In this case, non-interaction was found to extinguish the linguistic power relations, resulting in their states of incommunicado, except when the two groups were compelled to do group work together as specified by the lecturers or the curriculum. It is therefore argued that for the boldness to ask questions to ensue among the French-speaking students, a subset of the stakeholders may have to actively engage the other subsets in interactive communication. Boldness to ask questions was therefore a hidden curriculum experience among the French-speaking students in the ACOP. In the same vein, non-interaction between the South African and French-speaking students became a hidden curriculum experience.

A more critical look at the dynamics of asking questions or not is weighed against the suggestion of Severiens et al. (2006) that an indication of formal integration of students involves their capacity to ask questions in the classroom. In this study there were mixed experiences among the French-speaking students. At pre-degree they could not ask questions in the class because of their linguistic deficiency. However, as they progressed into the mainstream degree programme some of them began to associate with more knowledgeable others as suggested by Reyes (2007). There were some of them who refused to associate with the South African students. Consequently, those French-speaking students lacked the vocabulary to ask questions in the classroom. It is therefore posited that this study agrees with the finding of Severiens et al. (2006) that an indication of engagement among students with the curriculum involves a concerted effort to ask questions during learning facilitation.

g) Translation of curriculum content from English to French and back to English

Unknown to lecturers in the lecture rooms were practices relating to the translation of curriculum content from English to French and back to English before the French-speaking students could understand the enacted curriculum. I present cases out of the many cases that I got in the course of this study. In Chapter Five section 5.9.4 Miriam engaged in translating curriculum content from English to French and back to English when the content was too

difficult for her to understand. Erika in Chapter Five section 5.12.1, said, “In the maths class it took me time to understand what was being said. I had to translate to French first before I could understand what the lecturer was saying”. Belinda did the same thing before she could understand what she was taught (see Chapter Five section 5.14.1). Zelda said, “Sometimes I translate my work from English to French, and back to English”. These were the words of Ornella in Chapter Five section 5.22.1, “Even now I still translate from English to French. In certain modules I have to translate to French before I can understand”. At this stage, Ornella was in her second year of study. It was an indication that she had not totally negotiated the necessary linguistic transition for learning in English to ensue. Elijah’s case is presented on the issue. He said, “I translated from English to French and back to English because of the way we think as French-speaking students.”

Andre never translated from English to French probably because he was multilingual. However he said, “When someone is speaking to you, no matter the language that person is speaking to you, you will hear in your language.” I understood what he tried to say in the light of the experience I had with the French-speaking students. They heard what I had said in the class, and interpreted it to French before they could understand. Five out of the six French-speaking students in the Focus Group 2 translated before they understood curriculum content (see Chapter Five section 5.45.4). In Chapter Five section 5.48.4, Stevenson, the South African student in Focus Group 3 supported the fact that the French-speaking students translated curriculum content from English to French and back to English. He said, “I see that the French-speaking students have the challenge of processing the English by translating it into French and back to English before they can understand us”.

The French-speaking student advisor, Mr. Fletcher said, “It is one thing to speak the language it is another thing to think the language”. Furthermore, he said, “When they are being taught they have to have enough time to first understand what the lecturer is teaching. They translate what the lecturer is saying into French before they now process the information”. Mr. Fletcher argued, “The more they move from one class to the other, the better they become with the language”. However, from my experience in this study, I reiterate that Mr. Fletcher’s argument was limited because the French-speaking students improved when their participation in the ACOP was worthwhile. Moving from one class or level to the other did not seem to guarantee the acquiescence of French-speaking students with the English. Active

interaction with the other stakeholders seemed to give better results. Consequently, I argue that translation of curriculum content from English to French and back to English was a hidden curriculum experience common to most of the French-speaking students at Montana College.

h) Unique learning style

Despite the fact that I had been facilitating learning to a number of French-speaking students, I came across a unique learning style common to them in this study. According to the narratives obtained so far from the French-speaking students and the French-speaking student advisors the French-speaking students could write and read. Their major challenge was how to understand what they read and wrote. It was found that they had a unique way of learning during learning facilitation. In Chapter Five section 5.42.3, the French-speaking students in the focus group interview chorused how they learned best. They said there were words that lecturers pronounced that they were not familiar with. The only times they learned were when the lecturers took the initiative to write what had been said during learning facilitation on the board. Similarly, in another focus group interview session the French-speaking students supported what the French-speaking students had said in the other focus group interview session.

An astonishing finding came from one of the students I had taught Mathematics (see Chapter Five section 5.45.4). She said whenever I explained mathematical concepts in the lecture room she patiently waited until I wrote on the white board that every other thing I previously said was not comprehensible to her because the terminology in French is different from the terminology in English as far as Mathematics is concerned. Consequently it is argued that a hidden curriculum experience common to most French-speaking students was the unique learning style which involved the facilitator of learning taking the initiative to summarize what had been explained verbally on the white board. According to Caira, when unfamiliar words were written on the white board she looked for the meanings of such words in the dictionary before she could finally understand the content of the lecture.

i) Accents and the pace at which lecturers spoke during learning facilitation

The French-speaking students identified accents as part of the challenges they confronted at Montana College. This was expected because of the sociocultural diversity at Montana

College. I present instances where the French-speaking students complained about the different accents of lecturers. Bradley was initially not able to comprehend the white lecturers because of their accents (see Chapter Five section 5.6.5). Zelda carefully listened to her white lecturers when they spoke in class because of their accents, but preferred the accents of foreign lecturers because she was familiar with them (see Chapter Five section 5.16.1). Elijah was of a different opinion. He admitted he also had problems with his French accent. He accommodated the other lecturers and trained his ears to listen attentively when they spoke in class (see Chapter Five section 5.25.4). Candy did not understand the accents of her white lecturers at pre-degree. She began to watch CNN and listened to the news to learn different accents (see Chapter Five section 5.27.1). Amanda did not have issues with the accents of her lecturers. This was likely because she had quick transition from French to English and had acclimatized to the serenity of the ACOP (see Chapter Five section 5.30.4). Andre had issues with accents before he got to the ACOP but he overcame the challenge prior to reaching Montana College at the English proficiency school (see Chapter Five section 5.33.4).

In Focus Group 1 (see Chapter Five section 5.42.3) Onthatile did not have issues with the accents of white South African lecturers. Her challenge was with the accents of the South African lecturers. She admitted that she also had the Congolese accent. She watched American movies to correct her Congolese accent and began to adjust to the challenging accents over time. Stephanus tried to cope with the accents of lecturers by trying to comprehend how they spoke. His major issue was with the accents of the white South African lecturers. Marthe said, "There are too many accents here". She had issues with the rate at which the white lecturers spoke during lecture periods. She had a tough experience with the white lecturers at pre-degree. Cony adjusted to the accents of the lecturers in the ACOP. She said her major challenge was that the other students had issues with her Cameroonian accent. Violet had issues with the different accents of the lecturers and the speed at which the white lecturers spoke during learning facilitation. Similarly, three of the respondents of Focus Group 2 had issues with the accents of lecturers (see Chapter Five section 5.45.4).

The findings of this study in relation to the diverse accents in the ACOP is supported by the work of Halic et al. (2009), in a phenomenological investigation of international students at a large public research institution. They suggest that foreign students recognized accent as an important feature in determining their understanding of concepts and values necessary for

survival. The issue of accents was also revealed in this study as a major source of challenge to the French-speaking students who could hardly understand what was being taught in the classroom. The standpoints of the French-speaking students in the ACOP were indicative of the importance of accents because their comprehension could be hindered. This could affect their participation in the ACOP, especially as they entered the pre-degree programme or first-year as legitimate peripheral participants. The issue of accents could limit their involvement in their stride towards centripetal participation as suggested by Lave and Wenger (1991). However the French-speaking students were seen to have gradually adjusted to the accents of lecturers with elapsed time because of their doggedness to earn degrees. There were some of them in the third-year degree programme who still could not totally adjust to how the lecturers spoke during facilitation of learning.

J) Sense of belonging

Sense of belonging among the French-speaking students was found to predispose them to developing academic acculturation and academic identity. The following experiences were found as evidence of sense of belonging among the French-speaking students at Montana College. Felicia agreed that she had a sense of belonging to the ACOP because she was welcome to participate in the ACOP by certain South African and foreign students (see Chapter Five section 5.3.3). She mentioned that they taught her English, understood her linguistic challenges and did not embarrass her when she made grammatical mistakes. Bradley developed a sense of belonging based on the level of understanding displayed by his lecturers towards him (see Chapter Five section 5.6.3). Miriam demonstrated that she possessed a sense of belonging by saying she was comfortable with the academic stipulations at the ACOP (see Chapter Five section 5.9.3).

Erika was stimulated to demonstrate a sense of belonging to the ACOP by virtue of the diversity on campus. She had friends from the different countries of Africa who taught her the use of English (see Chapter Five section 5.12.3). Belinda saw Montana College as her route to attaining the social class mobility stratum (see Chapter Five section 5.14.3). Zelda found solace in her lecturers because they mentored her to achieve success (see Chapter Five section 5.16.3). Marilyn spoke about the comfort of the academic environment as her index of a sense of belonging (see Chapter Five section 5.18.3). Beatrice attached great importance to the patience of the lecturers at Montana College when they taught her (see Chapter Five

section 5.20.3). Ornella was positive about the academic assistance she received from her lecturers, and this gave her a sense of belonging to Montana College (see Chapter Five section 5.22.3). Elijah said, “My lecturers are dedicated”, an indication of his attachment to Montana College (see Chapter Five section 5.25.3).

Candy had a sense of belonging to Montana College because of the academic support she received from the lecturers and tutors (see Chapter Five section 5.27.3). Amanda was forced to have a sense of belonging to Montana College because the high school fees she paid became burdensome, yet she was in her third-year degree programme (see Chapter Five section 5.30.3). Andre found a connection to Montana College because he had the opportunity to do an internship programme (see Chapter Five section 5.33.3). Precious had a sense of belonging to Montana College because of the small class-sizes which gave her the opportunity to interact with her lecturers (see Chapter Five section 5.36.3). Brandon established a rapport with his lecturers, and enjoyed the multicultural diversity on campus (see Chapter Five section 5.39.3). The French-speaking students in Focus Group 1 developed a sense of belonging to the ACOP because of the opportunity to learn in English (Caira, Anthonia, Princess, Frida, Petunia and Ennigrace) (see Chapter Five section 5.44.3).

To ascertain the validity of what the French-speaking students mentioned about having a sense of belonging, I extended the inquiry to the South African students in Focus Group 3. Five out of the six South African students believed that the French-speaking students had a sense of belonging to Montana College. Stevenson was the only South African student that did not take a stance on the issue of whether the French-speaking students had a sense of belonging to Montana College or not. His case was understandable because he did not associate with any of the French-speaking students at Montana College (see Chapter Five section 5.48.3). Rosette, a female French-speaking student advisor indicated that the French-speaking students who were academically inclined had a sense of belonging to Montana College whereas the ones that were lackadaisical did not. This gave me another orientation to having a sense of belonging as an indication of the future goals of students. It implies that as long as the French-speaking students had goals to achieve, they were bound to develop the sense of belonging that would give them the necessary academic acculturation and academic identity to succeed. Consequently such students were found to interact with the presented and

enacted curricula and the other stakeholders at Montana College (see Chapter Six section 6.15.8).

Mr. Clement (French-speaking student advisor) mentioned that none of the French-speaking students came to complain about being ill-treated. He believed they acclimatized to Montana College because they developed a sense of belonging (see Chapter Five section 6.17.4). Mr. Fletcher (French-speaking student advisor) said that the presence of French-speaking student advisors at Montana College made the acclimatization experience of the French-speaking students viable. Consequently he believed they had a sense of belonging to Montana College (see Chapter Five section 6.19.2). Mr. Masada (French-speaking student advisor) was of the opinion that the sacrifice made by the parents of the French-speaking students in terms of paying high school fees was sufficient to create a sense of belonging to Montana College in them (see Chapter Five section 6.23.2).

My conceptualization in Chapter Three section 3.5 that the ACOP was an epitome of academic and social transactional events, which facilitates the track of participants to the domain, was reasonable. Furthermore, I speculated that their acculturation to the ACOP was a threat. After compiling the findings in terms of whether they had a sense of belonging, I posit that threat of acculturating to the ACOP was overcome by their interaction with the curriculum of study despite the linguistic challenges they faced. Consequently, the findings of this study seem to agree with Wooley and Brown (2007) that the engagement of students in an academic environment depends on their acquisition of a sense of belonging, motivation and the degree of communication and commitment of students to attending lectures in that institution. I look at the yardsticks proposed by Chow (2007) as indicators of a sense of belonging to an academic institution. These include a positive indication of friendship between the French-speaking students and South African students and the other stakeholders in the ACOP. In Focus Group 3 one of the South African students mentioned that he played soccer with some of the French-speaking students and they communicated well. This was an example of positive indication of friendship (see Chapter Five section 5.48.3). Some of the French-speaking students also attested to making friends with a number of South African students. I agree with the definition proposed by Capra and Steindl-Rast (1991:14) that the concept of belonging has an undertone of taking part in an enterprise and becoming familiarly involved in an actuality surpassing the participants. An understandable portion of Capra's and

Steindl-Rast's (1991) definition presents the situation of the French-speaking students as finding their place at Montana College. Consequently I argue that the French-speaking students found their place at Montana College by virtue of the fact that they were determined to learn in English until they earned degrees.

Their interaction with the curriculum and the other stakeholders in the ACOP makes the findings of this study agree with Cummins (1996:2) that "When students' developing sense of self is affirmed and extended through their interactions with teachers, they are more likely to apply themselves to academic effort and participate actively in instruction. The consequent learning is the fuel that generates further academic effort". This finding is applicable to this study because the French-speaking students engaged in learning English so as to participate in the ACOP by interacting with the curriculum of study and the other stakeholders. The rapport they had with their lecturers and tutors seemed to give them the sense of belonging they needed to engage with the stipulations of the planned and enacted curricula. The accumulation of the necessary vocabulary to interact with the curriculum and the other stakeholders likely yielded further scholastic effort to earn degrees. Therefore the exhibition of a sense of belonging among the French-speaking students in the ACOP was a hidden curriculum experience.

k) Premonition and anticipation

Premonition and anticipation were hidden curriculum experiences which seemed to enhance the participation of the French-speaking students in the curriculum at Montana College. I cite a number of instances from the findings of this study to support this claim. Felicia was initiated to come to Montana College because her parents told her that Montana College could predispose her to receiving academic attention, being a private institution (see Chapter Five section 5.3.4). Bradley had a premonition that South Africa was a more developed country; his parents suggested he had to study at Montana College (see Chapter Five section 5.6.4). Miriam came to study in South Africa because in the DRC international degrees were valued for employment (see Chapter Five section 5.9.4). Erika had a premonition and anticipation that private institutions were excellent at assisting students to cope academically (see Chapter Five section 5.12.4). Zelda and Marilyn had the premonition to study in English and Montana College was adequate to achieve their goals (see Chapter Five sections 5.16.4 and 5.18.4 respectively). Beatrice wanted to get rid of monotony, hence she opted to study in

South Africa (see Chapter Five section 5.20.4). Ornella studied the development in Gabon and wanted to be bilingual because that was the trend. She aspired to become a diplomat (see Chapter Five section 5.22.4). Precious was moved to study in South Africa because of her desire to work in the medical profession (see Chapter Five section 5.36.4). It is thus argued that the French-speaking students at Montana College experienced premonition and anticipation as hidden curriculum experiences, which triggered their involvement and integration into the ACOP.

1) Determination to succeed, strong work ethics and discipline

Determination to succeed was commonly found among the French-speaking students at Montana College. The high school fees paid by their parents were found to inform their connectedness to the principles of success. They all agreed that the secret of success is hard work (see Chapter Five sections 5.22.4 and 5.25.4 for examples). I cite a number of instances from their narratives in Chapter Five supported by the narratives of the other stakeholders in Chapter Six. Bradley, Felicia and Beatrice were examples of determination to achieve excellence (see Chapter Five sections 5.3.4, 5.6.5 and 5.20.4 respectively). Determination was therefore a hidden curriculum experience of most of the French-speaking students at Montana College.

In one of the focus group interviews with the French-speaking students of this study, Cony, Onthatile Stephanus and Rachel believed in working hard to achieve their goals (see Chapter Five section 5.42.3). The other stakeholders were not left out in the recognition of the strong work ethics displayed by the French-speaking students at Montana College. Mr. Taylor, one of the Mathematics lecturers in pre-degree, emphasized their commitment to hard work (see Chapter Six section 6.5.9). Ms. Thato, one of the student skills lecturers mentioned that they usually submitted assignments before the due date, and carried the English dictionary everywhere in anticipation to learn new words in English (see Chapter Six section 6.7.1). Strong work ethic was a hidden curriculum experience of the French-speaking students at Montana College, and it enhanced their participation in the activities of the ACOP, in an attempt to reach the domain.

Discipline was another hidden curriculum experience exhibited by the French-speaking students at Montana College. Bradley, for example passed all the modules he registered for in

the pre-degree with distinction. During the interview session I asked him whether he had ever failed any module. He screamed and said, “No I have never and will never fail any module” (see Chapter Five section 5.6.5). Erika, despite the linguistic challenge she confronted made sure to participate in group discussions in an attempt to integrate and learn in the ACOP (see Chapter Five section 5.12.4). Consequently, the findings in this study agree with Wang et al. (2009) that non-traditional students exhibit traits of inherent discipline to excel. Similarly, this study’s findings in terms of the inherent discipline possessed by the French-speaking students agrees with the findings of Durkheim (1925, 1961) that discipline is a strong underlying factor which determines the degree of excellence among students.

m) Market day

The market day was a strategy to internationalize Montana College, where different cultures are showcased for the other students to see and learn. It created a sense of belonging to Montana College in the minds of the French-speaking students and the other students present. It gave the French-speaking students the feeling that they were in their countries of origin (see Chapter Five section 5.18.3, 5.22.4 and Chapter Six section 6.17.3). The market day experience was a hidden curriculum experience which was a strategy to internationalize the ACOP.

n) Indecent dressing

Caira expressed disgust at the indecent manners of dressing by female students at Montana College (see Chapter Five section 5.45.4). Belinda expected the female students to dress decently because the way they dressed exposed females and it was not so in her country (see Chapter Five section 5.14.5). Zelda said, “I don’t like the way South African female students dress” (see Chapter Five section 5.16.1). Marilyn said, “I don’t want to learn the South African culture because I don’t like how South African students dress. It is like they are exposing me as a woman” (see Chapter Five section 5.18.4). Amanda did not like how people dressed generally (see Chapter Five section 5.30.4). Indecent dressing was a hidden curriculum experience of female French-speaking students in the ACOP.

o) Linguistic incongruity

This was a situation where the French-speaking students in the ACOP neglected their responsibility in terms of speaking English. When they were with their French-speaking peers

instead of speaking in English they spoke incessantly in French. One of them said each time she travelled home she almost forgot how to speak in English until she returned to the campus (see Chapter Five sections 5.30.4, 5.36.4, 5.39.1, 5.45.4 and Chapter Six sections 6.5.3, 6.7.5, 6.9.2). Consequently I argue that linguistic incongruity was a hidden curriculum experience of the French-speaking students and it was found to delay their transition from French to English.

7.5 Summary

From the available evidence in this study, it is vivid that a combination of hidden curriculum experiences had an impact on the engagement of the French-speaking students at Montana College. The impact of linguistic challenge was found to have delayed their comprehension of the planned and enacted curricula because English was the currency of communication. Issues bordering on accents and the pace at which the white lecturers spoke during learning facilitation played important roles in their comprehension of the planned and enacted curricula. Some of them complained about the accents of South African lecturers. In section 7.6 the first research subquestion is explored by considering the hypothesis drawn.

7.6 The first research subquestion

Why do French-speaking students negotiate higher education through the pre-degree programme in the academic community of practice? In an attempt to answer the first research subquestion, the following hypothesis was projected:

7.6.1 Hypothesis 2

French-speaking students negotiate higher education through the pre-degree as a result of their inability to demonstrate compliance with the demands of first-year main degree programme.

7.7 Confirmation/disconfirmation of hypothesis 2

I commence this discussion by referring to the narratives obtained from the French-speaking students of this study and those from the stakeholders. The first major reason why the French-speaking students were not directly admitted to the public universities of South Africa was because their qualifications were rated a step lower than the South African matriculation examinations. Consequently, the pre-degree route was the choice they had. A look at the prominent narrative used to describe Belinda reveals the reason why she came to Montana

College to study biomedicine. In Chapter Five sections 5.13.1 she said, “I want to do Biomedicine but I was not accepted at any public university”. The entry requirements at most public universities required that she could speak eloquently in English and demonstrate competence in terms of specific subject related matters before she could be accepted. Her DRC qualifications were analysed and found below the South African standard entry requirements. Consequently, she moved to the private provider of higher education to negotiate the pre-degree programme in anticipation that the public university would accept her to take up medicine after the completion of her degree programme (see Chapter Five section 5.14.4).

In Chapter Five section 5.15.1 Zelda was turned down at the public university because her matric result was below the required standard. It was easier for her to be accepted at Montana College, being a private provider of higher education. In Chapter Five section 5.17.1 Marilyn said, “I was not accepted to the Tshwane University of Technology and the University of Johannesburg because they said my result was not good enough.” She elaborated by saying, “They also said my English was not good enough.” The situation of Beatrice was different at Montana College; she came into the degree programme without negotiating the pre-degree route because her marks were a lot better to be accepted to the mainstream degree programme. Secondly, she was bilingual, from the English-speaking part of Cameroon but she spoke French fluently. She could not get admission to the public university as well because the standards were too high (see Chapter Five section 5.19.1). Elijah wrote his matriculation examinations in South Africa. Consequently he was accepted to the first-year degree programme because he passed very well (see Chapter Five section 5.24.1). Candy was told to re-write the South African matriculation examinations if she wanted to study at the public university (see Chapter Five section 5.26.1).

In Chapter Six section 6.15.2 Rommy, the French-speaking student advisor, said if the French-speaking students who could not speak English properly were admitted directly to the mainstream degree programme, they failed a number of times. The manager of the pre-degree programme, Ms. Hendrick said, “The pre-degree programme was originally started to assist students who didn’t meet the degree criteria, to have an access path to those degrees” (for more information, see Chapter Six section 6.24.1). Consequently, I argue that the French-speaking students negotiated higher education through the pre-degree route as a result of their

inability to demonstrate compliance with the demands of first-year main degree programme in the ACOP. The findings obtained so far confirm the validity of the hypothesis drawn, and answer the first research subquestion of this study. I argue that the French-speaking students of this study negotiated the pre-degree route to first-year degree programmes because they could not demonstrate adequate achievements in their matriculation examination results brought from their countries. Secondly, they needed to demonstrate adequate linguistic capabilities to interact with the curriculum and the other stakeholders in the ACOP. I argue that the speculations of Fraser and Killen (2003:254) that when students are admitted to a HEI they will be capable of successfully completing the course for which they are permitted to enrol seem valid. They propose that students who have demonstrated an above-average performance in their school matriculation assessment will be able to do well at the tertiary level. The pre-degree programme was thus found as a remedial path to correct the inadequacies of students at the secondary school level before they start the main degree programme. Similarly I agree with the notion of Goos et al. (2011:105) that the shift that students must embark upon in switching from high school to tertiary institution involves enormous tasks that deserve consideration (Goos et al., 2011:105). The consideration as far as the French-speaking students of this study were concerned, bordered on their linguistic transition from French to English, the tool of communicating with the curriculum of study and the other stakeholders in the ACOP. It also entailed taking a critical look at the entry requirements of students before they were accepted to the degree programme.

I argue in support of Moja (2004:34) that the entry requirements of students aiming to pursue higher education should be questioned to avoid academic suicide, as I conceptualized from the work of Durkheim (1925, 1961). The reason is that if students are admitted to pursue higher education without adequate considerations in terms of their linguistic proficiency and the capacity to negotiate academic rigour, dropout may ensue. I support the argument of Tinto (1975) that interaction in an academic environment is pivotal to the sustainability of students to avoid dropout. If students are not capable of proficiently interacting with the curriculum and the stakeholders in an ACOP eventual dropout may result. I argue that the acquisition of English as language of interaction is pivotal to the legitimate peripheral participation of students in an ACOP. This is because they require English to interact with more knowledgeable others as they take their strides to full participation as suggested by Lave and Wenger (1991). The argument of Rommy supports this claim because she said that

some of the French-speaking students who were directly admitted to negotiate the first-year degree programme dropped out because they could not comprehend the English which was the tool of communicating the curriculum to students (see Chapter Six section 6.15.2).

7.8 The second research subquestion

Do French-speaking students negotiate challenging experiences in terms of the intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula in the academic community of practice?

7.8.1 Hypothesis 3

French-speaking students negotiate challenging experiences in terms of the intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula in the academic community of practice.

7.9 Confirmation/disconfirmation of hypothesis 3

In Chapter Seven sections 7.3 to 7.5 I argued extensively that the French-speaking students of this study negotiated challenges in terms of the intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula at Montana College. They experienced delayed transition from French to English, and could not briskly comprehend the curriculum of study at the periphery of the ACOP as they legitimately and peripherally participated in the activities of the ACOP with more knowledgeable others. Hidden curriculum experiences in terms of shyness, lack of boldness to ask questions, the fear of losing French as a language of communication, issues with accents on campus, and linguistic incongruity, to mention but a few, as specified from section 7.3 to 7.5 were found to compound the challenges they confronted in the ACOP. Consequently, this hypothesis is confirmed that the French-speaking students negotiated challenging experiences in terms of the intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula in the ACOP. Consequently, to answer the research subquestion at this point, I posit that the French-speaking students in the ACOP negotiated challenging experiences in terms of the intended, enacted, assessed and hidden curricula in the ACOP.

7.10 The third research subquestion

How do hidden curriculum experiences impact on the planned, enacted and assessed curricula experiences of French-speaking students in the academic community of practice?

7.10.1 Hypothesis 4

Hidden curriculum experiences play important roles in the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students in the academic community of practice.

7.11 Confirmation/disconfirmation of hypothesis 4

In an attempt to confirm or disconfirm this hypothesis I refer to section 7.4.2, which extensively unravels the hidden curriculum experiences of the French-speaking students of this study. I begin with proactivity, an initiative taken by a number of the French-speaking students to deal with their linguistic challenge. Proactivity played an important role because it made the French-speaking students take precautionary measures to revamp their linguistic challenge. Studying ahead of lecture periods was seen as a proactive measure in this regard. It gave them an adjustment time to familiarize themselves with curriculum content before the commencement of learning facilitation. Proactivity was thus a hidden curriculum experience which fostered the French-speaking students' interaction with the planned and enacted curricula in an attempt to comply with the assessed curriculum.

The fear of losing French as a language of communication seemed to have created the regularity of constantly communicating with French-speaking peers at Montana College. Many of the French-speaking students saw it necessary to communicate in English with the curriculum of study but maintained their commitment to communicate in French with their peers because they seemed to see communicating in French as an attachment to their cultural roots, hence their identity. This led to what I term linguistic incongruity in this study, a situation which seemed to undermine their proficiency in English in an attempt to maintain their original French identity. As they attempted to maintain their French identity their communication and interaction with more knowledgeable others seemed to suffer because up to the third-year degree programme some of the French-speaking students could not make friends with the English-speaking students to the point of fluently conversing in English. The acquired notion that South African students kept away from them likely contributed to their states of incommunicado. Consequently I argue that the fear of losing French as a language of communication seemed to have subjected the French-speaking students at Montana College to the point that they could not completely integrate into the ACOP. The fear of losing the French language was thus seen as the major reason that they constantly declared their French identity because they feared to relinquish it.

From the available evidence in section 7.4.2, it is posited that my research hypothesis is confirmed that hidden curriculum experiences play important roles in the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students in the ACOP. To answer the research question in

this regard I posit that the fear of losing French as a language of communication delayed their transition from French to English and limited their comprehension of the English used to communicate the curriculum and affected how they demonstrated compliance with the assessed curriculum.

In the same vein shyness, boldness to ask questions, translation of curriculum content from English to French and back to English, issues of accents, the speed at which white lecturers spoke during lectures and isolation to mention but a few were likely responsible for their inability to briskly transit from French to English. These were the hidden curriculum experiences which seemed to play important roles in the curriculum experiences of the French-speaking students in the ACOP. To answer the research subquestion it is posited that an array of hidden curriculum experiences specified in section 7.4.2 impacted on the curriculum experiences of the French-speaking students in the ACOP.

7.12 The fourth research subquestion

What are the effects of sociocultural factors on the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students in the academic community of practice?

7.12.1 Hypothesis 5

Sociocultural factors play vital roles in the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students in the academic community of practice.

7.13 Confirmation/disconfirmation of hypothesis 5

In an attempt to confirm or disconfirm hypothesis 5, I bring into the limelight the meaning of sociocultural factors in the context of this study. These pertain to the use of language, acculturation and mediation of identity. It was found that the French-speaking students could not acculturate and mediate their identity with the mainstream society because of the perceptions of the French-speaking students of the mainstream society that South Africans were generally not welcoming. However, the discussion in this section would be in the direction of analyzing their academic acculturation and academic identity, which they developed in anticipation of their quests to earn academic degrees. I commence my argument by looking at the effect of language on the curriculum experiences of the French-speaking students in the ACOP from first year to the third year degree programme.

7.13.1 Effect of language on the French-speaking students in the pre-degree programme

I refer to the narratives of the French-speaking students in Chapter Five and the narratives of the other stakeholders in Chapter Six that the French-speaking students were linguistically challenged and needed to negotiate a transition from French to English to support my argument. Out of the diverse evidence available in Chapters Five and Six, I use the narrative of Felicia (a pre-degree student from Gabon at Montana College) in chapter Five, section 5.2.1 to illustrate the linguistic and social capital that accompanied her to the entry level of Montana College (pre-degree), and how these factors impacted on her curriculum experience at pre-degree level. Reflecting on Felicia's experience when she followed the pre-degree programme, she said, "When the lecturer is teaching, sometimes I don't understand." The reason for her lack of understanding was due to the linguistic challenge in the LoLT at the point of entry into the ACOP (the pre-degree programme). According to Wenger (1998), a COP is bounded by a domain, which in this case symbolizes the ACOP (Montana College's academic space).

Felicia came in to Montana College with an endowment of linguistic (French and little understanding of English acquired from the English school that she attended in South Africa prior to the commencement of the pre-degree programme), and social capital (a demonstration of inherent character and cultural traits) which she needed to expend at pre-degree level with the existing linguistic capital (LoLT), institutional social and scholastic capital at Montana College (lectures, support system, tutorials and consultation with lecturers). Her linguistic (LoLT) and social assets at pre-degree level were not up to measure with the institutional assets that were put in place (LoLT and the intended, enacted and assessed curricula). Felicia had to begin a new path to renegotiate her linguistic and social assets with the educational and cultural assets at Montana College. The French-speaking students at pre-degree level encountered a clash in terms of having to renegotiate their linguistic and cultural capital with the linguistic, social and scholastic capital put in place at Montana College.

Furthermore Felicia's experience in the mathematics classroom was evidence that her linguistic capital was low as she voiced her concerns, "In mathematics when I came the first time to this institution it was difficult to understand the subject because I couldn't understand

the English”. These were pointers to the fact that the LoLT is a predictor of acquiescence with the intended and enacted curricula. This finding supports the finding of Yeh et al. (2008) that the language of instruction is a cursor that indicates the extent of engagement among students. Felicia’s curriculum experience in terms of the LoLT supports the finding of Chow (2006:109) that aptitude in English is a vital issue to be considered in the requirement, briskness, and straightforwardness through which students adjust to an environment dominated by the English language. Felicia’s linguistic incompetence further corroborates Chow’s (2006:109) argument that the LoLT is needed for exchange of ideas, and for gathering daily facts concerning the new culture. In this study language proficiency in terms of the LoLT is taken as the navigational device which points towards the accomplishment of the planned, enacted and assessed curricula. Consequently Felicia was not doing well academically at the pre-degree level, despite being legitimately and peripherally located at the ACOP.

A point of explanation ensues from Felicia’s storyline at the boundary of the pre-degree programme. Using the LPP model as yardstick to explain the curriculum experience of Felicia, as a representative sample of the other French-speaking students at the periphery of the ACOP, it becomes obvious that Felicia came into the academic institution with a diminished linguistic capital (LoLT), which shielded her from actively engaging with the intended, enacted and assessed curricula. At the borderline (pre-degree level) she came to Montana College as a novice, using Wenger’s (1998) lens, with her paraphernalia in terms of language and social capital. She needed to interact with more conversant others (English-speaking students) to become integrated into the academic system into full participation, which guarantees compliance with the tenets in the academic institution until full participation status is attained.

Felicia also had low social capital, a vital ingredient for association and integration into the academic institution as she reiterated, “I don’t like to talk where there are many people”. Felicia’s utterance in the area of not feeling free to communicate in the midst of her classmates was a demonstration of quietness acquired through her state of *incomunicado*. Reticence was thus seen as a hidden curriculum experience which attempted to truncate her compliance with the intended, enacted and assessed curricula. Her inability to interact at the border of entering into the main degree programme (pre-degree) seemed to have elongated

her stay at the periphery of the ACOP. Consequently, Felicia's process of learning was slowed down. In this study, academic performance was located within the terrain of compliance with the tenets of the intended, enacted and assessed curriculum. A stipulation at the ACOP entailed full compliance with the LoLT and ability to interact with the intended, enacted and assessed curricula. Felicia lacked the necessary linguistic and social capital to foster compliance with these dimensions of the curriculum at the pre-degree level, so a process of re-negotiation was set in motion as discussed subsequently.

Felicia seemed to be at the risk of dropping out within the first few weeks of starting the pre-degree programme. Her susceptibility to dropping out was a similitude of suicide, referred to as "academic suicide" in this study by inference from the work of Durkheim (1961) (see Chapter Two, section 2.6). The scholarly work of Merriam et al. (2003:172) is used to explain how novices (like Felicia) become full community members, which is a depiction of compliance with the curriculum of the academic institution. Merriam et al. (2003) stipulate that at the periphery of the academic institution (pre-degree level for example), a level of interaction has to be initiated until participants grow into full community members. Growing to become full community members is a depiction of compliance with the language used to disseminate the ACOP curriculum (LoLT). Linguistic and social capital were what Lave (1997:27) referred to as the learning curriculum. The learning curriculum entails a measure of possession of the vital linguistic and social capital, which may involve the ability to seek consultation with more conversant others (e.g. lecturers and tutors), and having the right academic identity towards the academic institution, drawing on Halic et al. (2009). The learning curriculum also symbolizes a hidden curriculum attribute which may not be specified in the intended and enacted curriculum, but seems to be a demonstration of ardent character and beliefs in terms of the values attached to succeeding at the tertiary level. A further analysis of Felicia's experience revealed the knack to move ahead when she reiterated that she was getting better because she began to engage with lecturers during consultation hours. Felicia's ploy to seek consultation re-opened the door of intellectual negotiations at the border of the ACOP.

Furthermore, a valuable curriculum experience enjoyed by Felicia was in the area of personalized attention because the class-sizes at Montana College were moderate as she said in Chapter Five, section 5.3.4, "We are not many here, and the lecturer gives us attention".

These ideas seem to be in conformity with the findings of Lave and Wenger (2002:57) that despite being peripherally placed the newcomer to the COP builds up a character or identity through considerable interaction in the community with the quest to advance towards total membership. Consequently, it is argued in this study that, at the point of entry through the pre-degree programme, French-speaking students experienced degrees of linguistic challenge. Their curriculum experiences were challenged because of their requirements to transit from French to English, but they seemed to possess the knack to forcefully advance into the ACOP.

At first-year degree level, French-speaking students seemed to have gained a little bit more of linguistic stamina to cope with the curriculum at Montana College (the ACOP). The extent of social capital capable of enhancing acquiescence with English largely depended on the inherent character of the French-speaking students to relate with more conversant others in the ACOP (see Chapter Five section 5.48.1 for the comments of South African students in Focus Group interview 3).

7.13.2 Effect of language on the French-speaking students in the first-year degree programme

I use Belinda's storyline to support arguments at this stage. Belinda applauded the pre-degree programme when she got to first year. She confirmed that she was improving in terms of English comprehension. A probable reason for her brisk improvement could be linked to the fact that she began to relate well with her classmates who assisted her in the use of English. Her character was not the one inclined in the direction of unnecessarily keeping quiet. Belinda's English-speaking and writing abilities seemed to have improved for compliance with the intended, enacted and assessed curricula to have resulted in academic excellence. According to document analysis made in section 5.14.6 of Chapter Five, Belinda did well in her modules. In mathematics she had a distinction and never got below 70% in most of the modules she took. It is therefore argued that a probable posture of French-speaking students at first-year of study, with the commensurate level of linguistic and social capital, seemed to evolve in learning that results in academic performance.

Belinda's experience was that of mutual engagement in the ACOP. Her storyline is supported by the finding of Merriam et al. (2003) that the COP is characterized by mutual engagement

with more conversant others, which fosters learning. In the light of this study, the ACOP was characterized by mutual engagement which led to learning the English language and conforming to set academic standards. It is argued that with time, the learning of French-speaking students was enhanced within the ACOP, with the right dimensions of features in the forms of linguistic adjustment and social interaction.

Among the French-speaking students who could not improve their linguistic capital, they could not pass business English and had to do the module more than once. One basic experience that was evident among some of the French-speaking students was that a number of hidden attributes were responsible for their experiences of the curriculum at Montana College. These diverse attributes could not allow one to make specific assertions concerning their academic experiences. For example, the Dean of the IT Faculty (Ms. Du Toit) gave her version of experience with French-speaking students (see Chapter Six, section 6.13.1). Ms. Du Toit agreed that French-speaking students were dedicated and focused in their academic work but sometimes failed business English and had to write the examination on business English more than once. This linguistic incapability sometimes made them lose the mark of excellence (for more evidence on the linguistic challenges of French-speaking students, see Chapter Six, sections 6.7.1, 6.8.1, and 6.9.1) . It is argued in this study that linguistic adjustment incapability tended to mask French-speaking student's tenacity to excel at first year degree level.

Their resilience (French-speaking students) eventually seemed to bail them out of academic failure. The linguistic adjustment issues of French-speaking students make the finding of Porras and Mathews (2009) understandable that the initial investment that must be made by foreign language speakers before they comply with the tenets of an academic institution is English language. In terms of the COP and LLP concepts, it is argued that the dimension of time likely gave French-speaking students the impetus to survive their linguistic challenge until they were capable of passing the relevant English module (business English). I support my argument with Ms. Du Toit's narrative in Chapter Six, section 6.13.1 and Ms. Thato's comments in Chapter Six, section 6.9.2.

A valuable theoretical stance which attempts to support my argument was proposed by O'Donnell and Tobbel (2007:315). These two researchers propose that as newcomers

approach a COP, they become legitimate peripheral participants (LPPs). With time and experience, they may become full participants with the associated identity shifts. They propose that instead of “learning” to become an individual event, learning takes a course which is transferred to the entire personality of the learner as time elapses. In this study, it is argued that the fact that some of the French-speaking students in first year had to do business English 2 or 3 times, the repetition of the module likely gave them a measure of consolidation and experience to perfect skills required for overcoming the threats of the course (business English). A likely recovery event may have been in terms of first year French-speaking students seeking consultation much more than they ever did with lecturers and tutors, or the requirement to associate with more conversant others who could assist them within the academic institution (ACOP). The repetition of the business English module seemed to have given French-speaking students the experience that they needed, experience being a time dependent variable until the required identity transition to pass the module was generated. It is therefore posited that French-speaking students who failed the business English module in first year made necessary identity shifts by becoming more interactive with the curriculum via the support system put in place until they became conversant with the presented curriculum through centripetal participation in the ACOP (a symbol of experience suggested by O’Donnell & Tobbell, 2007:315).

7.13.3 Effect of language on the French-speaking students at second-year degree programme

I use Ornella’s experience in Chapter Five, section 5.22.1, to describe the effect of language on the curriculum experiences of second-year French-speaking students. It seemed that Ornella had better command of the English and the ability to relate with classmates while in the second-year degree programme. Ornella did not have South African friends in class, but she related well with them during group work. This was a demonstration of academic identity. It appeared as if Ornella did not want to associate with the South African students, but the contact time that she had with them during class lectures and group work seemed to have added to her comprehension of English. This continuous experience seemed to have boosted her linguistic comprehension and likely fortified her with the right equipment to relate, exchange academic ideas and make presentations in class. Her comments seemed to support my argument, “I don’t want to have South African friends, but I work with them during group work. My English improves by speaking and talking with others in English”.

However, one could not categorically infer that her transition from French to English was comprehensive. In Chapter Five section 5.22.1 she reiterated that she still engaged in translating curriculum content from English to French and back to English in certain challenging modules which required an understanding of English. She used the French/English dictionaries at such times. Her indulgence with respect to preferring her French-speaking peers seemed to have predisposed her to a state of not crossing the transition line to English, because they spoke together in French more than they did in English. Consequently I argue that linguistic incongruity seemed to have predisposed her to this inability to freely communicate in English with the curriculum and the other stakeholders at the ACOP.

Ornella's linguistic experience seems to support the notion of Heywood and Stornach (2005:119) that the meaning which students ascribe to the curriculum will therefore depend on the constant juxtaposition between the possibilities that language offers them in the academic community and the constraints that language imposes on them as they attempt to negotiate and renegotiate meaning. Ornella seemed to have compared the benefit of associating with more conversant English speakers as she engaged with them in group assignments. This was a demonstration of attachment to meaning and a symbol of identity. Ornella seemed to have attached importance to associating with classmates in an attempt to attain an academic identity which was relevant to achieving her set goal of obtaining a degree. She seemed to have juxtaposed the options of relating with other English-speakers against the constraints that learning the English through association could place on her. This constraint of juxtaposition seemed to appear in terms of extending the frontiers of her academic identity with the South African students, but it seemed as if she had to traverse the pedestal of compromise to belong to groups comprised of South African students. It is therefore argued that at second-year degree level, French-speaking students seemed to relate better with English speakers as a result of their academic identity and the constant juxtaposition of incoming benefits with the detriments contained. The limitation of her interaction with South African students was mainly academic and not social, a situation which adversely impacted on her capacity to freely express herself in English.

7.13.4 Effect of language on the French-speaking students in third-year degree programme

In the third-year degree programme, French-speaking students seemed to have negotiated a series of linguistic metamorphoses capable of making them attain their degree intentions. First, I use Candy's storyline as an example. When Candy came in through the pre-degree route, her English language comprehension was deplorable. Candy's academic performance in certain modules that needed proper comprehension of English remained at average level due to linguistic incompetence. Candy excelled in mathematics, which did not require too much of English language. The fact that she understood mathematics while in Congo also seemed to have assisted her in doing well in mathematics at the pre-degree level. In other subjects like biology, she performed averagely (see Chapter Five, section 5.27.1).

Candy was more confident at third-year degree level to express herself in English because she seemed to have gone through a series of remedial steps aimed at revamping her linguistic challenges. She used the support of lecturers and interacted with friends to achieve this aim. This was the stage that Lave and Wenger (1991) referred to as the stage of full participation to attain a set identity. Learning via presentation was also a key process that assisted Candy to gain confidence to speak in public. Learning via presentation of topics was a platform of interaction with members of the academic institution. It was a means to learn via observation by others and from others in the community. These findings are supported by the finding of Porras and Mathews (2009:32-33) that the use of verbal and written tasks may serve as valuable tools for interaction with other people in a community (see Chapter Five, section 5.27.1).

Amanda was the second example to support my argument that French-speaking students improved in their linguistic comprehension at third-year degree level. In Chapter Five, section 5.30.1, Amanda spoke about the fact that while she was at the recommended English school before starting at Montana College, she already had a fair command of the English language. Her ability to interact with South African students also seemed to have assisted her to grasp the command of English that she needed to survive through her degree programme. Amanda was in constant tune with her South African friends, an indication of interaction and association with more conversant English speakers. She was coping well at the third-year degree programme by virtue of her stance and stake with the English-speaking friends that

she maintained throughout her stay as student on campus. This was evidence that at third-year degree level, French-speaking students were likely in possession of the commensurate dimension of linguistic and social capital necessary to comply with the presented, enacted and assessed curricula. However, at third-year non-interaction with South African students and the other English-speaking students adversely affected the French-speaking students who could not break off from the French-speaking students' enclaves. I cite the case of Princess, a third-year French-speaking student at Montana College in Chapter Five section 5.45.1 as an example that interaction in English with the other stakeholders is important. She said:

This is my third-year at this institution; my case is worse because I don't relate with South Africans or the other students who could have taught me the use of English. I stay with the French-speaking students always. I can only listen to what they are saying but the issue is to speak English.

The linguistic experience of Princess was a case that revealed the adverse effect of not relating with more conversant others in an ACOP. One would expect that Princess already had made the transition from French to English, but could not consciously take the initiative of relating with the South African students. I use the narratives from the South African students in Focus Group 3 to argue my point at this juncture. In Chapter Five section 5.48.1 the six South African students accused the French-speaking students that they were also guilty of the accusation levelled against them. The South African students said that the French-speaking students also grouped together with their French-speaking friends and did not grant access to them because they always spoke in French. Another example was Anthonia, the French-speaking student from the Chad Republic. She did not interact with South African students because she had a premonition that the South African students kept away from the other students. She said, "It is difficult to feel at home in South Africa because South Africans are always threatened about the presence of foreigners". Anthonia reiterated by saying, "It is hard to make friends with the South Africans to the extent that they would have the patience to teach you English". On another occasion she said, "When you are with the other foreign students, it is much better than staying with South Africans." However, the other foreign students also seemed to have their challenges in English. Some of the other students were from Portuguese-speaking countries, and could also not fluently speak in English. Anthonia gave a reason why she felt that South African students intentionally excluded foreign students from conversations thus, "There were times that we spoke English together with the South African students that they just switched to their languages." At this

instance I use the narrative of Ms. Thato to buttress the fact that the South African students at times did not code-switch intentionally. They also had their issues with the use of English. In Chapter Six section 6.7.5 Ms. Thato said that some of the South African students also had linguistic challenge because English was taught to them in the medium of Zulu. I argue that the withdrawal of South African students from the French-speaking students was not intentional. They also grappled with linguistic challenge because of the convenience of speaking their mother tongue languages, just like it was easy for the French-speaking students to do the same (see Chapter Five section 6.7.5). Consequently, it is posited that language, an essential sociocultural factor played vital roles in the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students in the academic community of practice from pre-degree to the third-year degree level. The hypothesis raised is thus confirmed as relevant and a part of the research subquestion in section 7.12 has been answered. In summary, language, one of the three sociocultural factors played a vital role in terms of its versatility in reaching the French-speaking students and the other students with the content of the curriculum. Interferences from the indigenous languages spoken by the South African students prevented the French-speaking students from conscientiously interacting with the South African students except during group work. The next section details the effects of the other two sociocultural factors on the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students in the academic community of practice, in an attempt to completely answer the research subquestion in section 7.12.

7.13.5 Effect of acculturation and identity on the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students in the ACOP

I refer to the narratives of the French-speaking students in Chapter Five to present an argument that none of the French-speaking students acculturated and described their identity to indicate that they commenced negotiation with the mainstream society. However, it was found that they all had academic acculturation and academic identity by virtue of the goals they had to earn degrees and the desire to learn English. Academic acculturation and academic identity subjected them to taking responsibility for their learning of English and the content of the curriculum of study. They were all attached to Montana College because they saw it as a means to an end. For example Felicia mentioned that Montana College was meeting her academic needs in Chapter Five section 5.3.2. Bradley indicated that the pre-degree programme was adequate to attend to his academic needs before starting the degree programme (see Chapter Five section 5.6.2). Miriam said that life was better for her at

Montana College than in her country (see Chapter Five section 5.9.2). Erika got connected to a number of South African students who were her friends because they assisted her to learn English. The opportunity to learn English from her friends gave her academic acculturation and academic identity relating to Montana College. As far as Erika was concerned she wanted to acculturate linguistically so that she would pronounce English words correctly without the French accent. This was also a demonstration of linguistic identity (see Chapter Five section 5.12.2). Belinda had academic acculturation and academic identity because Montana College was meeting her academic needs. Secondly, her classmates were very friendly (see Chapter Five section 5.14.2). Zelda got connected to Montana College because she saw a difference between the lecturers at Montana College and the lecturers in Gabon. The lecturers at Montana College were very committed to attending to his academic needs (see Chapter Five section 5.16.2).

The point of connection to Montana College as far as Marilyn was concerned was based on the student-lecturer relationship that existed and friendliness among the other foreign students (see Chapter Five section 5.18.2). Beatrice saw Montana College as her route to achieving her goal to earn a degree. Consequently she became attached to Montana College (see Chapter Five section 5.20.2). In Chapter Five section 5.22.2 Ornella got attached to Montana College because of the way lecturers facilitated learning. It was not the same as it was done in Gabon. Elijah's point of connection to Montana College was because of his goal to earn a degree (see Chapter Five section 5.25.2). Candy said life was easier in South Africa. She did not mind living in South Africa for a while if she had a good job but wanted to return to the DRC later. However, she had academic acculturation and academic identity to Montana College because of the mentoring initiative she obtained from her lecturers (see Chapter Five section 5.27.2). Two of Amanda's lecturers at Montana College gave her the fortitude to have academic acculturation and academic identity relating to Montana College (see Chapter Five section 5.30.2).

Andre mentioned the cordial relationship between the lecturers and students as his main source of connection to Montana College (see Chapter Five section 5.33.2). Precious said, "I won't really say I enjoy living here but I can just say it is conducive for schooling" (see Chapter Five section 5.36.2). Brandon's connection to Montana College was as a result of the motivation he got from his brothers who previously had a good education. Consequently, he

saw Montana College as the opportunity to achieve his goal to earn a degree (see Chapter Five section 5.39.2). The French-speaking students in Focus Groups 1 and 2 had different emblems which indicated that they had academic acculturation and academic identity (see Chapter Five sections 5.42.2 and 5.45.2). Finally, five out of the six South African students in Focus Group 3 (see Chapter Five section 5.48.2) agreed that the French-speaking students had academic acculturation and identity because they were seen to focus on their studies. The lecturers who taught them were not left out of the exploration whether the French-speaking students had academic acculturation and identity. Mr. Taylor said that he found that the French-speaking students took responsibility for their learning (see Chapter Six section 6.5.4). Mr. Clement, a French-speaking student advisor mentioned that almost 90% of the French-speaking students were comfortable to study at Montana College (see Chapter Five section 6.17.2). From the available evidence in this study I argue that academic acculturation and academic identity were associated sociocultural factors which positively impacted on the French-speaking students to take responsibility for their learning despite the linguistic challenges and the other challenges they were confronted with at Montana College. This evidence provides answers to the research subquestion: What are the effects of sociocultural factors on the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students in the academic community of practice?

7.14 The fifth research subquestion

What are the strategies put in place by the private provider of higher education to provide a favourable academic environment for French-speaking students in the academic community of practice?

7.14.1 Hypothesis 6

The private provider of higher education employs the tool of sociocultural diversity among lecturers and staff and institutionalized policy to provide a favourable academic environment for French-speaking students in the ACOP.

7.15 Confirmation/disconfirmation of hypothesis 6

The posture of lecturers, French-speaking student advisors, pre-degree manager and Deans of faculties are considered to obtain an overview of the private tertiary institution to meet the needs of French-speaking students. Discussions in the different subheadings from section

7.15.1 to 7.15.5 provide confirmation/disconfirmation to the abovementioned research hypothesis on how the ACOP positioned itself to provide a favourable support and environment for students from French-speaking countries.

7.15.1 Attitude of lecturers

In view of the intended, enacted and hidden curriculum experiences of French-speaking students in this research study, it was found that lecturers at the private provider of tertiary education were adequately prepared for the task ahead of them, regarding French-speaking students. A number of avenues were employed to foster the survival of French-speaking students on the campus, one of which was the ardent policy to institutionalize consultation with needy students. The success of the consultation sessions with students largely depended on the attitudes of lecturers. In Chapter Six section 6.3.2 Ms. Esther, one of the Mathematics lecturers, being a foreigner empathized with the French-speaking students by conscientiously tackling their challenge regarding inability to solve mathematical word problems. Bradley, one of the pre-degree students from the Republic of Benin confirmed in Chapter Five section 5.6.3 that the lecturers at Montana College were dedicated to duty. Beatrice mentioned the assistance she obtained from the lecturers through consultation with them (see Chapter Five section 5.20.5). Marilyn preferred foreign lecturers to the other lecturers (see Chapter Five section 5.18.2). Ornella also preferred foreign lecturers to the other lecturers at Montana College because they assisted her to comprehend concepts (see Chapter Five section 5.22.4).

Mr. Taylor's narrative in Chapter Six section 6.5.3 indicates his commitment to consultation with needy students. One of the French-speaking student advisors, Ms. Sammy mentioned the commitment of lecturers to the task of consultation with academically challenged students at Montana College (see Chapter Six section 6.21.2). In Chapter Six section 6.7.2 Ms. Thato, the student skills lecturer consulted regularly with the French-speaking students because they were proactive. She took time to engage them by looking at their assignments before the due date. From the evidence provided it is argued that the lecturers from diverse countries were resourceful at alleviating the academic challenges of French-speaking students in the ACOP because the French-speaking students actively engaged their services by interacting with them. Again the evidence that lecturers at Montana College had the preparedness to engage the French-speaking students during consultation was an indication that they were knowledgeable about tackling their academic challenges. At the pre-degree level Ms.

Hendrick, the pre-degree manager, said it was a policy that lecturers had to create time to consult with academically needy students (see Chapter Six section 6.25.10). These findings provide evidence that Gopal (2011) may not be applied to all contexts because faculty at Montana College was prepared to teach crossculturally by employing lecturers from diverse parts of Africa who were culturally sensitive. Gopal (2011) on the other hand posits that in an internationalized academic institution faculty is not always prepared to teach crossculturally. It is thus argued that the academic environment at Montana College was an internationalized academic community of practice because the different students from different countries had lecturers they could relate to.

The second strategy entailed tutors and lecturers meeting with students at tutorial sessions to consolidate the enacted curriculum (see Chapter Five sections 5.20.3, 5.22.3, 5.22.4 and Chapter Six section 6.25.9). The third strategy was the enabling student-lecturer relationships which existed at the time of this study (see Chapter Five sections 5.6.4, 5.9.4, and 5.18.1 to mention but a few). The findings of this study depart from the observation of Serpell (2007:45) that lecturers confront students in a multiculturally diverse academic environment with limited understanding of their needs. Therefore, the attitude of lecturers was such that they had premonition concerning the multicultural diversity at Montana College, and this foreknowledge got them prepared to enact the curriculum in constructive and amiable ways. Therefore, the private provider of higher education ensured that lecturers had the right attitude to work with students to enhance academic support.

7.15.2 Institutionalization of the student advisory unit

The student advisory unit was mechanistic at revamping and alleviating the concerns of French-speaking students. A pre-assessment of the situation of the private academic institution seemed to have been done to cater for a multiculturally diverse campus by the directorate of Montana College. Before the arrival of French-speaking students at the academic institution, a number of measures were institutionalized to assist them in coping with the curriculum of the academic institution. The first strategy was the recommendation of English schools to French-speaking students before they began the pre-degree programme (see chapter six, sections 6.14.1 and 6.17.1). The second strategy was the constant affirmation by French-speaking student advisors that French-speaking students had to look for English-speaking students to alleviate their linguistic concerns through interaction (see Chapter Six,

sections 6.14.1 and 6.23.2). The third strategy entailed the introduction of bridging modules at the pre-degree level to cushion whatever academic disparity French-speaking students brought to the school from their countries (see Chapter Six sections 6.15.2 and 6.24.1). French-speaking student advisors persuaded the French-speaking students to navigate the pre-degree route to mainstream degree programme. This persuasion was to lengthen their linguistic learning scope so that they could be well equipped before they got to the mainstream degree programme. The findings of this study agree with the scholarly work of Winter and Dismore (2010:266) that the idea of presenting bridging modules may prove useful before the start of the main degree programme. Bridging modules offered at Montana College ensured persistent support for pre-degree students before they commenced the mainstream degree programmes. It (bridging modules via the pre-degree route) addressed gaps in knowledge as well as concerns which pertained to the intended, enacted and assessed curricula. Winter and Dismore (2010:266) argue in favour of the notion that, enhanced support needed to be made for students who were minimally inclined towards self-regulated learning and at the risk of experiencing what is referred to as academic suicide in this study. Consequently, the role of French-speaking student advisors seemed to corroborate the findings of Winter and Dismore (2010) because they guided the French-speaking students in terms of the route they had to navigate. Consequently, the academic institution used the student advisory unit on campus to foster support and favourable environment to French-speaking students at Montana College.

7.15.3 The roles of the pre-degree programme manager and Deans of faculties

The manager of the foundation and academic support programmes played a comprehensive role towards amalgamating the entire pre-degree programme with the existing faculties at Montana College. The amalgamation process was facilitated in such a dimension that the various needs of the six faculties which comprised the academic institution were met. The strategy that was used by Ms. Hendrick, the pre-degree programme manager included frequent staff training, curriculum development and alignment initiatives with stakeholders of Montana College, and regular communication of needs that arose to top management. One of such initiatives that she used entailed institutionalizing a mentoring programme aimed at revamping the linguistic challenges of French-speaking students, and other students who needed help (see Chapter Six, section 6.25.7). Her role supports the curriculum alignment initiative suggested by Kurz et al. (2010). A complementary role was also exhibited by Deans

of the different faculties, similar to what Ms. Hendrick did with the pre-degree programme staff. Ms. Hendrick had concerted meetings on a regular basis with the Deans of faculties to diagnostically assess the impact made by the pre-degree programme on the faculties available at Montana College (see Chapter Six, section 6.25.2). The support of the pre-degree manager in collaboration with the Deans of faculties and regular communication to top management of Montana College served as support and creation of favourable environment for the French-speaking students at Montana College.

7.15.4 Small class sizes

The small class size initiative was a marketing tool employed by Montana College to attract the attention of French-speaking students. Parents of French-speaking students knew this as a strategy before they sent their children to Montana College. For example, Felicia's parents deliberately sent her to Montana College because they knew she would be assisted on a one-on-one basis (see Chapter Five section 5.3.4). Zelda mentioned that she enjoyed the minimal number of students in her classes (see Chapter Five section 5.16.1). Rosette, the French-speaking student advisor identified the small class-size strategy as efficient because the lecturers had a one-on-one contact with the students. It was an initiative which fostered interaction and the engagement of French-speaking students with experts in the ACOP for academic learning to take place (see Chapter Six section 6.15.4). My observation during the tutorial classes that I conducted throughout 2011 also served as evidence that small class-sizes assisted in the course of interaction between beginners and experts in the ACOP. During the tutorial sessions I had close contact with the French-speaking students who could not understand the English as lectures were given in that language to them. I used the tutorial sessions to consolidate the facilitation of learning by using English words they could understand to explain concepts to the French-speaking students during the tutorial sessions. Consequently, small class size initiative became a strategy which assisted in attending to the academic inadequacies among the French-speaking students in the ACOP.

7.15.5 Market day initiative

The market day was institutionalized to showcase the sociocultural diversity on campus. It was an initiative designed to set the acculturation of the diverse population of students on course. Students from the different African countries wore their national clothes and cooked their tribal foods for the other students to buy and eat. It was found to enhance the sense of

belonging and acculturation of French-speaking students to the ACOP. It was also seen as an action to internationalize the academic environment (see Chapter Five sections 5.18.3, 5.22.4 and Chapter Six section 6.17.3). The market day initiative brings the definition of internationalization proposed by Knight (2003:2) to light because it was a course which integrated an “international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions, or delivery of postsecondary education” at the ACOP. The market day initiative also ignites the purpose of internationalization as was proposed by Knight and de Wit (1995:13) to significance. They argue that internationalization works in the direction of comprehending, realizing and lucidly expressing the reality of synergy among parties involved in order to furnish stakeholders with the wherewithal to operate “in an international and intercultural context.”

My speculation in Chapter Three section 3.3.4 that the requirement to internationalize the ACOP seems important has been supported by the market day initiative at Montana College. It gave the French-speaking students the feeling of living at home while they studied in a novel country (academic self-esteem and welcomeness). Similarly, my foresight that internationalization could give them a sense of belonging that was necessary to operate effectively was confirmed by the findings of this study through the market day initiative. Crose (2011) confirmed this initiative as useful. So does this study agree to its usefulness at acclimatizing the French-speaking students to the terrains of the ACOP. I argue that the necessary academic acculturation and academic identity required by the French-speaking students at the ACOP was partly generated by the market day initiative. Since the market day initiative was generated by the management of Montana College, which operated under the workplace curriculum as suggested by Billett (2006), I argue that the intercultural integration of the French-speaking students at the ACOP was likely set in motion at the point of convergence between the offerings initiated by the market day initiative and the stipulations of the workplace curriculum. My argument is based on the conceptualization of Wenger (1998) that there are subsets of a larger COP in a COP. Therefore this argument seems important because the market day initiative was seen as a subset of a larger COP. Ultimately I argue that the market day initiative was a reflection of intercultural power relations in a positive perspective where the “continuity-displacement contradictions” (Lave and Wenger, 1991:115), amid dissimilar cultures yielded dividends which fostered the necessary

dimensions of academic acculturation and identity required by the French-speaking students to participate and integrate into the ACOP.

7.15.6 The role of the foundation programme manager

The manager of the foundation and academic support programmes played a comprehensive role towards amalgamating the entire foundation programme with the existing faculties at Montana College. The amalgamation process was facilitated in such a dimension that various needs of the other 5 faculties which comprised the academic institution were met. The strategy that was used by the foundation programme manager included frequent staff training, curriculum development and alignment initiatives with stakeholders, and regular communication of the needs that arose to top management. One of such initiatives that she used entailed institutionalizing a mentoring programme aimed at revamping the linguistic challenges of the French-speaking students and other students who needed academic and linguistic help. The manager mentioned the strategy embarked upon to alleviate the linguistic concerns of the French-speaking students:

What we've done in the language curriculum has taken foreign students into account. However, we've found that it was focused on reading and writing. So this year, we've piloted an initiative to deal with more of the oral aspects of English.

These findings confirm the hypothesis drawn in Chapter One that the private provider of higher education employed the tool of sociocultural diversity among lecturers and staff and institutional policy to provide a favourable academic environment for French-speaking students in the academic community of practice. Consequently the answer to the fifth research question: What are the strategies put in place by the private provider of higher education to provide a favourable academic environment for French-speaking students in the academic community of practice has been answered?

7.16 The sixth research subquestion

Does learning occur when there is a hybridization of the three sociocultural factors (language, acculturation and identity) among French-speaking students in the academic community of practice?

7.16.1 Hypothesis 7

Learning occurs when there is a hybridization of the three sociocultural factors (language, acculturation and identity) among French-speaking students in the academic community of practice.

7.17 Confirmation/disconfirmation of hypothesis 7

In an attempt to confirm or disconfirm this research hypothesis, an intellectual proposition will be made. The proposition entails conceptualizing that this research hypothesis leads to a learning theory which I have conceptualized to explore an ACOP. This theory attempts to propose a mechanism of learning in a sociocultural context.

7.17.1 The trail

In Figure 7.1 a diagrammatic representation is proffered to explain the scenario in the academic institution (ACOP). When French-speaking students came into the ACOP via the pre-degree programme or in first-year for those who came into the mainstream degree programme through advanced level entry requirements, they came with their linguistic capital. They had to learn English at established and recommended English schools to gain proper access to Montana College. This was the first level of compliance with the set curriculum at Montana College, and it is implicated in this study as the first phase of academic identity and compliance with the set curriculum. As they began to learn the LoLT, they began to negotiate their French-speaking abilities with the LoLT via the route of compromise to be bilingual and to gain international recognition as dual language speakers (see the narratives of French-speaking students in Chapter Five and those of the other stakeholders in Chapter Six). This attempt was a compromise to gain access into another culture (the academic culture at work at Montana College). It must be borne in mind that their interest to study in English opened them up to learning a new culture (academic and not mainstream culture). Their cultural tolerance predisposed them to gaining academic acculturation, evidenced by their comments in terms of being satisfied with life on the academic campus. The first point of departure from the projected sixth research sub-hypothesis is that the French-speaking students did not possess mainstream acculturation and identity but academic acculturation and academic identity (see the narratives of all the French-speaking students in Chapter Five).

Their sense of belonging acquired via the process of gaining academic acculturation predisposed them to negotiating their cultural academic capital which they brought from the French-speaking countries with the academic tenets at Montana College. The onset of this negotiation was found when they began to learn the LoLT. It was seen in this study that they had to suspend the culture of using French in academic matters to take on the use of the English (see the narratives of the French-speaking students in Chapter Five on their linguistic transition). Consequently, the French-speaking students were seen to have gradually traded their academic identity from the French-speaking countries with the curriculum stipulations at Montana College. It is posited with the evidence in this study that learning takes place when there is a hybridization of language, academic acculturation and undeniable compromise of academic identity in an ACOP.

In Figure 7.1 the concept of hybridization of sociocultural factors as agents of learning is depicted for lucidity in an attempt to capture the detail of events in an ACOP. In Figure 7.1, a vivid look at the diagonals of the second inscribed rectangle gives a picture of the scenario at hand.

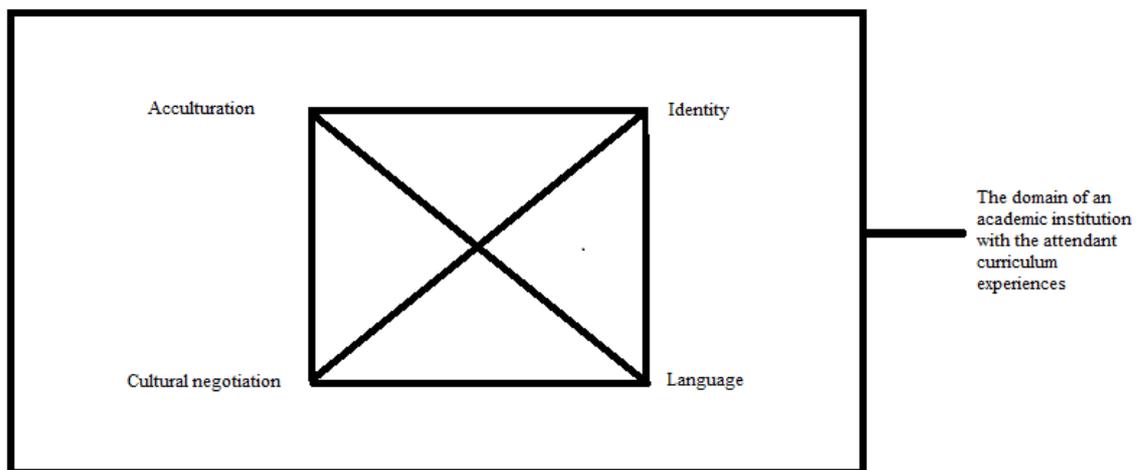


Figure 7.1: First phase of explanation of learning in a socioculturally diverse context (Montana College)

The diagonal connecting acculturation to language is symbolic. It is a depiction of the influence of language on acculturative tendencies among the French-speaking students at Montana College. As it has been posited in literature that language opens the door for the process of acculturation to begin (Adebanji, 2010; Yeh et al., 2008), I argue that the academic language at Montana College, which was the LoLT paved the way for the process of

academic acculturation to commence among the French-speaking students of Montana College. As suggested by Yeh et al. (2008:784) that language orchestrates the ability to grow beyond the home cultures of people to encapsulate another culture, so is it posited in this study that the academic language at Montana College orchestrated a pedestal of negotiation between institutional academic culture and the inherent culture to excel, brought into the ACOP by the French-speaking students. It is assumed that the inherent culture brought by the French-speaking students was potent enough, through their doggedness to learn in English, until their attachment to home cultural tenets were temporarily fragmented to encapsulate the already existing culture of the academic institution to attain a set identity. This fragmentation is hypothesized to have created what I refer to as the “language-culture fragmentation complex”. It is conjectured that the formation of this complex was likely responsible for the initiation of hybrid formation to yield an amalgam of cultures as previously conceptualized elsewhere (Adebanji, 2010). The amalgam of cultures is argued to initiate learning in the ACOP.

Another look at the second inscribed rectangle where the diagonal connecting cultural negotiation links up with identity, it is posited that for academic identity to have been formed by the French-speaking students, they seemed to have entered into a zone of what I tag as “cultural-identity activation complex”. The birth of this complex was conceptualized to have resulted in the ingenuity of romanticizing the planned, enacted and assessed curricula until the right dimension of learning evolved. Of note at this juncture is the feature of hidden curriculum issues being instrumental to the definition of academic identity among the French-speaking students. These hidden curriculum issues were cultural in nature, and manifested in terms of parental motivation to traverse the terrains of higher education, the quest to be bilingual, the infrastructural development in South Africa, proactivity to survive challenges of the intended curriculum and premonition in terms of curriculum delivery, to mention but a few. It is argued that a mixture of the planned, enacted, assessed and hidden curriculum experiences were likely responsible for the evolution of learning at the academic institution at the point of fusion of the sociocultural factors. The emerging learning is presumed to have taken place at an activated complex stage which unannouncedly resulted from what I tag as the identity-cultural negotiation interphase. The language of instruction is presumed to have catalyzed the formation of this interphase because of its potency at bridging the gap between dissimilar academic cultures.

Among the French-speaking students who had to fail the business English once or twice, it is posited that they did not gather enough academic cultural asset capable of assisting them to demonstrate compliance with the curriculum. However, by inference from the work of Wenger (1998:164), their experience in terms of failing the business English module was a measure of learning which they gathered. This learning was a kind of learning that resulted in failure to become acquainted with the academic culture, which was entrenched in accomplishing compliance with the intended and enacted curricula. Failure of English among the French-speaking students, particularly those who did not negotiate the pre-degree route was a demonstration of learning “in the way the business English module ought not to be learned”. Therefore, the fact that they had to repeat the business English module was a learning experience because they needed to undergo another process of renegotiation of academic cultures within the ACOP. It is posited that, French-speaking students who had at one time or the other failed the business English model needed to reach an equilibrium point represented at the point of intersection between language, acculturation, identity and cultural negotiation before a commensurate learning experience that stipulates the goals of Montana College could be guaranteed. It is thus conceptualized that they failed because they lacked the right dimension of institutional acceptance of intertwined academic cultures to reach the equilibrium point which is situated at the point of intersection of the diagonals in Figure 7.1.

7.17.2 Second phase conceptualization of cultural hybrid formation in an ACOP

Figure 7.2 attempts to consolidate an understanding of the theory of hybridization of sociocultural factors in an ACOP. The arrows in Figure 7.2 refer to the French-speaking students approaching the ACOP with their linguistic, acculturative and tendencies to mediate their previously acquired academic identities with the cultures in the ACOP. As they approached the ACOP, a redress seemed to have taken place in terms of the academic acculturation and academic identity they acquired until a hybrid was formed at the intersection of their linguistic capital, academic acculturation and academic identity. At the point of intersection due to the redress, learning is theorized to take place. The eventual posture surfaces as compliance with the planned, enacted and assessed curriculum. The French-speaking students were given access because they were legitimate peripheral participants at the pre-degree/first year level (Lave & Wenger, 1991). As they began to comply with the tenets of the academic institution through the rigorous process of cultural

redress, they began to negotiate and renegotiate their stake in the ACOP until they reached full participation which resulted in learning (the domain).

It is theorized that learning continues to occur as participants begin to move centripetally into the core of activities in the ACOP as suggested by Lave and Wenger (1991). With persistent redress among the sociocultural factors, the magnitude of learning is conceptualized to vary, and the dimension of learning is visible through the size of hybrid formed at the point of intersection of the sociocultural factors (see Figure 7.2). The variation in the size of hybrid formed is an indication of the magnitude of language invested with acculturative tendency and academic identity shifts. The LoLT was seen to have given the new entrants (pre-degree /first-year students) access into the culture of the academic institution. The LoLT gave French-speaking students the right to have a sense of belonging to the academic institution (academic acculturation). The LoLT enabled them to form the right dimension of academic identity via the negotiation of the academic culture they brought from their country with the established academic culture at Montana College. The French-speaking students were perceived to have traded their home flown academic identity with the cultural tenets in the ACOP. At the point of formation of hybrids, learning was assumed to have taken place. They were thus capable of surviving the linguistic challenges and threats of eventual dropout. Consequently, the research question that asks whether learning evolves when there is a hybridization of sociocultural factors has been answered. Similarly the projected research hypothesis that learning occurs when there is a hybridization of the three sociocultural factors (language, acculturation and identity) among French-speaking students in the ACOP had been confirmed. The only departure from the projected hypothesis entails knowing that the mainstream society acculturation and identity did not form part of the negotiation. However, the actors at work were their academic acculturation and academic identity tendencies in the ACOP. Consequently it is posited that when there is a hybridization of the three associated sociocultural factors (language, academic acculturation and academic identity), learning tends to evolve.

These concepts emerged from the empirical findings in Chapter Five sections 5.4, 5.7, 5.10, 5.23, 5.26, 5.28, 5.31, 5.34, 5.37, 5.40, 5.43 and 5.46). In section 7.18 I present the dissonance involved in the mediation of academic acculturation and academic identity among

the French-speaking students in the ACOP to foster better understanding of the concept of hybridization of sociocultural factors in an ACOP.

7.18 Theoretical echoing of acculturation and identity mediation dissonance

This section attempts to establish the finding that French-speaking students at Montana College traversed a situation of dissonance in terms of their acculturation and identity mediation, in the midst of dissimilar and informal languages of communication in the ACOP. Dissonance is used in this study as it relates to the conflictual scenario in terms of acculturation and identity mediation differences between the host society and the academic institution among the French-speaking students (Montana College). The dissonance evolved because French-speaking students did not agree with the mainstream society cultures, and as such deviated from the trajectory of negotiation of their Francophone cultures with the mainstream South African cultures. French-speaking students did not have the wherewithal to acculturate and identify with mainstream South African society because of a number of cultural disconnections they had towards the South African society at large (see Chapter Five of study). The only visible dimension of acculturation the French-speaking students had was academic acculturation as reiterated earlier. The French-speaking students primarily had academic acculturation in a bid to traverse the route to obtaining degrees. Similarly, the French-speaking students had academic identity and not mainstream acceptance of the fortitude to identify with the South African cultures to form a hybrid of cultures as suggested by Vandeyar (2008).

The French-speaking students at Montana College could not communally create identified rapport between their cultures and the cultures of South Africa as remarked by Beltz (2002) that communication is vital between cultures for any form of cultural negotiation to occur. This situation seemed to predispose the French-speaking students to maintaining a stance that made them to constantly transmit the posture of cultural incoherence and intolerance towards the South African mainstream society (see the comment of Cairn in Chapter Five section 5.45.2 for an example).

This study agrees with the study of Vera and de los Santos (2005:104) that the process of acculturation is intertwined with ethnic, racial and cultural identity. The experience of

French-speaking students at Montana College seems to support the finding of Gardner and MacIntyre (1993:159) that the acculturation process is signaled by their willingness and interest to commit to social interaction with members of other language speakers. Many of the French-speaking students did not commit to learning the indigenous South African languages except Erika who was interested in learning how to greet because she was attempting to associate with the South African students who could teach her the use of English. Gardner and MacIntyre provide a platform to see that French-speaking students only had academic acculturation which was facilitated by the compulsion of French-speaking students to learn the LoLT (the medium of exchanging academic cultures at Montana College).

A notable explanation emerged from the desperation of French-speaking students to learn the English language, despite the challenges involved (see Chapter Five). At the academic institution, French-speaking students were in agreement with academic cultures in terms of policies set to take them through the trajectory to earn degrees. This situation seemed to have fostered their survival, despite the myriads of challenges they had to confront. The academic culture they brought from the various African French-speaking countries were negotiated with the academic culture at Montana College until a hybrid of cultures emerged in terms of compliance with the planned, enacted and assessed curricula. The situation of French-speaking students at Montana College was a demonstration of compliance with the suggestion of Su (2008:379) that a negotiation of cultures can emerge when dissimilar cultures are in contact. In this case the negotiation was in terms of academic cultures in contact. The academic culture brought by French-speaking students from their previous communities of practice seemed to have collided with the academic and workplace curriculum at Montana College. This collision likely resulted into hybrids of cultures to learn the English language, and negotiate their home flown academic identities with the identity stipulations at Montana College (the quest to remain students of higher education).

It is therefore posited in this study that non-South African French-speaking students at Montana College engaged in arduous mainstream acculturation and identity negotiation, but by-passed challenges to acculturating and identifying with the mainstream society until they settled down to renegotiate their acculturative and identity tendencies with the stipulated culture on ground at the campus. This was done because they had a mission and goal to attain

the upward mobility stratum, capable of making them fit into the realm of relevance in the global market. Therefore, according to Yeh et al. (2008:784), French-speaking students renegotiated their home flown academic identity with the curriculum on ground (a depiction of institutional culture) by bypassing the constraints they had with mainstream society to attain a set academic identity fit for graduation to obtain degrees.

Many of the French-speaking students in this study did not desire to learn any of the South African languages, while some of them wanted to learn how to greet. Had they been interested in learning the indigenous languages, an indication to acculturate and identify with the cultures of the mainstream South Africa would have likely evolved. According to the line of thought of Valdes (2001:147), the French-speaking students were likely sidelined in terms of gaining an understanding of the key events and cultures within the South African community because of the incessant use of Zulu and Sotho, which became offensive to them because of their requirement to briskly learn English. If they had the desire to learn Zulu and Sotho, they would have translated the desire into an attempt to adapt to South African cultures as suggested by Gray et al. (1996) and McDonald et al. (1997) that a vital sign that stipulates the desire to adapt to novel cultures appears when people of different cultures begin to learn the mainstream of indigenous languages.

A few of the French-speaking students who indicated interest to learn how to greet in Zulu only desired to learn the academic perspective of Zulu and Sotho languages as implied by Saville-Troike (2003:6) that any attempt of foreigners to learn the indigenous languages without mingling and associating with people of the dominant culture would only make language learning an academic exercise. This study points to the fact that discussions involving acculturation and identity revolve around dominance of language as suggested by Brown (1994:164) that it is almost impossible to separate language from culture. This study agrees that culture is expressed via the tool of language and language is a link between cultures, as suggested by Yeh et al. (2008). Therefore the mediation of acculturation and identity require the medium of language in order to be deciphered. These arguments thus make my conceptualization of hybrid formation for learning to ensue reasonable.

The outlook of French-speaking students to issues of cultural negotiation makes this study to agree with the notion of Savignon and Sysoyev (2002:510) that the negotiation of cultures is

perceived as negotiated individual-consciousness of all humans. The inability of French-speaking students to communicate and integrate to the mainstream South African society undoubtedly seemed to hinder their acceptance of South African cultures. The avoidance of cultural negotiation between French-speaking students and the cultures of mainstream South Africa seemed to support Cheong's (2006:379) study that conversational and interactional abilities would be hindered when there are restricted opportunities to enter into one another's cultures via the avenue of language. These arguments both seem to answer the research question on the possibility of evolved learning when there is a hybridization of the three sociocultural factors in the ACOP.

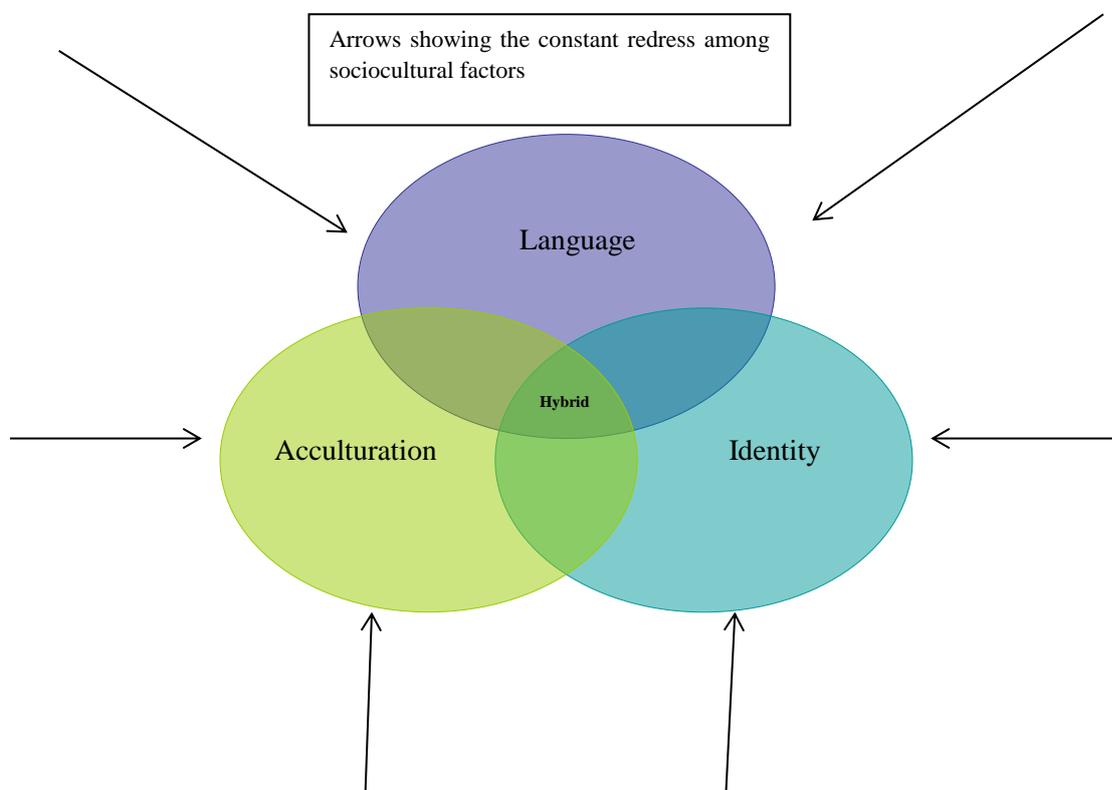


Figure 7.2: Second phase explanation of the concept of hybridization of sociocultural factors in an ACOP.

7.19 The seventh research question

How do power relations among stakeholders challenge the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students in the academic community of practice?

7.19.1 Hypothesis 8

The curriculum experiences of French-speaking students are challenged by power relations in the academic community of practice.

7.20 Confirmation/disconfirmation of hypothesis 8

Issues of power relations are impossible to discuss without taking a critical look at the narratives of the French-speaking students and those of the other stakeholders in the ACOP. This discussion is initiated by looking at the narratives of Beatrice in Chapter Five section 5.20.4. She was hindered a number of times from attending lectures because she had to stand in long queues to ascertain that she did not owe money. Such times that she stood in long queues competed with her lecture periods because she was not allowed to attend classes if adequate demonstration that she did not owe fees was not proved. This experience became a “continuity-displacement contradiction” to her, drawing on Lave and Wenger (1991:115-116) because the fact that she needed to ascertain that her fees were paid up to date competed with her requirement to attend classes. Ornella’s version of the story was that students were blocked from gaining access to the school if they owed fees even when they had to write tests and examinations (see Chapter Five section 5.22.4). Her experience was a depiction of the “continuity-displacement contradiction” as proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991:115-116), because to earn a degree she had to attend classes. However, the issue of fees owed became a source of exclusion from participating in the presented and enacted curricula. Ornella mentioned that there were times that her school fees were paid late due to a number of unforeseen circumstances. Consequently, I argue that her curriculum experiences were challenged by financial power relations at the ACOP.

Candy reiterated the costliness of studying at the ACOP by mentioning that foreign students had to pay half the fees at the time of registration with the balance paid over a period of 10 months. The argument was that since the management of Montana College knew that it was compulsory to eventually pay fees they needed to be more understanding. On the other hand the management of Montana College stood their ground by creating a stern policy to exclude fees defaulters from tuition. This drag of conflicting dynamics was an indication of the “continuity-displacement contradiction” proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991:115-116). The management of Montana College and Candy were seen as two perspectives of power relations incapable of reaching a point of equilibrium as far as the settlement of fees was

concerned. The resultant effect of unpaid fees, according to Candy was exclusion from tuition, which had an impact on her contact with the planned, enacted and assessed curricula when her fees were in arrears.

In Chapter Five section 5.30.4 Amanda complained about the issues of fees at Montana College that were unbearable. Another important dimension of power relations found through Amanda's narratives was the issue of linguistic power relations which ensued from what I refer to as linguistic incongruity in this study. She found that she could not cope with speaking English all the time, especially when she was in the midst of her French-speaking peers. She found that she tended towards speaking French more than she spoke in English. I see this experience as a kind of linguistic power relation because she was required to communicate in English, to strengthen her linguistic and interactive capability in the ACOP. She rather spoke French because it was more convenient for her. The dynamics between the requirement to communicate in English and the convenience involved in speaking French became a dilemma for consideration with respect to the "continuity-displacement contradiction" as suggested by Lave and Wenger (1991:115-116). I argue, based on the linguistic incongruity experienced by the French-speaking students that linguistic power relations affected their full transition from French to English at the ACOP. These tendencies were found in Elijah (see Chapter Five section 5.25.4). Candy also experienced the incessant use of Zulu and Sotho languages as linguistic power relations in Chapter Five section 5.27.4. Precious mentioned the same challenge in Chapter Five section 5.36.4.

In Chapter Six section 6.19.3 Mr. Fletcher mentioned that the French-speaking students needed to keep French as a language of communication despite their requirement to learn English. Throughout in Chapter Five the French-speaking students decided to retain French as a language of communication. The preponderant use of French as a language of communication and the requirement to learn English because it was the LoLT became issues of power relations. I therefore argue in this study that the requirement to learn the LoLT and the compulsoriness of retaining French as a language of communication became issues of the "continuity-displacement contradiction" as proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991:115-116). For more evidence of the linguistic power relations, see Chapter Five section 5.45.4 and Chapter Six sections 6.5.2, 6.7.5, and 6.9.2. A very prominent indication of linguistic power relations was found between the South African and French-speaking students in Focus Group

3. The South African students in the focus group interview responded to the accusation levied against them by the French-speaking students that they were not friendly. The South African students mentioned that the French-speaking students also sidelined them with the incessant use of French as language of communication when they were in the midst of their French-speaking counterparts. Consequently, the South African students mentioned that they also could not penetrate their groups because of linguistic issues. This tussle was a kind of linguistic power relation which kept the two parties from conveniently interacting and integrating into the academic community of practice (see Chapter Five section 5.48.1). Brandon failed 2 modules because he was excluded for owing fees. His brother who paid fees was overseas for 2 weeks. Consequently, he could not attend the revision classes before writing the examination (see Chapter Five section 5.39.4). His argument, which was an indication of the power dynamics which existed at Montana College, was that he still had to pay the fees owed after failing the 2 modules but the management of Montana College did not bend the rule as far as the payment of fees was concerned.

The experience of French-speaking students with respect to power relations was corroborated by the other stakeholders of the ACOP. Mr. Taylor, one of the Mathematics lecturers at the ACOP mentioned that the issues of fees adversely affected the access of students to tuition (see Chapter Six section 6.5.10). In Chapter Six section 6.7.8 Ms. Thato expressed concern that the exclusion of fees defaulters from tuition was hectic because it adversely affected their academic performance. Rosette and Ms. Sammy, French-speaking student advisors at Montana College, were not left out of the discussion that late payment of fees attracted interests and exclusion from tuition (see Chapter Six sections 6.15.9 and 6.21.1). A different perspective to power relations emerged in the course of discussion with the Dean of the IT Faculty, Ms. Du Toit mentioned, it took a turnaround time of five years for the French-speaking students to reach full compliance in terms of their proficiency in English. However, they were at the IT department for up to 3 years except those that had academic issues. It was expensive for the French-speaking students to stay at the ACOP because of financial issues. This situation was seen as a conflation in terms of the issues that financial expenditure could cause and the requirement to comprehend the English. This tussle was taken as a kind of financial-linguistic power relations at the ACOP. It is thus argued that the shortness of time spent by the French-speaking students likely delayed their transition from French to English.

The French-speaking student advisors also had an encounter in terms of the power relations between them and the management of Montana College in Chapter Six section 6.15.7. Rosette lamented that the management of Montana College made student advisors to promise the French-speaking students that there was enough accommodation before the French-speaking students reached Montana College. Before the French-speaking students reached Montana College the available accommodation was exhausted due to competition. The tussle was that the French-speaking student advisors were not permitted to look for accommodation for the French-speaking students elsewhere in an attempt to fulfil their roles as institutional guardians of the French-speaking students. They were compelled by the management of Montana College to continue marketing the halls of residence to the French-speaking students despite the non-availability of accommodation. This experience between the French-speaking students and the management of Montana College was a kind of power show which could affect the acculturative predisposition of French-speaking students. The French-speaking students who could not get accommodation at the school residence were thus compelled to seek alternative accommodation elsewhere. This concerned the prevailing security risks in South Africa. I argue that the constraints placed on the French-speaking students advisors not to seek accommodation for the French-speaking students elsewhere was an indication of the “continuity-displacement contradiction” proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991:115-116). It became a potential source of displacement to the French-speaking students and seemed to affect their acclimatization to the ACOP.

In Chapter Six sections 6.15.12 and 6.15.14 a concept emerged referred to in this study as inflationary power relations, a situation which the yearly escalation of fees caused. In 2013 the number of French-speaking students who registered at Montana College dropped because of inflation. For example the Gabonese government stopped sponsoring Gabonese students to study at Montana College because it was too expensive. The few Gabonese students who came to study at Montana College registered under the sponsorship of their parents and guardians. Inasmuch as the French-speaking students from Gabon wanted to study in English, they were financially estranged. I refer to such power relations as inflationary power relations and they deprived a number of French-speaking students from studying at Montana College. This became a power relation issue because the management of Montana College required a fifty per cent upfront payment. Such excluded French-speaking students were thus denied the opportunity to experience the curriculum at the ACOP.

With the abovementioned evidences I argue that the “continuity-displacement contradictions” (Lave & Wenger, 1991:115-116) were extinguished in the course of time when the parties involved recognized their roles in the ACOP. For example the French-speaking students studying at Montana College had to comply with the requirement to pay fees despite the issue of possible exclusion from tuition. The parents of French-speaking students from Gabon who lost the opportunity of government sponsorship had to make alternative arrangements to send their children to South Africa to study. The issues of linguistic power relations stayed unabated but the different parties remained with their linguistic identities and found ways around keeping to their linguistic boundaries while academic activities continued. The French-speaking students who minded losing their French as language of communication stood their ground by tenaciously holding on to their linguistic identity. They did not relinquish their use of French as a language of communication among their French-speaking peers, despite their requirement to learn the LoLT. Consequently I argue that the issues of power relations are extinguished in the course of time in agreement with the suggestions of Lave and Wenger (1991:115-116). These findings confirm the validity of hypothesis 8 that the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students are challenged by power relations in the ACOP. The evidence therefore provides answers to the seventh research subquestion: How do power relations among other stakeholders challenge the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students in the ACOP?

7.21 Conclusion

This chapter has deliberated on the correspondence as well as divergence between the findings obtained from the research study and in the voluminous literature. The study has evolved a theory which attempts to add to the existing theories of learning in a sociocultural perspective. Wenger’s (1998) theory of communities of practice as well as the theory of legitimate peripheral participation, authored by Lave and Wenger (1991), were used as yardsticks to understand the curriculum experiences of non-South African French-speaking students at the private provider of tertiary institution. The LPP model assisted in understanding the intricacies involved at the entry level of French-speaking students to the ACOP and gave direction to the sequence of events traversed by the French-speaking students as they journeyed through pre-degree to the third-year degree programme. Issues of the curriculum were split into the intended, enacted and assessed curricula as suggested by Kurz et al. (2010). These were the core ingredients relating to the essence of French-speaking

students' belonging and participating in the activities of the curriculum at Montana College. Other aspects of the curriculum, known as the hidden curriculum experiences were also contemplated and found to be determinants of the intended curriculum delivery and actualization. The chapter was concluded by identifying and discussing the pertinent power dynamics capable of challenging the academic survival of French-speaking students in the ACOP. These were financial power relations, linguistic power relations, inflationary power relations and power relations which bordered on the roles of French-speaking student advisors, in terms of providing safe accommodation for the French-speaking students, to mention but a few. A number of hidden and intended curriculum issues emerged as novel contributions to the study. The contribution to knowledge will be discussed in relation to silences and gaps in the available literature in Chapter Eight. Chapter Eight presents the summary of research answers, new findings, conclusions and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY OF EMERGENT THEMES, GENERATION OF NEW KNOWLEDGE, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a synopsis of the findings concerning the research questions raised in the study. The significance of the study is succinctly highlighted. It presents the generation of new knowledge and contributions based on the curriculum experiences of non-South African French-speaking students in a private tertiary education institution. Prospects for future research are presented. The chapter ends by giving an articulate summary that presents further questions to be answered in the near future.

8.2 Summary of emergent findings

This research study set out to explore the curriculum experiences of non-South African French-speaking students in a private tertiary education institution. Findings that emerged from the study were seven-fold:

Firstly, the curriculum experiences of non-South Africa French-speaking students from the pre-degree programme to third-year entailed a rigorous negotiation with the language of learning and teaching (LoLT). Their negotiation with the LoLT was seen as the door to gaining access into the nomenclature of the private provider of higher education. The LoLT was their cultural ticket to traversing the rigours of higher education. At pre-degree level, French-speaking students came to the periphery of the campus as novices, drawing on Wenger (1998). Through interaction with the curriculum of the academic institution, they began to advance in the LoLT proficiency until they reached the third-year degree programme. The negotiation that they had with the LoLT was seen as a compromise of culture because they had to trade their French-speaking acumen with the compulsion to learn the LoLT which was needed for cross-cultural exchange of academic and non-academic ideas. They did this until they reached the level of full participation which qualified them to be like their more conversant English speakers in the ACOP. However, it was found that some of them did not interact with South African students because of their preconceived

notion that South African students deliberately excluded foreign students from their discussions. The focus group interview session conducted with six South African students revealed that South African students also perceived that the French-speaking students maintained their enclaves by linguistically excluding them by speaking French with their French-speaking peers. According to one of the lecturers interviewed in Chapter Six (Ms. Thato), it was found that an assumption was made that all of the South African students were proficient at speaking English. She mentioned that some of the South African students were taught English in the medium of Zulu at primary school level. Ms. Thato's narrative opened up an important consideration which pointed to the fact that a number of South African students had linguistic challenges. Consequently, they used Zulu and Sotho to interact among their fellow Zulu-Sotho-speaking peers. In the same vein it was found that the use of French as a language of communication was less stressful for the French-speaking students because of the intellectual labour intensity involved in translating words in English to French before they understood the meaning in English. The lack of communication of knowledge with respect to these perspectives of experiences seemed to have placed the French-speaking and South African students at a disadvantage because they perceived their maintenance of languages based on the notions of deliberate exclusion from their discourses.

Based on these findings before the French-speaking students reached full participation in the ACOP as suggested by Lave and Wenger (1991), some of them were noted for failing the business English module, had challenges with pronunciation of English words, and complained that some of the lecturers spoke too fast during lecture periods. At the pre-degree programme level, French-speaking students were mathematically intelligent but had challenges with word problems in mathematics. These issues revolving around language were pointers to the reality that in a multiculturally diverse academic environment, teaching and learning styles should be revisited by lecturers becoming more aware of reflecting on their practice and professional development in response to emergent issues of the curriculum.

At first-year degree level, it was found that French-speaking students who did not negotiate the pre-degree route needed to register for the bridging English module in an attempt to provide sufficient time to negotiate a transition from French to English. The lapse in the English curriculum emerged as a result of a gap that needed to be filled in terms of the curriculum used for first-year students. This design seemed not to have taken cognizance of

the need that the transition of linguistic acumen that needed to be achieved by French-speaking students were enormous tasks that deserved attention as posited by Winter and Dismore (2010). A redress needed to have been made to accommodate the linguistic needs of first-year French-speaking students. At the third-year degree level, a number of them had adopted the cultural language of the academic institution which was the LoLT to a level that guaranteed the fortitude to earn degrees. The exception to this finding was in terms of those who did not associate with South African students, because at third-year degree level their linguistic challenges persisted. New knowledge was discovered in the course of conducting the focus group interviews with the French-speaking students. It was in terms of how the French-speaking students comprehended the facilitation of learning. This finding was unravelled by one of my previous French-speaking students who said she waited until I wrote the summary of what I said in English on the white board before she understood lectures. This was an important finding fit for educational practice because it provided the fortitude to teach crossculturally and relevantly.

Secondly, it was found that French-speaking students negotiated the pre-degree route to mainstream degree programme because their curriculum of study, while they negotiated secondary school education in French-speaking countries was not trusted by most South African public universities. Many of them were denied access to mainstream degree programmes because the rating of South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) did not qualify them for access to South African public universities. Their inability to proficiently speak and understand the English also did not give them the opportunity to be accepted at most public institutions of South Africa. The recommendation given to a number of them was that they needed to traverse the South African public secondary school route before they could be accepted to the degree programme. In complying with this recommendation, the implication was that they had to start from grade 11 so that they could write the South African matriculation examinations. The French-speaking students did not want to go through this rigour again, after negotiating the rigours of secondary school education in their own countries. Consequently, they resorted to the pre-degree route, which was aimed at bridging the gaps between secondary education and the requirements for mainstream degree programme. This finding was an answer to the research question raised in the study on: Why do French-speaking students negotiate higher education through the pre-degree programme?

Thirdly, French-speaking students experienced the planned/intended, enacted and assessed curricula at Montana College. There were a number of hidden curriculum experiences which they had, that were not visible but influenced the planned, enacted and assessed curricula. In outlining these curriculum experiences, the research question posed to explore how the hidden curriculum experiences impacted on their education are also concurrently discussed. Planned/intended curriculum experiences of French-speaking students were in terms of the following:

- (a) French-speaking students at Montana College experienced the LoLT (English), which was disparate from the previous LoLT (French) that was used to communicate issues of the curriculum to them in their French-speaking countries. The impact of learning in English on the educational path of French-speaking students was in terms of lengthening the duration of obtaining degrees, compared to their French-speaking counterparts in the various Francophone countries from where they originated. They also had the opportunity to experience the “word power” curriculum, which was a module designed to enhance the linguistic proficiency of students in the ACOP.
- (b) Curriculum alignment was a curriculum experience of French-speaking students. They enjoyed the institutionalized policy at the private provider of higher education in terms of negotiating well thought-out and designed curricula which were aimed at sustaining them along their degree path. Issues of the curriculum were tabled at set meetings to decipher their curriculum needs on a regular basis. For example the English curriculum alignment process resulted in institutionalizing an oral presentation curriculum at pre-degree programme level, to assist foreign language speakers with the gathering of relevant academic acumen to speak the English language properly.
- (c) French-speaking students experienced a vast dimension of mentoring programme as curriculum experience. They were assigned to mentors who took them through the mentoring process. The impact of the mentoring programme was that it enabled them to master assignment writing skills and the skill to make academic presentations.
- (d) Small class-sizes evolved as curriculum experience to the French-speaking students. The impact of small class-size on their educational path was that it assisted lecturers and tutors to have close contact with them. The close contact allowed the stakeholders

to identify academic challenges confronting them. Consequently, the role of experts to novices became evident, and interaction with the curriculum of study became significant.

- (e) A lapse in the English curriculum at first-year degree programme level was a curriculum experience to French-speaking students. The impact of the lapse in the English curriculum was that French-speaking students who were admitted directly to the first-year degree programme failed business English. The business English module was designed to assist students in letter writing and communication with the world of work. The business English module was furthermore faulted as incapable of meeting the linguistic needs of first-year students in terms of compliance with the linguistic culture of the academic institution. A suggestion was made that the bridging English module offered at pre-degree level needed to be included in the curriculum of first-year French-speaking students to alleviate their linguistic challenges.
- (f) Consultation with tutors and lecturers was a curriculum experience of French-speaking students. The impact of this experience on their academic path was that it gave them confidence to romanticize the presented curriculum. It assisted them to take responsibility for their learning, and gave them academic identity and acculturative tendencies. This was because they saw the academic institution as catering for their academic needs by giving them personalized attention to traverse the curriculum with the help of stakeholders.
- (g) Prior learning in English was a curriculum experience of French-speaking students. The impact of the prior learning of English on French-speaking students was that the vocabulary that was gathered from the recommended English school became an asset upon which some of them built their understanding of the curriculum. However, their prior learning of English did not demonstrate that they had made the transition from French to English. They needed to interact with English-speaking students to achieve the transition experience.
- (h) A turnaround period of about four to five years was a curriculum experience of the French-speaking students to demonstrate relevant understanding of the LoLT. The impact of this on them was that they had to stay longer than necessary to grasp the command of their studies.

- (i) The pre-degree programme was seen as a curriculum experience. The impact of the pre-degree programme was that it bridged the gap between the laxity of secondary school education and the requirements of the mainstream degree programme.
- (j) Achievement in mathematics and strong work ethic were curriculum experiences of the French-speaking students. The impact of mathematical intelligence on their education was that it gave them reasoning and logical thinking abilities. The strong work ethic gave them the fortitude to achieve and complete their education. This work ethic also assisted them to learn the LoLT. The strong work ethic was found to have evolved among them through their recognition of the secret of academic success, which according to them was hard work.
- (k) The French-speaking students experienced group work and individual presentation of assignments and topics as curriculum experiences in an attempt to foster the capacity to interact with more knowledgeable others in the ACOP.
- (l) Inability to eloquently speak in English and diminished boldness to ask questions were curriculum experiences of French-speaking students, except those who had better command of the English via interaction with the other English-speaking students in the ACOP.
- (m) The student advisory unit became a curriculum experience to the French-speaking students because French-speaking student advisors navigated their path by informing them of the requirement to have prior learning experience in English before they registered at Montana College. They also informed them of the requirement and advantages involved in negotiating the pre-degree programme, to give them an adjustment time to revamp from their linguistic challenges.
- (n) There were good lecturer-student relationships at Montana College, and these reflected in terms of the ease at which students booked consultations to see the lecturers to clarify unclear academic concepts.
- (o) Tutorial sessions became intended curriculum experiences of French-speaking students in the ACOP. A maximum of 30 students were assigned to each tutorial class. Each tutorial session was assigned to dealing with academically needy students to enhance the throughput rate in the ACOP.

- (p) The use of French and English dictionaries was a curriculum experiences of French-speaking students in the ACOP. They used the English dictionary to learn new words and the French dictionary to translate curriculum content from English to French and back to English.
- (q) They experienced difficulty in mathematical word problems, especially at pre-degree programme level, but improved as they interacted with the curriculum and English-speaking students.
- (r) A number of them used books in the library to enhance their linguistic potential while the others did not.

The French-speaking students at Montana College also had hidden curriculum experiences which are analyzed below with the impacts on their educational paths:

- (a) Complications of indigenous languages of mainstream South Africa with the LoLT and French became hidden curriculum issues to the French-speaking students. They had to grapple with the use of Zulu and Sotho with the intermittent use of Afrikaans by lecturers and the LoLT. The impact of this hidden curriculum experience on them was that they vacillated between the use of different languages on campus and were seemingly incapable of quickly grasping command of the LoLT.
- (b) The issue of accents was a hidden curriculum experience of French-speaking students. The impact of this experience on them was that they struggled to understand the pronunciation of words from lecturers. The rate at which white lecturers spoke and the accents of certain South African lecturers were issues to a number of them. This seemed to have thwarted their understanding of the curriculum until they got used to the accents of the lecturers.
- (c) Proactivity to catch up with the planned curriculum was an inherent trait found among some of the French-speaking students. They prepared before attending lectures. The impact it had on them was seen in terms of making the enacted curriculum more lucid.
- (d) Premonition that Montana College had a policy to keep classes to a maximum of 60 students became a hidden curriculum experience for the French-speaking students.

The impact of small class size was in terms of granting lecturers and tutors access to academically weak students.

- (e) Satisfaction with life, which gave French-speaking students the relevant sense of belonging, became hidden curriculum issues. The impact of life satisfaction on their educational path was in terms of the fact that they had academic acculturation and academic identity to the academic institution. These gave them the awareness that they had to abide by the curriculum of the campus environment.
- (f) Academic acculturation and academic identity were seen as hidden curriculum issues in this study. The impact of these on the French-speaking students was that academic acculturation and academic identity gave them a sense of ownership of their studies, and acceptance of the academic environment.
- (g) Strict adherence to ethnic cultures was a hidden curriculum experience in this study. French-speaking students held tenaciously to their ethnic cultures and could not negotiate these with the cultures of main South African society. Their adherence to academic cultures imbibed from home could only be renegotiated with the academic culture of the ACOP in terms of scholarly work. The implication of this was in terms of their grip on ethnic identity, a symbolism that their cultures were not negotiated with the cultures of the South African society. Furthermore, if they had appropriately acculturated and identified with the South African society, they could have in the long run added to the workforce and capacity building block of South Africa. The skill they acquired, and were still acquiring could have been beneficial to the development of South Africa. This was where the detriments of xenophobia became obvious.
- (h) Translation of curriculum content from English to French, and back to English was a hidden curriculum experience to the French-speaking students. The implication of this devised route to understanding the curriculum was that it wasted their time. It was found that French-speaking students spent double the effort and time invested by English-speaking students to achieve the required dimension of understanding of the curriculum. This tendency was found in almost all the narratives obtained from them in Chapter Five. The South African students interviewed in the focus group interview also attested to this issue of translating the curriculum content from English to French and back to English.

- (i) Introversion and extroversion were character traits exhibited by French-speaking students at Montana College. The impact of these character traits on French-speaking students was in terms of interacting and not interacting with more conversant others in the academic institution. Introversion kept them to themselves, and they were not able to wade their ways into the lives of those who could help them with the LoLT for example. Extroversion was responsible for the knack of some of them going out of their way to make friends with more conversant English speakers, especially at third-year degree level.
- (j) The market day initiative was a hidden curriculum experience because it gave them a feeling of living at home. It was also an initiative which internationalized the ACOP for intercultural transaction to take place among the students.
- (k) Parental motivation was a hidden curriculum experience of French-speaking students. The impact of parental motivation was that many of them had parents in the middle class echelon of their society who were university graduates. This motivation helped the French-speaking students to succeed.
- (l) Indecent dressing became a hidden curriculum experience of French-speaking students. It was a cultural aberration to them to see ladies in dresses which exposed themselves.
- (m) Delayed payment of tuition fees was a hidden curriculum issue. The impact of delayed payment was that it had a direct effect on the intended, enacted and assessed curricula. Fee defaulters were deprived from gaining access to the campus during lectures, tests and examinations. The impact of this experience was that it caused the failure of some of the French-speaking students because they were denied access to lectures, tests and examinations. It was also a symbol of financial power relations as proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991:115-116).
- (n) Linguistic incongruity was a hidden curriculum experience of French-speaking students in the ACOP. They vacillated between the use of English and French. Consequently their English-speaking abilities came under a siege.
- (o) They experienced feelings of isolation because of their states of incommunicado. They lacked the adequate dimension of vocabulary to communicate with lecturers and

classmates. This experience was responsible for their reticence, especially at pre-degree level.

Fourthly, the private provider of higher education positioned itself to provide a favourable support and environment for the French-speaking students in the following ways:

- (a) The attitude of teachers was a useful asset. Teachers were sourced from different sociocultural perspectives of the world. The impact of teachers' attitudes led to the commitment to achieve excellence and dedication towards student learning. The constructive student-lecturer relationships which existed were also active at mentoring students until they succeeded.
- (b) The establishment of the student advisory unit was a resource which positioned the academic institution in the perspective of providing a favourable and supportive environment to the French-speaking students. The impact of the student advisory unit was in terms of acting as liaison between French-speaking students and their parents. This strategy positioned the provider of tertiary education in the perspective of meeting sociocultural needs that emerged.
- (c) The combined roles of pre-degree programme manager and Deans of faculties were support systems which positioned the provider of tertiary education in good stead of offering favourable and supportive environment to French-speaking students. The impact of this initiative emerged in curriculum alignment and mentoring initiatives, where curriculum responsive measures were taken to avert experiences that would have resulted in failure of students to meet academic requirements.
- (d) Small class sizes played important roles in establishing students that had academic deficiencies. This initiative gave lecturers the fortitude to reach students because of the advantage of proximity to students.

Fifthly, sociocultural experiences of the French-speaking students involved the following:

- (a) The use of Zulu, Sotho and the sporadic use of Afrikaans by lecturers at Montana College became sociocultural experiences of French-speaking students. The impact of this was felt by the French-speaking students when they took a longer time to negotiate transition from French-speaking to English-speaking. Zulu, Sotho and Afrikaans languages seemed to have competed with the available time to learn the

LoLT. In addition to these South African languages, their incessant use of French to communicate with French-speaking peers also seemed to delay their transition to English. These issues of language also appeared to have prevented the French-speaking students from negotiating their identities with the mainstream South African society.

- (b) A dissonance in terms of acculturation and identity mediation between the cultures at home and cultures in the mainstream society of South Africa was found as sociocultural factor among French-speaking students at Montana College. The impact it had on them was inability to decisively adopt the cultures of South Africa, to produce a hybrid of cultures, which could have denoted their passion and commitment to settlement in the long run. Instead they had academic acculturation and academic identity. All of the French-speaking students in this study wanted to go back home. They were prepared to take the skills which they hoped to acquire from South Africa home, to develop their countries. It was found that issues of acculturation pertained to subsuming the original culture of immigrants to encapsulate a novel one to create an amalgam of cultures. Identity was a remarkable experience which was found to be constitutive of what the mainstream society had to offer entrants in terms of the propensity, tenacity and liberality to produce a foundation of historical, chronological and futuristic embellishment of cultures through a coercive negotiation process. It outstrips superficial offering of benefits and gains of the host society.

Sixthly, findings of this study pointed in the direction that learning ensues, when there is a hybridization of the three sociocultural factors namely language of communication, acculturation to the domain of influence and mediated identity. This sort of learning trajectory had another dimension of learning when applied to the issue of French-speaking students' learning in the mainstream society. The only learning that evolved pertained to the accumulation of skills not to reach a compromise. Consequently in the larger society, the redress that occurred did not result in conclusive definition of hybrid formation. On the other hand, due to the efficacy of the catalyst that fosters access to cultures (language), and at the academic institution to be precise (the LoLT), the academic acculturation and academic identity possessed by the French-speaking students by virtue of their agreement with the academic institution's cultures, hybrids of learning were formed. The magnitude of the

formed hybrids depended on the extent of redress between the sociocultural factors involved in the process of negotiation.

Seventhly, it was found that power relations manifested themselves in different perspectives in an ACOP. Lave and Wenger (1991) proposed that power relations exist in the field of education where teachers exercise their roles as facilitators of learning and students see that they are in possession of economic power, by virtue of the fact that they pay fees. Consequently the issues of power relations abound in the form of the “continuity-displacement contradictions” (1991:115-116). The scope of power dynamics was extended in this study beyond the issues of students paying fees and lecturers exercising their roles as facilitators of learning. In this study it was found that there were issues of financial power relations, inflationary power relations, linguistic power relations and power relations involving the roles of student advisors providing accommodation for the French-speaking students. The indication of power relation in terms of promising the French-speaking students accommodation before they arrived at Montana College was counteracted by the fact that there were not sufficient residential apartments. The management of Montana College usurped authority over the French-speaking student advisors in that they (the student advisors) could not assist them (the French-speaking students) to look for alternative accommodation at the expense of the residential apartments of the school which did not suffice. These issues add to the contributions made by Lave and Wenger (1991) by arguing that power relations are not restricted to the issues of payment of fees and the role played by the facilitators of learning.

8.3 Significance of the study

The sociocultural diversity at Montana College was indicative of the fact that a vast percentage of African immigrants tramped into South Africa to negotiate the rigours of higher education. About 30% of the student population at Montana College comprised African immigrants, out of which less than 10% were from French-speaking countries. According to the research output of Rodriguez (2009:18), immigrant teachers were found to be unprepared to teach immigrant students because of the complexities attached to facilitating learning to them. These complexities include language, ethnic issues and the need to stabilize them to focus on learning. This study has shown the possibility of institutionalizing an array of favourable conditions to sustain them within a multicultural environment. The study has also

found that the faculty at Montana College was prepared to teach crossculturally as opposed to the argument of Gopal (2011) that faculty is seldom prepared to teach cross-culturally. Faculty at Montana College also made the campus environment an internationalized ACOP where different students saw lecturers and mates from their countries of origin. The support mechanism put in place at Montana College includes the following, specialized lecturers from diverse sociocultural backgrounds, the student advisory unit, and the role of the pre-degree management and the networking found among the Deans of Faculties in consonance with the foundation programme which fed the different faculties on campus. The finding that lecturers and stakeholders were actively prepared to undertake such enormous tasks of taking students from the pre-degree level to third-year was indicative of the possibility that adequate information, understanding and determination to practice curriculum responsiveness is of utmost importance.

Findings of this study are significant because they offer an understanding of the learning trajectory and behaviour of foreign students within the tertiary academic institution, conflated by the complexities of ethnicity, language, acculturation and identity. In terms of language, the study has provided an important focus that diversity is important, in terms of appointment of lecturers. When students from different sociocultural contexts are able to find lecturers who are from similar ethnic background, this creates a symbol of identity and trust. Another example is cited from the student advisory unit. The French-speaking student advisors related well with French-speaking students, and gave advice by offering assistance to them in terms of acting as mediator between them, their parents and the academic institution. This idea was of utmost importance to the French-speaking students because it added to their belongingness at the academic institution.

In terms of the notion of French-speaking students about the South African community, important initiatives may arise when the South African government knows the mindset of citizens of this country about race matters. It is a matter of concern that 19 years after the demolition of apartheid, matters of race and racism still persist in miniaturized and enlarged perspectives depending on the situation and environment. Matters of race and racism abound in the mainstream South African society while they are miniaturized in academic communities of practice such as Montana College. A pertinent issue which was found in this study deals with the fact that a number of situations which are termed as evidence of racism

were misconstrued. An example was the finding in this study that lack of communication between the French-speaking and South African students presented a case as if South African students deliberately excluded the French-speaking students from their conversations. This study has unravelled the situation based on two key perceptions. Firstly, it was found that the French-speaking students were not the only ones with linguistic challenge in the LoLT. Secondly, the French-speaking students were also as guilty as the South African students because the two parties did not have the opportunity to explore the reasons why they used French and the indigenous South African languages to communicate in their different groups. Unknown to the two groups was the fact that it was more convenient for them to communicate with their language proficient peers for ease of understanding and comprehension among them. Among the French-speaking students the challenging rigour of translating English to French and back to English was burdensome, hence when the French-speaking students were in the company of the other French-speaking students they spoke in French because it was a relief to stop translating from English to French and back to English.

Going back to the issue of race and racism, when matters are weighed against the backdrop that up till now the United States of America, is still in the limelight by inviting foreigners into their country, it calls for concern that the situation in South Africa should be looked into. In America, highly skilled immigrants are welcome, but in South Africa, highly skilled immigrants are discountenanced by legislation that they are forbidden to work and develop the country. In the continuum, if South Africa continues to adopt this system of sending highly qualified expertise to other countries, a situation may arise where there may be a scarcity of specialized skills. This study stands to illuminate an understanding of the potential that is being wasted via legislation, and as such foreigners refuse to initiate the idea of identifying with this country because of institutionalized measures of marginalization and xenophobia.

This study is significant because it provides the opportunity to give South African students a wakeup call in terms of the requirement to be focused and to take conscious responsibility for their learning. They are provided with an array of pacesetters in terms of work ethic and commitment to duty from a few examples seen among the French-speaking students. Finally, in terms of language, this study stands to initiate a plethora of opportunities in terms of visiting the education system of South Africa, in terms of the requirement to ensure that the

language of globalization is ensured from the foundation phase to university level. It was obvious that the French-speaking students were deprived in terms of briskly learning the LoLT because South African students also had linguistic issues in the LoLT. As we are in a globalized world, the question arises in perpetuity: Would South Africa be able to compete in a globalized world in view of her stance with the 11 official languages currently used?

8.4 Contribution to knowledge

Firstly, the main knowledge that was generated in this study was in terms of the effects of the amalgamation of sociocultural factors in an Academic Community of Practice (ACOP). In previous studies (e.g. Wenger, 1998; Lave & Wenger, 1991), generic discussions were made about the COP principle, and not to specific domains like the private tertiary education institution. This study has been able to conceptualize the academic institution domain as an Academic Community of Practice (ACOP), where newcomers were referred to as novices and main members known as experts (Wenger, 1998). The pre-degree and first-year students were referred to as new entrants into the ACOP because they were assessed and given the rights to belong to the academic community. It was found that when the three stipulated sociocultural factors (language, academic acculturation and academic identity) are in a state of redress, there is an emergent learning, depending on the extent of hybridization or amalgamation between the sociocultural factors. The magnitude of learning is conceptualized to depend on the extent of redress or hybridization among the sociocultural factors.

Secondly, the finding that French-speaking students in the first-year degree programme needed to have been assigned to take the bridging English module in first-year was new knowledge as far as the private tertiary institution was concerned. This was a lapse in the design of the first-year curriculum and was not seen as relevant to pursue in terms of curriculum review. The implication is that if the bridging English module had been included in the first-year degree curriculum, it could have stretched the scope of French-speaking students in terms of learning English.

Thirdly, when there is prior learning of the language of instruction among foreign language speakers, backed up by interaction with the other English-speaking students it tends to shorten the transition time from proficiency in the foreign language to the target language of instruction in an ACOP.

Fourthly, the French-speaking students minded losing French as a language of communication. They chose to be bilingual because of the trend of globalization to be capable of competing for employment in the near future.

Fifthly, a turnaround time of about four to five years is required for the transition from French to English among the French-speaking students in the private tertiary education institution.

Sixthly, lecturers used unfamiliar accents to communicate the curriculum at the private provider of tertiary education to French-speaking students. The pace at which white South African lecturers spoke was incomprehensible to the French-speaking students in the ACOP. The accent of black South Africans was not understood by the French-speaking students. These factors were likely responsible for the delayed transition of French-speaking students from French to English.

Seventhly, the French-speaking students were proactive in terms of studying ahead of lecture periods due to their linguistic challenges, in an attempt to catch up with the curriculum.

Eighthly, small class size was instrumental to aiding French-speaking students to receive personalized attention. Weak students were identified and helped with challenges of the curriculum.

Ninthly, French-speaking students at the private provider of higher education had academic acculturation instead of acculturation to the mainstream society. They strictly adhered to their ethnic cultures and could not trade their ethnic cultures with the mainstream society cultures.

Tenthly, the French-speaking-students translated curriculum content from English to French and back to English before they could understand curriculum content. This practice wasted their time considerably.

Eleventhly, introversion and extroversion were character traits that determined the extent of association and integration of French-speaking students with the curriculum and English-

speakers at the academic institution. Introversion and extroversion were found to determine the survival of French-speaking students in terms of compliance with the presented curriculum. Introversion made the French-speaking students have diminished academic coping mechanisms because they were reticent, while extroversion gave them the charisma of outgoingness in terms of finding solutions to their academic challenges.

Twelfthly, the route of comprehending learning facilitation among French-speaking students became new knowledge. French-speaking students learned better and more efficiently when facilitators of learning write a summary of verbal explanations on the white board, for foreign students to write and process on their own.

Thirteenthly, apart from the generally acclaimed power relations proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991), this study found other avenues through which power relations evolve in an academic institution. These include (a) financial power relations; (b) linguistic power relations; (c) inflationary power relations and (d) workplace power relations which involve authoritarianism from top executive members in an academic institution to the lower cadre staff members. This was exhibited at Montana College via issues bordering on advertising accommodation as part of the packages available to French-speaking students without fulfilling the promises made to them prior to their arrival at Montana College.

8.5 Delimitations and limitations

In South Africa studies involving the curriculum experiences of foreign students in the private higher education institutions have not been explored. To elicit the right and dependable responses from the respondents of this research, an effort was made to define seemingly strange terminologies such as curricula, educational and sociocultural challenges and/or experience of them.

When a researcher employs the qualitative case study methodology he/she is expected to have an understanding of the sociocultural perspectives of the respondents. As a Nigerian, exploring the curriculum experiences of non-South African French-speaking students in a private higher education institution, my seven-year experience regarding the South African community hopefully assisted in making the right judgment.

The findings that were obtained from this study were premised on the data obtained from a single private higher education provider. This institution was unique and not from other private or mainstream higher education institutions. Consequently I am not claiming that the findings from this study can be generalized to other private providers of higher education institutions. The study therefore allows for further research on how other sociocultural groups, not bordered by this study, could perceive and handle challenges confronting non-English-speaking private higher education students. A major limitation of the study was in terms of the sample size. If the sample size had been larger, a mixed method approach could have been more appropriate. However, the percentage of French-speaking students at the research site was minimal compared to the indigenous and the other foreign students. Furthermore, it might be challenging to generalize the findings of this study since the qualitative research technique was employed and that compelled the study to be contextualized. Therefore a small sample was used which culminated in the world-view of the respondents appraised in the study. Moreover, I strongly assume that this study has not provided all the answers to questions raised to investigate the respondents in this research effort. Therefore, the recommendations for future study in order to put forth the cutting edge of knowledge on how the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students impact on their learning and capacity to acculturate and develop academic identities are proposed.

Despite that my main reason for utilizing the constructivist/interpretive model was to gather in-depth comprehension of the phenomenon under study, it was discovered that some aspects were not properly covered as I would have wanted. For instance the issue of exploring the proportion of lecturers that spoke English/French and those of students who spoke the different official and indigenous languages at Montana College were limitations as far as this study was concerned.

Another limitation in the study entailed the plan I made to interview cohorts of French-speaking students from the pre-degree to the third-year levels. It was impossible to gather these cohorts of students at these different levels in focus group interviews. If this plan had worked the richness of obtained data could have been used to make more informed judgment on the findings presented.

8.6 Recommendation for practice

Based on the findings at Montana College, the following recommendations are made for practice in an attempt to enhance curriculum development, enactment and alignment initiatives for similar providers of higher education in a multicultural milieu.

- (a) Firstly, in the area of tuition fee recovery it is recommended that a better avenue be devised to recover school fees. The idea of excluding fees defaulters from tuition was found to be instrumental to diminished academic performance among the French-speaking students. It was observed that the students who owed fees, were demoralized, and had low morale to uninterruptedly integrate into the academic domain. Students with outstanding fees may be disallowed to view their tests and examination results instead of depriving them from tuition.
- (b) Secondly, French-speaking students who are admitted to the mainstream degree programme via the advanced level examinations offered in French-speaking countries should be required to take the bridging English module offered at the pre-degree (foundation) level. This initiative may enhance the acquiescence of non-English-speakers to the use of English, which entrenches them in the academic community of practice to integrate and learn.
- (c) Thirdly, at the provider of higher education, it was found that French-speaking students struggled to be allocated accommodation. It is recommended that foreign students be given priority, especially because they are from other countries. This idea may assist in getting them ready to acclimatize in the academic environment. Many of the French-speaking students had to look for alternative accommodation away from the academic environment because the available accommodation was limited within the campus environment. This challenge of having to rent apartments away from the campus exposed them to situations that could jeopardize their academic aspirations. They could also be exposed to risk factors in the mainstream society such as armed robbery, hijack and rape.
- (d) Fourthly, apart from the market day which was a cultural initiative to strengthen the adaptation of foreign students to Montana College, it is recommended that additional days be set aside to familiarize students with the cultural diversity on the academic institution. This idea could foster a better dimension of acculturation and identity to the academic environment and the mainstream South African society.

- (e) The issue of accents and the pace at which white lecturers speak during learning facilitation could be tackled by the management by providing opportunities to train lecturers. An awareness of these issues should be communicated to lecturers with a view to addressing them.

8.7 Recommendation for future research

In line with the findings obtained from this study, the following future studies are recommended:

- Curriculum experiences of French-speaking students from African countries in a predominantly white tertiary education institution of South Africa.
- Curriculum experiences of black South African students in a predominantly white tertiary education institution.
- The reestablishment of African immigrant lecturers' professional identities in South African universities.
- Unfolding the intricacies of curriculum experiences in internationalized academic communities of practice.

8.8 Chapter summary and conclusion

The chapter has presented the summary of findings in the research study. It has highlighted the significance of the study and presented the generation of new knowledge. Recommendations for future research are proposed to ensure continuity in terms of the knowledge base among foreign students and stakeholders at the tertiary institutional level. The display of linguistic power relations between the French-speaking and South African students was a result of lack of communication between the two groups of students. The French-speaking students were as guilty as the South African students because they both remained at both ends of a continuum by assuming that they intentionally detached from one another. The French-speaking students did not realize that the South African students also had their own linguistic challenge in the LoLT because some of them had a wobbly foundation in English. Similarly, the incessant use of French as a language of communication among the French-speaking students prevented the South African students from reaching out to them. Soccer was found to unite certain French-speaking students with the South African

students. However not all of the French-speaking students were interested in soccer. A possible point of interaction was thus seen as a possible meeting point for the two groups of students. It implies that games are capable of fostering interaction between the two groups of students as suggested by Jan in Chapter Five section 5.48.1.

As the French-speaking students translated words from English to French before they could understand, the South African students likely had similar challenges because of their inability to fluently speak in English. The explanation of Ms. Thato in Chapter Five section 6.7.5 supports this argument. The natural posture was to use the indigenous languages to communicate with their Zulu and Sotho-speaking friends. This study has revealed that code-switching was not intentionally practised by the South African students. In the same vein the use of French as a language of communication was not predetermined by the French-speaking students. The French-speaking students used French to communicate among their French-speaking peers because it was a relief to do so. It was seen as an opportunity to rest from translating words and thinking in French to respond in English as some of them put it.

Finally an important finding has emerged in this study which seeks to inform the course of learning facilitation among non-English speaking students. Lecturers are equipped with the fact that they should not only verbally explain concepts in lecture rooms with the assumption that all the students understand what they are teaching. They should endeavour to write on the board or use power point presentation slides to communicate curriculum content. Based on my experience as a mathematics lecturer, it may not be desirable to teach mathematics using power point presentation because of the nature of mathematics. A mixture of power point presentation and demonstration on the board may be appropriate for non-English-speaking students to learn and follow the course of learning facilitation.

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APPENDIX A



Letter of informed consent to students from pre-degree to third-year

Dear student,

I am a Doctoral student registered at the University of South Africa (Unisa). The topic of my study is:

Non-South African French-speaking students' curriculum experiences in a private tertiary education institution.

I intend gathering data for this study by conducting interviews with non-South African French-speaking students at this institution to gather their experiences about curriculum related issues. You have thus been identified to participate in this research.

I promise to use the information that you will provide solely for this study and not for any other purpose. Your name and that of your institution will not be disclosed for confidentiality purposes. The video recordings of your interview will only be used for research writing purposes and will not be presented at conferences or seminars. I will also collect film and photograph data throughout the university setting, including lecture rooms, hallways, sports or cultural events, gatherings of students and so forth and will include students and lecturers.

You have the right to stop your participation in this research at any point you may wish. You may also request that the tape-recorder be switched off for certain responses during the interview process if you feel uncomfortable for such responses to be recorded.

Kindly sign here below if you agree to take part in this research:

I, grant Mr C.A. Adebajji permission to interview me for purposes of gathering data for his study, and allow him to record the interview.

Date:/...../2012

APPENDIX B



Interview protocol for non-South African French-speaking students in the first to third-year programme.

1 Family background and socio-economic information

- 1.1 What is your name, and how long have you lived as a student in South Africa?
- 1.2 Where are you from?
- 1.3 What is the composition of your family (How many children, wives etc.)?
- 1.4 Why did you decide to study in SA?
- 1.5 Why did you decide to study in a private tertiary institution?
- 1.6 Did you do your matriculation exams in SA? If no, where, and what is the secondary school leaving certificate called in your country? How many years did you spend at school in your country?
- 1.7 Why didn't you decide to study at one of the public tertiary institutions, e.g., University of Pretoria, University of JHB, UCT etc.?
- 1.8 How did you get your admission to this private HEI? Was it because the requirements are reasonable, give details?
- 1.9 What are you studying now and how has it been?
- 1.10 Is any member of your immediate family a university graduate? If yes, do you get any inspiration from such a family member? What are the professions of your parents, and where do they work and live?
- 1.11 Who encouraged you to go to a tertiary institution, and why?
- 1.12 Who is paying for your studies and living expenses in SA?
- 1.13 Do you at times, experience financial difficulty as an immigrant student, explain?
- 1.14 Can you tell me how the economy of your country is?
- 1.15 Are you satisfied with the economic situation of your country?
- 1.16 How many of you, and your siblings are studying at this school?

2 Life satisfaction indices in SA

- 2.1 Do you think this HEI meets your educational and sociocultural needs? I explain educational and sociocultural to the participant thus
.....
- 2.2 Are you satisfied with the lifestyle of your classmates on campus, and at the hostel/accommodation?
- 2.3 Are you happy about any difference in cultures, between your home culture and SA culture?

- 2.4 In terms of culture, did you feel uncomfortable about any difference in culture between your country's culture and SA's culture? Explain in detail.
- 2.5 What do you enjoy in this country? Clothes, food, music, night life, academics, road network, infrastructure etc.?
- 2.6 Do you think the crime in this country is high/low, compared to your country? If yes, how has it, or does this affect your comfort in SA?
- 2.7 Have you ever experienced xenophobic violence since you began to live and study in SA?
- 2.8 Do you think South African students on this campus are friendly to you, or hostile? Explain.
- 2.9 Have you ever experienced any forms of cruelty, or attacks since you began to study and live in SA?
- 2.10 What is the major source of challenge to you on the campus, and at the hostel/accommodation?
- 2.11 Have you ever experienced being called names, e.g., foreigner?
- 2.12 What is a normal class lecture like? Do you contribute to discussions in class? If no, why don't you contribute to discussions?
- 2.13 Who are your friends during lecture, free periods, and at the hostel?
- 2.14 Do you talk to SA students closely, immigrants from your country, immigrants from other countries?
- 2.15 Do you have an association of fellow countrymen/women at the school or hostel? Do you feel more comfortable to share your personal feelings and experiences with them more than SA citizens who are students in this school?
- 2.16 During your study period, who do you study with? Who do you have group discussions with?

3 Academic experiences

- 3.1 I have been told that mathematics and English are compulsory for all pre-degree students. How do you enjoy mathematics and English?
- 3.2 Do you think it is important for you to study mathematics and English?
- 3.3 Do you, or have you ever experienced difficulty understanding these two subjects?
- 3.4 If yes, is there any special kind of help to reduce your difficulties in any of these subjects, or more?
- 3.5 Do you have an academic advisor at this school? What does he/she do to assist you in your academic and career path?
- 3.6 Do you think your lecturers and tutors are patient with you during lectures and tutorials? Have you ever experienced any forms of abuse from any of them? When your lecturer comes to class, do you become afraid? If you don't understand a concept, do you dare to ask questions? How do they respond when you ask questions during lectures and tutorials?

- 3.7 Apart from mathematics and English, do you experience any difficulty with any other subjects or issues within the campus?
- 3.8 Do you think your lecturers encourage you to succeed, how?
- 3.9 What do you want to become in life? To become what you want to become, do you break barriers at the school and hostel to become friends with students that you think are more intelligent than you, by studying together, practicing together, joining their social groups etc.?
- 3.10 What is your level of involvement with facilities that are on ground at this school? Do you visit the library often to do additional study? Do you prepare before going for each lecture by studying ahead of time, to gain understanding and ask questions about unclear aspects of your study? Do you engage the help of your lecturer by participating and doing assignments, and self-help questions in all your modules?
- 3.11 Do you make presentations in class, for other students to benefit from you? Do you learn anything from other students' presentations? Explain in detail.
- 3.12 Have you ever failed any module, and why, if yes?
- 3.13 Have you ever done any supplementary exams, why, if yes?

4 Sociocultural issues

- 4.1 Do you enjoy the teaching styles of your lecturers at this school? How are the teaching styles in SA different from how they taught you in your country? How would you like your lecturers to lecture to you? Are you comfortable with the language policy of this school, i.e. the use of English?
- 4.1.1 What languages do you speak? Which one do you speak and understand best?
- 4.1.2 Do you think you would understand your lectures better if you were taught and allowed to write your exams in French?
- 4.1.3 In what major language do you communicate at the school, hostel, and at home?
- 4.1.4 Do you understand your lecturers when they are lecturing in English?
- 4.1.5 Do all your lecturers speak aloud when lecturing? Do they explain well in ways that help you understand? Do you think their lectures are boring?
- 4.1.6 Tell me, what challenges do you face in your studies at this school, at home, or at the hostel?
- 4.1.7 Do you get any kind of support from the school, friends, staff etc.?
- 4.1.8 Do you prefer to stop speaking your home language, so that you can better understand English?

- 4.1.9 Are you interested in learning any of the South African languages? If yes why and how?
- 4.1.10 Do you want to adapt to the cultures of this country? In what ways do you think you can adapt to the SA cultures, and why?
- 4.1.11 After your studies, would you prefer to return to your country, to live there and work, or to stay in SA?
- 4.1.12 Do you prefer to live in SA or your country?
- 4.1.13 What do you hope to eventually become in the near future, and how are you going about this dream?
- 4.1.14 Can you tell me what you think may be your challenges towards becoming what you intend to become?
- 4.1.15 Do you wish to become a SA citizen? How would you describe your identity? Would you now say you are a South African, or what?
- 4.1.16 Can you give up your nationality to become a South African if the opportunity comes, why, if your response is yes?
- 4.1.17 If you get a job in SA, would you stay and work, or would you prefer to go elsewhere, or back to your country?
- 4.1.18 Are you on a government subsidy, or sponsorship in SA? If yes, do you have to pay back the bursary, or funds made available to you?
- 4.1.19 Do you talk and play with immigrants from other countries? Are they your closest friends? If yes, why? Do you prefer to have SA friends?
- 4.1.20 Do you learn anything from SA students, other immigrant students, lecturers, staff members etc.?
- 4.1.21 Do you love anything in SA? Tell me more

APPENDIX C



Focus group interview protocol with French-speaking students at Montana College

Welcome: Good morning to you all. You are welcome to this focus group interview. A focus group interview is a forum where different participants are allowed to freely express their concerns about a topic. My topic is on non-South African French-speaking students' curriculum experiences in a private tertiary education institution. You know MGI is a private institution so we have been able to conduct some interviews to document some views of the French-speaking students in 2012. But now I want to do additional interviews in 2013. That is why I have invited you to this meeting. Thank you very much, you are welcome.

1. Can you please tell me your names?
2. Do South African students interact with you at this institution?
3. What challenges do you face as a student at this institution?
4. Can you please tell me your courses at MGI?
5. Do you also have issues with pronunciation among the lecturers?
6. Would you say that you have been adjusting to this institution?
7. Do you have a sense of belonging to this institution?
8. Do you ask questions in class?
9. Do you experience shyness at this school?
10. Do you have any special way that you learn during lectures?
11. Do you experience homesickness?
12. Can you briefly explain what your relationship has been like with your lecturers at this institution?
13. Do you present topics in class?
14. Do you understand lectures without translating into French?
15. Do you work in groups with the South African students?

APPENDIX C



Focus Group Interview protocol with South African students at Montana College

Welcome: Good morning lady and gentlemen. You are welcome to this focus group interview. Focus group interview is a forum where different participants are allowed to freely express their concerns about a topic. My topic is on non-South African French-speaking students' curriculum experiences in a private tertiary education institution. You know MGI is a private institution, so we have been able to conduct some interviews to document some views of the French-speaking students. But now it is the turn of South African students. That is why I have invited you to this meeting. Thank you very much, you are welcome.

1. Can you please tell me your names?
2. The French-speaking students complain that South African students don't interact with them so what's your view on this?
3. Would you say that language is a key point in communication? What do you think prevents a French speaker from breaking into your midst if I may ask you?
4. Can you please tell me your courses at MGI?
5. Do you also have issues with pronunciation? Even with the white lecturers?
6. Would you say that the French-speaking students have been adjusting?
7. Do you agree that they have a sense of belonging?
8. Do the French-speaking students ask questions in class?
9. Do South African students also have linguistic challenges in the LoLT?
10. What recommendation do you have for the French-speaking students at this institution?
11. Do they complain about homesickness?
12. Can you briefly explain how your relationship has been with your lecturers at this institution?
13. Do you ask questions in the class?
14. Do the French-speaking students ask questions in class?
15. Do you work in groups with the French-speaking students?

APPENDIX C



Focus Group interview session with student advisors

You are welcome to this focus group interview session, aimed at exploring the curriculum experiences of non-South African French-speaking students at this institution. Your names will not be mentioned in the research report of this study. Please feel free to respond to the questions which follow.

1. How would you describe the French-speaking students of this campus?
2. Why do you think they decided to study at this institution?
3. What are some of the challenges you address among them?
4. Do they experience any social or academic concerns?
5. If they do, how do you address such concerns?
6. Are you also of French-speaking origin? If yes, why do you think the school appointed you as student advisor?
7. Do you travel to French-speaking countries to recruit students?
8. Of what benefit are French speaking students to this institution?
9. After their pre-degree programme, do they proceed to the degree programme?
10. Do they enjoy any form of government aid from their country? If yes, are they expected to pay back the bursary?
11. Do you think they adjust to this school?
12. Do you think they have a sense of belonging to this school?

APPENDIX D

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Research topic: Non-South African French-speaking students' curriculum experiences in a community of practice at a private tertiary institution.

This observation schedule is aimed at gaining insight into the real-life experiences of French-speaking students regarding the curriculum. I will observe the lecture room atmosphere and non-verbal interaction among the French-speaking students, their lecturers' accents and the mode of learning facilitation to see whether the lecturers engage with the students within the lecture hall. Boldness to put questions to the lecturers among the French-speaking students would be observed to explore whether they would express the feelings of shyness and reticence. I will also observe their interactions with their peers outside the classroom.

I will document my findings in my field notes and observation journal and interpret these documented observations in order to augment my understanding of the curriculum experiences of French-speaking students in a private tertiary institution environment.

A) LECTURE ROOM SETTING

1. Seating arrangements/group formations
2. Diversity of students in the lecture room
3. Lecture room milieu. Is it warm and welcoming?
4. Does the lecture room environment promote engagement and active learning?

B) INTERACTION BETWEEN THE LECTURER AND STUDENTS

1. What role did the lecturer play in the lecture room?
2. How was the lecture introduced?
3. What language was used most frequently during the lecture?
4. Did the lecturer allow room for students to ask questions?
5. If so, how were the questions answered?
6. Was there interaction between the lecturer and students?
7. Did the lecturer demonstrate the virtues of patience to explain concepts
8. Any other indications suggesting rapport between students and the lecturer
9. Which module was being facilitated?
10. Did the lecturer speak too fast?
11. Did the lecturer indicate the need to check whether non-English speaking students understood the lecture?

C) INTERACTION AMONG STUDENTS

1. What is the level of interaction among the students?
2. Did students separate into groups in the lecture room/ outside the lecture hall?
3. What is the most predominant language during free periods/break time?
4. Were there occasions when other language speakers came into the midst of the French-speaking students?

APPENDIX E

An example of transcribed interview

Real name = Flora = F, I= Interviewer and pseudonym = Felicia

I: Good afternoon, can you please tell me your name?

F: My name is Flora.

I: What year of study are you in now?

F: Pre-degree.

I: How long have you lived as a student in South Africa?

F: Nine months.

I: Where are you from?

F: I am from Gabon.

I: Why did you come to South Africa?

F: For my studies.

I: In your family, how many children were born to your parents?

F: Four, but I am the only one on my mother's side.

I: How many of you are studying at this institution?

F: My sister was here.

I: Is she still here?

F: No, she just did one year here.

I: Pre-degree?

F: Yes.

I: And then she left for another university?

F: University of Johannesburg.

I: Why did you decide to study in a private institution like this?

F: My parents told me that if I come here, if I don't understand a topic in class, I can ask my lecturer because the classes are not overcrowded, but in a public university I cannot do this.

I: So they have a feeling that because this institution is a private institution, you would receive attention?

F: Yes.

I: And are you getting that attention?

F: Yes.

I: Okay, who encouraged you to go to a university like this and why did you decide to go to a university?

F: In my country, we received visitors from MGI and they spoke to us about MGI so I decided to come to here.

I: Is there any member of your family that has gone to the university before?

F: Yes.

I: Who?

F: Everybody in my family has been to the university before.

I: So you don't want to be left out?

F: No (smiling)

I: Why don't you want to be left out?

F: Because if I don't finish my studies, I will not have a good job.

I: Who is paying for your studies and living expenses in South Africa?

F: My father and my mother.

I: Is it not expensive for them?

F: It is expensive. They just want me to be able to work and if I am able to work, it is fine.

I: Do you at times experience financial difficulty as a student in South Africa?

F: Yes.

I: Tell me more.

F: When my parents send me money, I don't have enough money for my personal needs. For example when I go to the mall, there are many things I wish to buy, whereas in Gabon, we do not have malls as there are in South Africa.

I: Do you think this institution is meeting your educational needs as a pre-degree student?

F: Yes.

I: Okay can you tell me more? In what ways are the modules you're taking here different from the ones you took in Gabon?

F: For example in Gabon, mathematics is more difficult. But here in South Africa, mathematics is easier for me. In Gabon, I studied in French and there are certain figures of speech in English that are not in French but here, in English I am learning them.

I: How has this helped you?

F: It has helped me in the comprehension of my subjects at school.

I: Now let us talk about your experience with your classmates who are not from Gabon.

F: Okay (nodding her head in affirmation).

I: How would you describe the relationship between you and your South African friends and friends from other countries? Are they welcoming? Do they accept you into their group?

F: Yes they welcome me into their groups. I think they are welcoming. For example I don't speak English very well. They try their best to understand me.

I: Do they help you to learn English?

F: Yes.

I: So you have South African friends?

F: Yes.

I: How do they help you?

F: For example, when I don't understand a lesson, I ask them and they help me.

I: So they help you?

F: Yes.

I: They do not say because you are from another country they will not help you?

F: No.

I: Okay that is good. Do you like this country?

F: Yes.

I: Okay what do you like about this country?

F: I like their food. I like their malls. In Gabon we don't have malls. I like the game parks in this country.

I: So you feel at home here.

F: Yes.

I: What other things do you enjoy in South Africa and in this institution?

F: I enjoy all things, especially in my studies. For example in class, we are not many whereas in Gabon we are so many and the lecturer gives us attention here. In Gabon, when the teacher explains to the class and we don't understand, he ignores us. Here, they attend to our academic needs.

I: So the teachers didn't attend to you in Gabon because you are many?

F: If you ask him a question, he would tell you that you had to listen when he was teaching.

I: Can you tell me your major difficulty in pre-degree?

F: When the lecturer is teaching, sometimes I don't understand. For example, in mathematics when I came the first time to this institution it was difficult. For example, the word "exponents" is new to me. It is not the same way we call it in Gabon that they call it here. Sometimes I was lost but now I am fine with it because I have learned what it is called here.

I: What do you call exponents in French?

F: "Exponential" (She said it with a French intonation).

I: But they mean basically the same thing?

F: No (nodding her head to indicate they are not the same in meaning).

I: Do you still have challenges in terms of English language?

F: Yes, I want to learn and speak English very well as if I am a native of South Africa.

I: How did you start learning English?

F: In my country, when I was 10 years old in college, I started to learn English. Each year my parents sent me to South Africa for three months to be able to learn English. I had to learn in the midst of older students and I didn't learn at that time. All they did was to ask me to colour drawings. I began to learn English properly when I came in September 2010.

I: How would you say your English is now?

F: My English is better than before but not very good at the moment since I have only been here for 9 months.

I: Now what about your lecturers, are they very friendly? Would you say they help you a lot?

F: Yes.

I: Can you give me an example of a lecturer who is helping you?

F: For example Mr. Du Plessis, I didn't understand his lessons for the first time and he always tells me that if I have any problems, I should try to see him so that he can explain to me. He speaks too fast and I don't understand his accent.

I: Do you feel comfortable with the other lecturers?

F: Yes.

I: Are they very helpful?

F: Yes.

I: Do you have friends from other countries at this school?

F: Yes.

I: Can you mention their names?

F: Yes, from Cameroun, Congo, Zimbabwe, Lesotho and also Angola.

I: Now what has been your academic experience? Would you say you are doing very well?

F: No, I think university and English are new to me. I think in the 2nd semester, I will do better.

I: So English has been your major challenge? Sometimes when they are lecturing, you don't understand what they're saying?

F: I do not understand what they are saying at times. Also, I live very far away and it has been difficult for me to get here on time but now I come with the university shuttle service.

I: Why didn't you live at the university residence?

F: I didn't know about the university residence. It was when I met a friend (Ertha) that she told me that there is university residence here.

I: So, next semester you are likely going to take accommodation there?

F: Yes.

I: So Ertha is also from Gabon?

F: Yes.

I: Did you know her from Gabon or was it when you got here that you met her?

F: Yes it was when I got here that I met her.

I: Do you socialize with South African students and other students from other countries?

F: Yes.

I: Do you do group work together?

F: Yes.

I: How has the group work been helping you to cope with your studies?

F: It is important to work with others in a group because they understand rapidly. For us, it is difficult so they help us understand our modules while we are doing group work with them.

I: Do you sometimes translate what you are taught into French before you understand what you are required to understand?

F: Sometimes I do, especially in mathematics because I am not very good in mathematics.

I: So you translate to French before you understand? Has that been helping you?

F: Yes it has been helping me.

I: Have you ever experienced hatred from anybody at this school?

F: No.

I: When you came into this school, was it very new to you?

F: Yes because it was my first time to attend university, especially because I had to learn a new language and it was not easy. I also didn't know when I had to write a test. It was my sister who told me that each lecturer gives out a study guide for assignments that I can read.

I: If you don't understand a concept, do you ask questions in class?

F: No I prefer to ask the lecturer after the class or my friend if they understand because I am shy. I don't like to talk where there are many people. I am afraid other students will laugh when I am speaking English.

I: Do you think your lecturers encourage you to succeed academically in any way?

F: Yes, I think they try to help me every time. For example in economics, my lecturer, Mrs. Folake helps me when I don't understand. When I give her an assignment and she finds that the assignment is not good, she gives me more time to redo the assignment.

I: Is it because of English that economics is difficult for you?

F: Yes but in my country, I did economics. It is like mathematics and it is difficult for me. Next year I am going to do psychology because I prefer it.

I: So you want to study psychology?

F: Yes.

I: Now to become a psychologist. What do you think would help you?

F: It is because psychologists are people who talk to many people. They are not shy and foresee a number of things and they try to understand others. So I think I am interested.

I: Do you visit the library many times to do additional studies?

F: Yes.

I: Do you understand the books that are in the library?

F: Yes because I like reading, so it's fine.

I: Do you use the English dictionary at times to try to understand what you're reading?

F: Yes and the French dictionary and these have been helping me.

I: Do you prepare ahead of time for every lecture?

F: Yes.

I: How has that helped you?

F: If I don't study ahead of time, it means I will lag behind in my studies and it will be more difficult to understand what I am required to learn.

I: Do you think the pre-degree is easier than what you did while you were in Gabon?

F: No, I think college is different from university.

I: So this one is more challenging?

F: Yes.

I: Because of English?

F: It's not only that, for example, in student's skills we were taught how to do bibliography.

I: Referencing? You didn't do that before?

F: Yes I did it before but it was not the same way we were taught in Gabon. In student's skills, now I understand how to do referencing.

I: What do your student advisors do to help you?

F: They help me to get acclimatized to the university. For example if I have a problem with my classmates or with those who live at the school residence, they help me with all kinds of problems.

I: Okay, do you make presentations in class for other students to learn?

F: Yes.

I: What are your experiences?

F: My first day at MGI, I was in Mr. Du Plessis's class, he told us to gather in groups of 4 or 5 students. One student in each group had to present the findings of each group. So he chose my group and he told me to present on behalf of my group. I was afraid because it was my first experience at the university and because I knew my English was not very good. I did my first presentation in English. It was fine and my lecturer told me that my presentation was very good.

I: So the group work and having to interact with your friends at school is helping you and helping your confidence at the school?

F: Yes.

I: When you came in, you did not have that confidence? But now you are gaining confidence gradually?

F: Yes.

I: What do you think is the secret of academic success?

F: I think the secret of academic success is to work all the time and if I don't understand my lessons, I have to ask my friends or the lecturers. If I don't adopt the style of asking for help from my lecturers or friends at the campus, it would be difficult to catch up with my studies.

I: Okay, have you ever failed any test or examination before in this school?

F: No.

I: Do you enjoy how the lecturers at this institution teach?

F: Yes.

I: What do you enjoy about their teaching styles?

F: They ask each student to go to the white board to do an exercise. For example in my pre-degree English, we have a test in class which involves figures of speech. The lecturer asks us to find, for example a metaphor. When we finish, she tells us to use the metaphor to construct statements.

I: So you participate in class and it's helping you to learn the cultures of South Africa?

F: Yes.

I: In what ways are you learning the cultures of South Africa?

F: I think South Africans are friendly and welcoming at this school.

I: The dressing? Do you like the dressing?

F: I think South African's dress very well. There are clothes that we don't have in Gabon. For example, we don't have winter in Gabon and we don't have warm clothes as worn in South Africa.

I: In what major language do you speak at home and at school?

F: I speak French at home. Sometimes I speak in English at home and my parents told me to speak in English with my brothers and sisters. When you stay all the time with the French-speaking people, it is more difficult to speak in English. The tendency is that you speak French all the time.

I: Why did your parents tell you to speak English with your brothers and sisters?

F: It is because they want me to speak and learn how to speak very well in English quickly.

I: Why do they want you to speak in English?

F: Because it was not only my parents that wanted me to learn in English. I have a brother in France, I could have gone with him to study in French, but since I was a child, I have always loved English. For example when I am with my parents and brothers and sisters, if they don't want us to understand what they are saying, they speak in English. So, since I was a child I desired to speak in English so as to be able to speak like them.

I: So you felt they were cheating you whenever they were speaking in English?

F: Yes.

I: Do you think you would understand your subjects better if you were taught in French?

F: I think for the subject that I love, in French it would be the same thing. But for subjects that are very difficult, I think it may be better for me to learn them in French.

I: Which subjects do you like?

F: Student skills, pre-degree English, and all the literature subjects.

I: Human development?

F: Yes.

I: Mathematics?

F: No (Smiling and showing displeasure).

I: Do all your lecturers speak aloud when they are lecturing?

F: Yes.

I: You're comfortable with that?

F: Yes.

I: What other challenges do you face?

F: Generally we speak English but South Africans speak Zulu.

I: Why are you not comfortable? Do you also wish you could speak Zulu?

F: Yes.

I: Do you want to learn Zulu.

F: I prefer to learn languages that are international. For example, I prefer to learn Spanish and Portuguese but not the unrecognized languages of each country.

I: Can you greet in Zulu?

F: Yes.

I: Do you think it is important to learn how to greet in the South African language?

F: Yes because when I am in the bus, people speak Zulu and the more you hear them speak Zulu, it is easier to understand them.

I: Do you think it is better to stop speaking your home language so that you can better understand English?

F: I don't want to forget French because I think it is a good language. For example, my brother has been in Africa for 6 years. Today, when he speaks French, he makes a lot of mistakes

I: Because he has really associated with the people here?

F: Yes.

I: Do you get any support from the school, friends and the staff? Is there any way that they are helping you to adapt to this school?

F: Yes, for example my student advisor, I see him for any kind of problem. When I am with my friends, I understand how they think and live. If I don't understand any lesson, they help me as well as the lecturers.

I: Are your friends South Africans?

F: Yes.

I: So they are very helpful?

F: Yes.

I: They like you?

F: Yes (smiling).

I: Do you want to adapt to the cultures of South Africa?

F: Yes but I don't want to forget my culture too.

I: Why don't you want to forget your culture?

F: Because even if I learn another language, I will always be a French speaker. I like how they live and think as well as what they do.

I: So you want to remain a French speaker?

F: Yes.

I: And you want to retain that culture?

F: Yes.

I: What is the French culture?

F: For example, I think South Africans are very welcoming. I think among the French speakers, people do not care about you. You face your problem alone. However I still like that culture and the French language.

I: So your experience with the South Africans at this school is that they are welcoming?

F: Yes.

I: They allow you to integrate and associate with them?

F: Yes.

I: Now do you wish to become a South African citizen?

F: No.

I: So you don't want to change your identity and say you are a South African?

F: No.

I: Why?

F: If I change my identity, it will only because I want to be an American or Canadian. It will only be because I don't want to stay in Africa anymore.

I: So you prefer to be an American?

F: Yes.

I: So because of American citizenship, you can decide not to be a Gabonese?

F: I will stay a Gabonese but I would want to have an American nationality.

I: But if I ask you after you now live in America about your nationality, how would you answer me?

F: No, I am Gabonese.

I: What if you start working there?

F: I am Gabonese. But I will be proud to have their nationality but will remain a Gabonese.

I: What about the South African nationality, will you stay here and work?

F: No.

I: What if you marry a South African?

F: I don't want to marry a South African.

I: Why?

F: I prefer to marry a Gabonese?

I: What about from Congo?

F: No. Maybe I may marry a South African, but I prefer Gabonese because I have lived with them.

I: You know them already and it is difficult to break away from them?

F: Yes.

I: What else do you learn from South African students and other students at this school?

F: All of us don't speak the same language but I think we are all the same because we don't have problems and we are friends and we are not different.

I: Okay have you ever experienced xenophobia?

F: No.

I: Can you tell me any other difficulty that you are having apart from the ones you have told me about?

F: South Africa is a big country. For example in Gabon, it takes 20 or 30 minutes to get to school. Here, it can take up to 2 hours. When I was at the English school, it took me a long time to go and come back. I often slept in the bus because I was always tired of the traffic, even now I am tired.

I: So you would want to move close to the school?

F: Yes, but I told my parents and they told me to wait till my sister returns to Gabon before I move to the school residence. She will return next year and then I can live at the school residence.

I: Because of the cost?

F: Yes.

I: It's not easy to pay for two people?

F: It is not easy at all.

I: So you're not on a government scholarship?

F: No, because in Gabon, now it is difficult to get a government sponsorship. I have many friends who stayed in Gabon this year because they did not get a sponsorship. The new government wants all Gabonese to study in Gabon because they are building schools and universities.

I: Alright thank you so much for sharing your story with me. I wish you success in your career path and your stay within this institution. Thank you so much.

APPENDIX F



TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN
(UNISA)

RESEARCH ETHICAL CLEARANCE NO: MGI/1/2012/05

21ST February 2012

RE: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT MIDRAND GRADUATE INSTITUTE (MGI)
MR CHARLES ADEDAYO ADEBANJI – STUDENT NUMBER 42879582

This is to confirm that the Research Committee of the Midrand Graduate Institute (MGI), acting on behalf of the EXCO of MGI, has granted Mr. C. A. Adebajni approval to undertake a research project involving staff and students at MGI, towards his Doctor of Education degree as follows:

RESEARCH TITLE:

Non-South/African French speaking students' curriculum experiences in a private higher education institution

It is understood that appropriate protocols, with particular reference to consent by, and confidentiality for all participants, will be observed. It is further understood that the findings of the research will be made available to the MGI EXCO.

The Management of MGI wishes Mr. Adebajni in his research project.


Professor Marvin M. Kambuwa
Dean: Research and Postgraduate Development
& Chair: Research Committee


Dr. Johan Freysen
Vice Principal (Academic)

APPENDIX H

Interview Protocol for Lecturers

You are welcome to this interview session, aimed at exploring the curriculum experiences of non-South African French-speaking students at this institution. Your names will not be mentioned in the research report of this study. If there are issues that you would not want me to record, please feel free to inform me. Please feel free to answer the questions which follow:

Biographical information

1. Can you please tell me your names?
2. What is your educational qualification?
3. When did you begin to lecture at this institution?

Intended curriculum design, implementation, and assessment

4. What are the curriculum needs of French-speaking students at this institution?
5. How do you design, implement and assess the curriculum?
6. Do you take cognizance of the curriculum needs of French-speaking students at this institution when designing and implementing the curriculum?
7. What are some of the challenges confronting the French-speaking students at this institution?
8. Do you think that the French-speaking students adjust to this institution?
9. Do you think that the French-speaking students are more academically focused than the South African students?
10. In your capacity as a lecturer, what have you identified as the challenges of French-speaking students at this institution?
11. Do these challenges inform your design, implementation and assessment of the curriculum?
12. What would you recommend to this institution as a remedy to these challenges, if any, to alleviate the challenges of the French-speaking students?
13. Have you ever handled any incidence of racial discrimination or prejudice against any of the French-speaking students?
14. Do French speaking-students participate in class discussions, presentation or group work?

15. Do they ask questions in the lecture room?
16. Have you noticed any trace of shyness among them?
17. How promptly do they hand in assignments, and do they take their work seriously?
18. How do you think this institution can position itself to address the various challenges confronting the French-speaking students?

APPENDIX I



Letter of informed consent to Head of Programme

Dear Head of Programme,

I am a Doctoral student registered at the University of South Africa (Unisa). The topic of my study is:

Non-South African French-speaking students' curriculum experiences in an academic community of practice at a private tertiary institution.

I intend gathering data for this study by conducting interviews with you at this institution, to gather your version of experiences about curriculum related issues pertaining to non-South African French-speaking students. You have thus been identified to participate in this research. I promise to use the information that you will provide solely for this study and not for any other purpose. Your name and that of this institution will not be disclosed for confidentiality purposes. The video-recording of the interview session will only be used for research writing purposes and will not be presented at conferences or seminars. I will also collect film and photograph data throughout the university setting, including lecture rooms, hallways, sports or cultural events, gatherings of students and so forth and will include students and lecturers.

You have the right to end your participation in this research at any stage you may wish. You may also request that the video-recorder be switched off for certain responses during the interview process if you feel uncomfortable for such responses to be recorded.

Please sign here below if you agree to take part in this research:

I, grant Mr CA Adebajji permission to interview me for the purpose of gathering data for his study, and allow him to record the interview.

Date:/...../2012.

APPENDIX J



Letter of informed consent to lecturer

Dear lecturer,

I am a Doctoral student registered at the University of South Africa (Unisa). The topic of my study is:

Non-South African French speaking students' curriculum experiences in a private tertiary education institution.

I intend gathering data for this study by conducting interviews with non-South African French-speaking students at this institution to gather their experiences about curriculum-related issues. You have thus been identified to participate in this research as a result of having taught a number of the non-South African French-speaking students at this institution.

I promise to use the information that you will provide solely for this study and not for any other purpose. Your name and that of your institution will not be disclosed for confidentiality purposes. I will collect film and photograph data throughout the university setting, including lecture rooms, hallways, sports or cultural events, gatherings of students and so forth and will include students and lecturers.

You have the right to end your participation in this research at any stage you may wish. You may also request that the video-recorder be switched off for certain responses during the interview process if you feel uncomfortable for such responses to be recorded.

Please sign here below if you agree to take part in this research:

I, grant Mr CA Adebajji permission to interview me for purposes of gathering data for his study, and allow him to record the interview.

Date:/...../2012.

APPENDIX K



Letter of informed consent to Dean of Faculty

Dear Dean,

I am a Doctoral student registered at the University of South Africa (Unisa). The topic of my study is:

Non-South African French speaking students' curriculum-experiences in a private tertiary education institution.

I intend gathering data for this study by conducting interviews with you at this institution, to gather your version of experiences about curriculum related issues pertaining to non-South African French-speaking students. You have thus been identified to participate in this research.

I promise to use the information that you will provide solely for this study and not for any other purpose. Your name and that of this institution will not be disclosed for confidentiality purposes. The video recording of interview session will only be used for research writing purposes and will not be presented at conferences or seminars. I will also collect film and photograph data throughout the university setting, including lecture rooms, hallways, sports or cultural events, gatherings of students and so forth and will include students and lecturers.

You have the right to end your participation in this research at any stage you may wish. You may also request that the video-recorder be switched off for certain responses during the interview process if you feel uncomfortable for such responses to be recorded.

Please sign here below if you agree to take part in this research:

I, grant Mr CA Adebanji permission to interview me for purposes of gathering data for his study, and allow him to record the interview.

Date:/...../2012.

APPENDIX L



Letter of informed consent to French-speaking students/South African students

Dear student,

I am a Doctoral student registered at the University of South Africa (Unisa). The topic of my study is:

Non-South African French-speaking students' curriculum-experiences in a community of practice, at a private tertiary education institution.

I intend gathering data for this study by conducting interviews with you at this institution, to gather your version of experiences about curriculum related issues pertaining to non-South African French-speaking students. You have thus been identified to participate in this research.

I promise to use the information that you will provide solely for this study and not for any other purpose. Your name and that of this institution will not be disclosed for confidentiality purposes. I shall look at your academic record to make inferences on your performance. The video-recording of the interview session will only be used for research writing purposes and will not be presented at conferences or seminars. I will also collect film and photograph data throughout the university setting, including lecture rooms, hallways, sports or cultural events, gatherings of students and so forth and will include students and lecturers.

You have the right to stop your participation in this research at any point you may wish. You may also request that the video-recorder be switched off for certain responses during the interview process if you feel uncomfortable for such responses to be recorded.

Please sign here below if you agree to take part in this research:

I, grant Mr C.A. Adebajji permission to interview me for the purposes of gathering data for his study, and allow him to record the interview.

Date:/...../2012.