

**CONTEXTUAL AND LEARNER FACTORS IN THE DEVELOPMENT
OF ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY**

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**CONTEXTUAL AND LEARNER FACTORS IN THE
DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH
SECOND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY**

by

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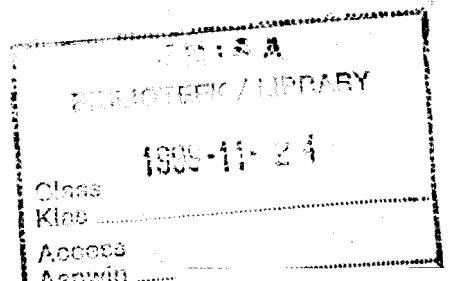
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I hereby declare that **CONTEXTUAL AND LEARNER FACTORS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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TITLE:

***CONTEXTUAL AND LEARNER FACTORS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF
ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY***

SUMMARY

The senior secondary school learners' limited English proficiency motivated the researcher to investigate the extent to which contextual and learner factors contributed to this problem. The ultimate aim was to recommend guidelines for dealing with the problem.

The review of literature and empirical methods of research were used to this effect. The literature review revealed that the learners' societal, home/family and school/classroom contexts contributed to learners' development of ESL proficiency. It further showed that the independent learner factors (i.e. learner factors that are not influenced by the context from which the learner comes and/or in which SLA takes place) and dependent learner factors (i.e. learner factors that are completely or partly subject to the influence of the context from which the learner comes or in which SLA takes place) significantly influenced the development of ESL proficiency.

With its focus on language learning strategies, the empirical investigation found a significant relationship between the learners' level of ESL proficiency and use of direct strategies (i.e. strategies that involve the mental processing of the target language, albeit in different ways and for different purposes). The investigation found no significant relationship between the learners' level of ESL proficiency and use of indirect strategies (i.e. strategies that underpin the process of language learning). Several contextual and learner factors were found to influence the relationship between the learner's strategy use and the development of ESL proficiency.

These findings formed the basis for recommending specific guidelines for dealing with limited ESL proficiency, as well as recommending possible directions for future research.

Title of the thesis

***CONTEXTUAL AND LEARNER FACTORS IN THE
DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE
PROFICIENCY***

Key terms

Age, classroom, cognitive style, context factors, English second language (ESL), ESL proficiency, family, first language proficiency, group dynamics, home factors, intelligence, language aptitude, language learning strategies, learner attitudes, learner factors, motivation, personality, school, second language acquisition, society.

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PRETORIA

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THE AUTHOR

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
BICS	Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills
CALP	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESPO	Early School Personality Questionnaire
FD/I	Field Dependence/ Independence
FET	Further Education and Training
FETC	Further Education and Training Certificate
FRD	Foundation for Research and Development
FSL	French as a Second Language
GEFT	Group Embedded Figures Test
GET	General Education and Training
GETC	General Education and Training Certificate
GSAT	General Scholastic Aptitude Test
HET	Higher Education and Training
HPL's	High Proficiency Learners
HSPQ	High School Personality Questionnaire

IGM	Intergroup Model
INSET	In-service Training
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LAB	Language Aptitude Battery
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
LLO	Language Learning Outcome
LLS	Language Learning Strategy
LPL's	Low Proficiency Learners
LRC	Learners' Representative Council
MAT	Metropolitan Achievement Test
MLAT	Modern Language Aptitude Test
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OBE	Outcomes-Based Education
PISET	Project for Improvement of Secondary English Teaching
RPT	Reading Performance Test
RuPEP	Rural Primary English Programme
SAFCERT	South African Certification Council
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SASA	South African Schools Act
SBI	SILL-Based Interview
SES	Socio-economic Status
SGB's	School Governing Bodies
SILL	Strategy Inventory for Language Learning
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SLAQ	Spanish Language Attitude Questionnaire
SLL	Second Language Learning
TESL	Teaching English as a Second Language
TL	Target Language
WPT	Writing Performance Test

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION, STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND THE AIM OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Every learner has an innate ability or potential that he or she strives to fully develop with the support of the home, the school and society at large. In any regular school learners differ in their potential: the difference ranging between the so-called slow-learners and the highly gifted. In South Africa an educational policy which establishes a framework for lifelong learning has been introduced (South Africa 1995a:25-26; 1998a:5). One of the main aims of this policy is to develop learners' potential regardless of the learners' ages or chosen career paths (South Africa 1995a:25-26). The concern for the development of human potential is not only limited to South Africa. It manifested itself in the "First Global Conference on Lifelong Learning" whose theme was "Creating and Sustaining Learning Organisations: Integrating the Development of Human Potential" (Stewart & Ball 1995:5). Among other things, the conference emphasised the fact that a learning organisation, for example a nation, school or university, should create opportunities for and encourage all its people to fulfil their potential (Stewart & Ball 1995:6).

In the researcher's view, successful realisation of the learner's potential depends on the learning environment, the learner and the learner's understanding of the language medium of teaching and learning, which is English for most South African learners. The abilities to read, write, listen to and speak English are crucial for the development of potential of most South African learners. In South African schools most learners learn English second language (ESL) as a subject and also deal with it as a medium of teaching and learning (South Africa 1995b:2). Despite this use of ESL across the curriculum, it has been shown that a significant number of learners go through the school system without achieving adequate levels of ESL proficiency (Orr 1995:189; Lazenby 1996:30). In the researcher's view, limited English proficiency (LEP) makes the learner depend on the teacher for learning, even when this dependence is unnecessary. The dependence is caused by, inter alia, LEP learners' lack of skills for self-directed learning. The extent of the problem of LEP and the motivation for focusing this study on this problem are explained in the next

section.

1.2 THE EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM OF LEARNERS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

The problem of learners with LEP is world-wide. In 1992 of the approximately five million school-going children who received specialized education in the form of compensatory education in the USA, 1,5 million received remedial education in English language proficiency (Booyse 1995:52; cf. French, Ellsworth & Amarusso 1995:35). South Africa is no exception. According to the Report of the *Work Committee: Children with Special Educational Needs* (Human Sciences Research Council 1981) cited by Du Toit (1991:31) it was estimated in 1981 that about 15% of the school-going children in South Africa had learning problems which, among others, had to do with limited proficiency in English as a medium of teaching and learning. However, if reliable identification procedures and criteria were available, and the whole South African school-going population were accessible, this figure could be as high as 50% (Booyse 1995:52; Du Toit 1991:31-32). It has been argued that there is a link between LEP and rote learning, which characterizes the writings of most candidates who failed matric in subjects such as History and Biology in South Africa (Anstey 1998:4). This study has been undertaken in the light of the effects of LEP on many aspects of learners' lives. In the following paragraphs, the background regarding the necessity of such a study is explained.

The factors motivating this study derive from the researcher's understanding of educational, social, political, cultural and economic developments in South Africa (South Africa 1995a; 1995b; 1996a; 1996b; 1997a; 1997b; 1997c; 1997f; 1998a; 1998b). These factors are

- learners' limited proficiency in the language serving as a medium of teaching and learning;
- importance of proficiency in ESL for human resources development;
- need for additive multi-lingualism;
- dearth of South African research in Applied Linguistics;
- the poor quality of higher education student intake, and

- lack of skills for self-directed learning.

Each of these factors is discussed in more detail below in order to highlight the rationale for this study.

1.3 FACTORS MOTIVATING THIS STUDY

1.3.1 LIMITED PROFICIENCY IN THE LANGUAGE SERVING AS THE MEDIUM OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

The medium of teaching and learning in South African schools and colleges is mostly English. It is incumbent on all schools to enable learners to master English because if they fail to do so the language incompetence of the learners evidently affects learners' general academic progress negatively. Poor academic progress results into such forms of student attrition as failing and/or dropping out of school. Among factors accounting for student attrition at universities and colleges in South Africa is limited proficiency in the language of teaching and learning (Kapp 1993:318). This trend can be extrapolated to the school situation where deficits in language proficiency cause poor academic performance (Whitmore 1980:165) which further retards learner progress towards self-actualisation. This leads to the conclusion that proficiency in the language of instruction such as English is critically important for general academic success (Mahlobo 1995:27).

The need for studies of factors influencing SLA is further evidenced by the poor matriculation examination results where the general pass rate was 55,2% in 1995 (Nekhwevha 1996:17), 52,2% in 1996 (Anstey, Shota, Kortjaas, Dugan & Doonan 1997:4; Bengu, 1997:18), 47% in 1997 (Cresswell, Naidu & Mothibeli 1998:14; Calitz 1998:14) and 50,6% in 1998 (South Africa 1999a:10-11).

1.3.2 IMPORTANCE OF PROFICIENCY IN ESL FOR HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

To enable learners to be competitive in the job market after matriculation is actually to empower them economically. This empowerment entails enabling the learners to satisfy the requirements of the workplace. These requirements are

- accuracy in reading, writing, speaking and listening;
- the ability to understand resource materials;

- personal and social skills, especially the ability to relate to other people and communicate with them;
- reasoning skills and a logical approach to solving practical problems; and
- an understanding of the working world, which implies understanding the roles of employers and employees and the reasons for work (Wood 1991:1).

All these requirements have to do with proficiency in the language of the workplace which, for many South Africans, is English. Ndebele (1987) points out that, in order for English language instruction to achieve this empowerment, English has to be taught in such a way that learners see the relevance of what they are taught to their daily lives. It is also hoped that employers, who subscribe to the above-mentioned requirements expressed by Wood (1991:1), understand that the "roles of the employer and the employee" can only be acceptable if it means that the learners of ESL are treated as self-respecting citizens, and not as units of labour (Ndebele 1987:14). In order to meet the national demand for a skilled labour force, the new curriculum framework and human resources development plan to place more emphasis on development of skills and competencies in learners (Gultig 1997:1). It is within this framework that the researcher aspires to contribute to the learners' socio-economic empowerment by understanding their sociolinguistic circumstances and giving guidelines for improvement thereof.

1.3.3 NEED FOR ADDITIVE MULTILINGUALISM

Additive bi- or multilingualism refers to a person's learning of other language(s) besides his or her first language (L1) in order to expand his or her understanding of the world around him/her (Musker 1991:5). The additional language does not become a substitute for, or more important than, the L1. In South Africa, the Department of Education (1997c:23-24) maintains that the advantage of promoting multilingualism is that it affords learners the opportunity to develop and value:

- their home languages and cultures;
- other languages and cultures in a multicultural country and in an international context, and
- a shared understanding of a common South Africa.

In the opinion of the researcher the more languages one knows, the wider one's horizons

become. The view expressed by Musker (1991:5) and Cummins (1979a:197-198) that there is a common underlying proficiency across languages, reinforces the researcher's belief in encouraging multilingualism whereby one retains one's cultural identity. Additive bilingualism has also been emphasised by UNESCO (Gonzalez, Scott & Vasquez 1988:26).

Research in the development of ESL proficiency and ESL teaching aims at enabling learners whose mother tongue is not English to join the global village wherein most technical and scientific periodicals are in English and the language medium of 80% of the information stored in computers is English (Peirce 1989:402-403). English is the language of, *inter alia*, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), the Cable News Network (CNN) and Microsoft. All these organisations, together with the Internet, contribute to making the world a global village. Besides this, there is a move towards international articulation between institutions. Out of this move a number of agreements are materialising, and they are written and communicated in English (Lazenby 1996:32). Considering the extent to which English is used, Alatis's (1986:198-199) and Peirce's (1989:405) conclusion that the position of English as a world language is incontrovertible, is not surprising. In the opinion of the writer, all South Africans who have chosen to join the world of bi- or multilingualism by being able to use English should be empowered to realise their goal.

1.3.4 DEARTH OF SOUTH AFRICAN RESEARCH IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS

Research in Applied Linguistics can enable researchers and practitioners to take informed decisions about teaching and learning of ESL. In South Africa most of the available literature on SLA is based on contexts foreign to South African conditions. When this foreign theory is applied to South African circumstances, the margin of error can sometimes become so wide as to render foreign literature useless (cf. Van Wyk 1991a:485-486). This shortage of literature has also been pointed out by Mahlobo (1995:42) in his study of underachievement in ESL. There is a general agreement that second or third language instruction should be based on accurate research findings of which there is a shortage in South Africa (Meij 1991:106). Meij (1991:106) further makes

a call for research in this field by education departments, research institutes and colleges of education in order to fill this void. The South African Foundation for Research and Development (FRD) (Taole1997:51) also encourages research projects to be undertaken in respect of the impact of ESL on learning science, mathematics and technology.

1.3.5 QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENT INTAKE

The researcher's experiences with college students made him conclude that their limited proficiency in English as the language of teaching and learning is their major obstacle to success. The studies of Mawasha (1983), Sookrahj (1990), Orr (1995) and Lazenby (1996) highlight the first year students' plight in depth. According to Mawasha (1983:52), colleges and universities are experiencing students' communication inadequacies that have been transferred from primary and secondary schools over years. For example, the quality of the first year Mathematics and Physical Science college students has been described as poor (Arnott, Kubeka, Rice & Hall 1997: 52-53). The statement made by Arnott et al. (1997) is corroborated by Lazenby (1996:33) who argues that students' limited English proficiency is one of the major problems facing numerous institutions. According to Orr (1995:189), poor writing skills is a concern to faculty members at the University of South Africa. Arguing for the importance of students' English proficiency in higher education, she maintains that "mastering a discipline at tertiary level is as much a matter of acquiring the language of the academic community as it is of learning the content". This study is undertaken in order to improve understanding of the extent and the causes of the problem of LEP and to search for ways in which it can be solved.

1.3.6 LACK OF SKILLS FOR SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

One of the reasons for undertaking this study is the fact that most senior secondary school learners in the South African schools, especially where English is offered as a second language, lack the skills for self-directed learning. Most of these learners are accustomed to being spoon-fed. They expect to be told what to do and they do only what they deem essential for them to get good results - even if they fail to develop useful skills in the process (cf. Dreyer 1992:64). Consequently, it is not surprising to find a learner who has gone through the public school system without developing an acceptable level of English

proficiency.

In order to eliminate the dependency syndrome in learners, it is advisable to develop in them capacities for self-directed learning. Self-directed learning refers to the learner's ability to identify a learning purpose, locate the learning resources and to manage and evaluate his/her own learning (cf. Benson & Voller 1997:1-2). In Dreyer's (1992:64) opinion, it is important to develop the learner's skills for self-directed learning because the skills enable the learner to work on his/her own. These skills are vital for learner success because learners do not and will not always have the teacher around to help them. In respect of L2 learning, Dreyer (1992:64) also mentions that another advantage of self-directed learning is that learners gradually gain greater confidence, independence, as well as improvement in their proficiency levels.

The attempt to develop the learner's capacity for self-directed learning can be justified on the basis of the principles of individualisation and learner-centredness. On the basis of the first principle, the development of the learner's skills for self-directed learning is an affirmation of the fact that each learner has his/her own cognitive style, needs and capacities (Benson & Voller 1997:7). In terms of the principle of learner-centredness, the development of the skills for self-directed learning validates the fact that the learner constructs his/her own system of knowledge and experiences that develop around a personal frame of reference. The principle of learner-centredness focuses on, *inter alia*, the development of learning methods, rather than on teaching methodologies.

On the basis of the value of self-directed learning skills for the development of ESL proficiency and in terms of the role of the learner in the outcomes-based education paradigm (OBE) discussed below, it is important to undertake a study that takes the development of the skills for self-directed learning into account.

It is necessary to mention at this point that this study focuses on the senior secondary school learners. The rationale for focusing on the senior secondary school learners is that at secondary school level the fields of learning become progressively more complex,

difficult and demanding on the learners. In order to succeed, a high level of commitment to his or her work and the ability to work independently of the teacher are required from the learner. Learners who do not have these characteristics need to be supported.

Senior secondary school learners have the capacity (albeit in varying degrees) for learning about learning (also called meta-learning). They derive this capacity from their ability to think in the abstract, which is also related to their ages. The capacity for meta-learning is requisite for learning success at senior secondary school level as it makes learners amenable to training on how they should organise, plan and manage their own learning. The study focused on the senior secondary school learners because of the need to capacitate them in this manner.

Furthermore, the secondary school level has been identified by the South African National Department of Education (1999b:9-10) as one of the prioritised areas targeted for improvement. According to the Department, the senior secondary phase is targeted for improvement because it is the only phase in the school system that ends with national examinations leading to a national qualification (Matriculation Certificate). In this way the secondary phase serves as an indicator of the quality of the school system while it also serves as foundation for the quality of higher education (see 1.3.5). The researcher deemed it necessary that, in line with other national initiatives, the study should contribute to the improvement of the teaching of ESL to learners in the senior secondary school phase.

1.4 PRESUPPOSITIONS OF THE STUDY

It is important to place this study in a particular context in terms of a paradigm. This study is based on the presuppositions of the **outcomes-based education (OBE)** paradigm. Crucial to the understanding of this paradigm are initiatives such as Curriculum 2005, National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), as well as concepts such as bands, levels, credits, unit standards, critical outcomes, specific outcomes, learning areas, learning programmes and continuous assessment. In the following section the tenets of OBE are presented including discussion

of each of these initiatives and concepts.

1.4.1. CURRICULUM 2005 AND OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

One of the reasons of the Department of Education for introducing Curriculum 2005 is to make the education system more effective and relevant (Schollar 1997:12). Effectiveness and relevance are ensured by aligning what is learnt in schools with both the demands of the workplace and the socio-political aspirations of the South African people (Taylor 1997a:1). Another reason for the introduction of the new curriculum is to inculcate the appreciation of diversity in respect of race, colour and gender. The new curriculum is underpinned by the principles of equity and access, which emphasise the need to equalise the availability of educational opportunities for all (South Africa 1996a:22; 1997a:14; Schollar 1997:12)

1.4.1.1 The National Qualifications Framework

Curriculum 2005 forms part of a broader national framework called the **National Qualifications Framework (NQF)**. The NQF is a framework for providing lifelong learning opportunities by utilising nationally recognised levels (South Africa 1996a:15; Lubisi, Wedekind, Parker & Gultig 1997:57). Through the NQF, learners are provided lifelong learning opportunities regardless of their age, circumstances and the level of education (Lubisi et al. 1997:57).

The NQF has three **bands** and eight **levels**. The lowest band is termed the **General Education and Training (GET)** band and consists of grade 0 to 9 and Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) levels 1 to 4. The lowest band occupies NQF Level 1 (South Africa 1997c:12). The second band is labelled **Further Education and Training (FET)** band and consists of grades 10 to 12 and their equivalents done in technical and community colleges. Education and training in this band is pre-tertiary and integrates academic, technical and commercial training (South Africa 1995a:26). The FET band occupies NQF Levels 2 to 4. The third and topmost band is known as the **Higher Education and Training (HET)** band and deals with all learning related to national

diplomas, degrees and post-graduate studies. This band occupies NQF Levels 5 to 8 (South Africa 1995a:26; 1996a:48; 1997a:15; Lubisi et al. 1997:58-59).

At the completion of GET (NQF Level 1) the learner is awarded a **General Education and Training Certificate (GETC)** which is in recognition of the fact that he or she has gradually accumulated the required **credits**. A credit is the recognition that the learner has achieved a **unit standard** and credits may gradually be accumulated until conditions are met for awarding a qualification (South Africa 1996a:16). Unit standards are statements registered in all eight levels of the NQF. They are nationally agreed upon and correspond with internationally comparable statements of specific outcomes and their associated performance criteria (South Africa 1996a:15; 1998a:3-4; Gultig 1997:12). At the completion of the FET, the learner is awarded a **Further Education and Training Certificate (FETC)**. Throughout NQF Levels 5 to 8 higher education diplomas and degrees may be achieved through the gradual acquisition of required credits at professional colleges, institutes, technikons and universities (South Africa 1995a:26-27; 1998a:9-10).

The implication of the system as described above is that in order for the learner to progress from one grade to the next and from one NQF level to the next, he or she must first demonstrate in measurable and observable terms that he or she has mastered the skill as specified in the specific outcomes forming part of the unit standard. In other words, from the GET to the HET band education is based on outcomes specified in the unit standards for each level, hence outcomes-based education (OBE). OBE is a type of education geared towards the learner being able to clearly demonstrate signs of having learnt valued skills, knowledge and attitudes as expressed in the educational outcomes (Lubisi et al. 1997:2). An OBE curriculum such as Curriculum 2005 is founded on the following principles:

- Education is a lifelong process.
- A qualification should reflect competence, not time spent to complete it.
- Education provision should be flexible, emphasising integration and transfer.
- Competence is a combination of thinking, doing and attitude.

- Outcomes are classifiable into critical (essential) outcomes (which apply across a number of various fields) and specific outcomes (which are specific to a particular task) (Lubisi et al. 1997:73-74; South Africa 1997b:11).

1.4.1.2 Critical and developmental outcomes

In respect of the South African OBE system, the South African Qualifications Authority (**\$AQA**) has identified seven **critical outcomes**, and five **developmental outcomes** as reflected in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1 Critical and developmental outcomes

CRITICAL OUTCOMES	DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES
<p>The learner's ability to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> communicate effectively using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in the mode of oral and/or written presentation; identify and solve problems by using creative and critical thinking; organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly; work effectively with others in team, group, organisation and community; collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information; use science and technology effectively and critically showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others; and understand the world as a set of related systems, i.e. problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation. <p>(De Waal 1996:8; South Africa 1997b:15; 1998a:8; Gultig 1997:12).</p>	<p>To make the learners aware of the importance of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reflecting on and exploring a variety of strategies to learn more effectively; participating as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities; being culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts; exploring education and career opportunities; and the development of entrepreneurial opportunities. <p>(De Waal 1996:8; South Africa 1997e:82)</p>

In the OBE system **critical outcomes** are used to express the intended results of education and training. They underpin the learning process in all its facets because they are not restricted to a specific learning context. They also determine the formulation of specific outcomes of individual **learning areas** at all levels of GET and all fields of learning in the FET and HET bands of the NQF. They are working principles which

underpin teaching, learning, training and development (Gultig 1997:11). Developmental outcomes, in particular, are used to contribute to the learners' ability to learn (South Africa 1997e:82).

1.4.1.3 Learning areas, specific outcomes and learning programmes

For the purpose of Curriculum 2005 various subjects have been integrated and classified into eight learning areas. These learning areas are:

- Communication, Literacy and Language Learning
- Numeracy and Mathematics
- Human and Social Sciences
- Natural Sciences
- Arts and Culture
- Economic and Management Sciences
- Life Orientation
- Technology

Each of these learning areas has its learning area or specific outcomes. Specific outcomes are context-specific. They are based on the critical outcomes but formulated within the context in which they are to be demonstrated (Gultig 1997:97; South Africa 1996a:15; 1997c:15). Specific outcomes describe the competence that the learner should be able to demonstrate in a specific context at the end of a learning experience. These types of outcome serve as the basis for assessing learner progress and the effectiveness of a **learning programme**. A learning programme is a set of teaching and learning activities and ways of assessing the learner's achievement (South Africa 1997b:12). A learning programme should consist of the relevant unit standards, specific outcomes, suitable learning material, methodology by means of which the specific outcomes can be achieved, as well as ways of assessing learner progress (South Africa 1997a:3, 36-42)

1.4.2 THE IMPLICATIONS OF CURRICULUM 2005.

The OBE paradigm has implications for the **teacher and teaching methodology, the learner, the parent, method of assessment, materials and resources**, as well as

classroom organisation and management. The implications for each one of these aspects are discussed below.

1.4.2.1 The teacher and teaching methodology

According to the OBE paradigm, **the teacher's role** is that of facilitating learning. He or she must be competent to structure learning experiences according to the learning programme so that at the end of each learning experience the learners can demonstrate that specified learning outcomes have been achieved. The OBE paradigm emphasises learner-centred approaches including individualisation, group or team work, self-discovery and self-activity (Tema 1997:7). Tema (1997:6) further argues for a pragmatic approach to the selection and use of teaching methods whereby the method to be used is determined by the outcome to be achieved. In order to achieve this flexibility, the teacher has to be competent and knowledgeable in his or her specific area of specialisation. It has been argued that the success of Curriculum 2005 depends on, among other factors, skills, judgement, attitude, dedication, experience and foresight of the teacher (Taylor 1997b:5; Tema 1997:7)

1.4.2.2 The learner

Whereas the teacher is expected to guide and facilitate learning, **the learner** must be fully involved in the learning activities. This implies learning on his or her own. Learners have to work individually, in groups, or teams depending on the outcome to be achieved. To be able to effectively learn on their own, learners have to be trained to take responsibility for their own learning (South Africa 1997b:25-26). In order to be involved the learner must be interested, have a positive attitude towards learning and be motivated to learn. Learner involvement in the learning activities presupposes his or her cognitive, affective, conative and physical ability to do so, as well as understanding the language of learning and learning materials.

1.4.2.3 The parent

In the researcher's opinion the success of Curriculum 2005 also depends on the parents' level of education. The higher the level of the parents' education, the better their

understanding of the OBE learner performance report system and the greater the probability of their willingness to share the responsibility of educating their children with the state. It is perhaps due to the significance of the parents' higher educational levels that the Department of Education encourages parents to further their education (South Africa 1997b:25). In short, the family context is one of the crucial factors to the success of Curriculum 2005.

1.4.2.4 Assessment

OBE emphasises continuous **assessment**. Continuous assessment can either be informal continuous assessment or formal continuous assessment. **Informal continuous assessment** is used to monitor and encourage learner progress, provide guidance to learners, guide the teacher's planning and encourage his or her setting of appropriately differentiated tasks responsive to learner differences. Informal continuous assessment can be achieved by means of such assessment techniques as oral presentation, observation, projects and peer performance appraisal (Gultig 1997:15-16; Hallendorff 1997:10). **Formal continuous assessment** is designed internally by each institution and may be moderated externally. The marks derived from the formal and informal continuous assessment are used in the final summative report used to award a qualification (Gultig 1997:15-16; Lubisi et al. 1997:22-23). It is important to mention that OBE assessment integrates all assessment techniques, taking cognisance of the fact that no single assessment tool can effectively assess all the dimensions of learner competence (Lubisi et al. 1997:22-23).

1.4.2.5 Teaching and learning support materials

Adequate learning **support materials and resources** are also essential for the success of OBE. Teaching and learning materials and resources include support materials for teachers and learners in the form of notes and work books, adequate classroom space, well-equipped laboratories and classroom furniture.

1.4.2.6 Classroom organisation and management

In the researcher's opinion the OBE teaching and assessment methodologies exert an

influence on **classroom organisation**. The classroom has to be organised in such a way that group activities, assessment and monitoring of groups and individuals are facilitated. OBE methodology necessitates the use of flexible classroom settings as such settings can be manipulated to suit the achievement of any outcome specified in the learning programme. Flexible classroom organisation is also facilitated by an acceptable learner-educator ratio. Overcrowded classrooms do not give much room for flexible classroom organisation.

1.4.3 SUMMARY

The aim of the discussion in section 1.4 has been to place this study within the context of the new South African education paradigm, namely Outcomes-Based Education. The presuppositions of this paradigm are presented in a nutshell as follows:

- Education is a lifelong process, the success of which can be demonstrated by the learner's ability (competence) to execute tasks that are specified in the learning outcomes.
- Supportive learning contexts (society, homes, and schools) are indispensable for learning success.
- In order to succeed, teaching and learning activities must take into account learner characteristics.

1.5 EXPLANATION OF TERMS

1.5.1 PROFICIENCY

In order to clarify what language proficiency means four related concepts must be explained, namely: language achievement, language competence, language performance and language proficiency. **Language achievement** traditionally refers to the pupil's score in a test or final examination. If the test is standardised, the score becomes a reliable indication of the extent to which the pupil has acquired the various skills entailed in the teaching of that particular language (Human Sciences Research Council 1993:40). Of importance, therefore, is the fact that achievement is syllabus-related.

According to Widdowson (1990:157), the knowledge of grammatical rules and the ability

to use those rules in context are not mutually exclusive. This idea is also upheld by Canale and Swain (1980:29-31) who have propounded a multidimensional model of **language competence** which includes grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence. Bachman and Clark (1987) and Bachman (1990) support Canale and Swain's multidimensional model of language competence. In South Africa the proponents of Peoples' Education have redefined language competence to include the ability:

to say, to write what one means; to hear what is said and what is hidden; to defend one's point of view, to argue, to persuade, to negotiate, to create, to reflect, to invent, to explore relationships personal, structural and political; to speak, to read and write with confidence; to make one's voice heard; to read print and resist it where necessary (cf. National Education Crisis Committee 1987:58; Peirce 1989:411-412).

Language performance is defined as a person's ability to understand and produce speech in a particular language (Ellis 1994:718; Richards, Platt & Weber 1992:211). According to the studies reviewed on performance and competence one can conclude that performance and competence can be displayed by the learners' ability to use expressive or receptive modes and written or oral modes depending on the demands of the situation.

How language competence and language performance can be reliably measured brings into the picture the term **language proficiency** and proficiency testing. In defining language proficiency, Briere (cited in Hussein 1982:44) states that it is the **degree of competence** demonstrated by an individual in a given language at any given point in time independent of a specific textbook or pedagogical method. This definition corresponds with the models discussed above thereby implying that language performance, language competence and language proficiency are practically synonymous. This is the opinion also held by Ellis (1985a:302; 1994:720) and Kelly (1981:169). Therefore, achievement differs from proficiency in so far as it is syllabus-related and emphasises the expressive written language mode. In Stern's (1983:346) view, proficiency is manifested by the speaker's:

- intuitive mastery of the forms of the language;*
- intuitive mastery of the linguistic, cognitive, affective and socio-cultural meanings, expressed by the language forms;*
- capacity to use language with maximum attention to communication and minimum*

- attention to form; and*
- the creativity of language use.*

In the new South African national curriculum language proficiency is defined in terms of the learner's skill, competence or ability to:

- make and negotiate meaning and understanding;*
- show critical awareness of language usage;*
- to respond to the aesthetic, affective, cultural and social values in the text;*
- access, process and use information from a variety of sources and situations;*
- use language for learning;*
- understand, know and apply language structures and conventions in context; and*
- use appropriate communication strategies for specific purposes* (South Africa 1997d:23).

According to the definitions of Kelly (1981:169), Briere (quoted in Hussein 1982:44), Ellis (1985a:302; 1994:720), the Human Sciences Research Council (1993:42), as well as the descriptions provided by Stern (1983:346) and the Department of Education (South Africa 1997d:23), language proficiency (competence or performance) is not only a product of curricular activities, it is also a result of extra-curricular contact. In this study the term proficiency is preferred because it entails language achievement, language competence and language performance.

1.5.2 ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE

The term "second language" is not used in this study in a sequential or ordinal sense. It is used taking into account four variables, namely: aims of learning the language, the teacher's aim in teaching the language, the teaching method and the amount of exposure to the target language (TL) outside the classroom.

Usually English is learnt as a second language (L2) by people **who want to use it** in education, government institutions, politics, media, commerce and industry (Mahlolo 1995:10). South Africa serves as a good example of a country where English is learnt as an L2 by the Sotho-, Nguni- and Afrikaans-speaking population groups. In schools the aim in teaching ESL is to enable the learner to acquire the level of proficiency described in section 1.5.1 above. Because at school entry the ESL learner has not yet mastered the language, he/she has to be taught in a different method compared to the native speaker of

English. Defined in terms of **amount of exposure**, an L2 is a language besides the first language (L1) to which the learners are exposed outside the classroom setting (Leschinsky 1985:212). For most South African secondary school learners exposure to English is mainly limited to the classroom. Because of this it can be argued that the status of English for learners in South Africa varies along a continuum from English as a foreign language (no exposure outside the classroom), English as an L2 (exposure outside the classroom) to English as an L1 (home language) depending, for the most part, on whether the social context is rural or urban, predominantly black or white and of low or high socio-economic class.

1.5.3 SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

According to Krashen (1985:1-2), there is a difference between second language acquisition (SLA) and second language learning (SLL). **Acquisition** refers to the spontaneous internalisation of the L2 rules which results from the L2 learner's natural exposure to natural L2 use (Krashen 1985:1-2). On the other hand, Krashen (1981 & 1985) regards **learning** as the development in the L2 learner of conscious L2 knowledge which the learner uses to monitor the correctness of his or her L2 production. The L2 learner is formally taught this knowledge by, for example, the teacher in a formal classroom environment.

This distinction between "acquisition" and "learning" tends to oversimplify the complexities involved in internalising a new language as it is:

- based only on morpheme acquisition; and
- not supported by any empirical evidence (Gregg 1984:79-100).

According to Gregg (1984:82), if unconscious knowledge is capable of being brought to the conscious, and conscious knowledge is capable of becoming unconscious, there is no reason at all for this distinction. Gregg's (1984) argument is supported by an earlier study by Long (1983) in which he shows by a number of empirical studies that instruction in conscious rule learning resulted in successful communicative competence in the L2. According to Stern (1983:19), the distinction between acquisition and learning is of no theoretical significance and these terms can be treated as stylistic alternatives.

Because in practical terms acquisition and learning are synonymous, **acquisition** is used in this study to refer to learning in spite of the context in which and method whereby such learning takes place. Acquisition is treated as an overarching concept including both formal and informal learning.

1.5.4 CONTEXT

The Thesaurus of the WordPerfect Corporation (1993) regards the word **context** as synonymous with background, circumstances, conditions, framework, setting or situation. The Concise Oxford Dictionary (Sykes 1983:204) defines context as the ambient or surrounding conditions without which the meaning of the phenomenon studied cannot be completely understood. This is the operational definition of "context" for this study. It specifically refers to the background factors without which the senior secondary school learners' good or poor performance in English cannot be understood. These contexts refer to the learners' ecological part-system which comprises their societal, home/family and school/classroom environments (cf. Du Toit 1993:9).

1.5.5 LEARNER FACTORS

Learner factors are also referred to as learner characteristics or learner variables that influence SLA. In this regard the literature reviewed highlight the factors listed below as the most important ones. Literature reviewed on each one of them is indicated next to each factor in brackets:

- **age** (Ausubel 1964; Brown 1987:42; Collier 1987; Ellis 1985a:105-110; Patkowski 1980; Spolsky 1969);
- **first language (L1)** (Cummins 1979a & 1979b; Olshtain, Shohamy, Kemp & Chatow 1990; Saville-Troike 1984);
- **intelligence** (Brown 1987:72-74; Ellis 1985a:112-114);
- **aptitude** (Davis & Connell 1985; Ellis 1985a:112-114; Sasaki 1993a & 1993b);
- **motivation** (Brown 1987:114-117; Ellis 1985a:116-119; Lukmani 1972; Gardner 1979; Gardner, Smythe & Brunnett 1977; Gardner, Smythe & Clement 1979; Gardner, Lalonde & Moorcroft 1985; Ely 1986a & 1986b; Olshtain et al. 1990 ;

- Svanes 1987);
- **cognitive style** (Dreyer 1992; Ellis 1985a; Hansen and Stansfield 1981);
 - **personality** (Guiora, Brannon & Dull 1972; Pritchard 1952; Tucker, Hamayan & Genesee 1976; Genesee & Hamayan 1980);
 - **group dynamics** comprising **L2 self-confidence** (Clement, 1980; Hermann 1980) and **anxiety** (Chastain 1975; Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986; Madsen 1982; Steinberg & Horwitz 1986);
 - **learner attitudes** (Brown 1987:126-132; Ellis 1985a:116-119; Gardner 1979; Gardner et al. 1985; Spolsky 1969; Svanes 1988); as well as
 - **language learning strategies (LLS)** (Dreyer 1992; Naiman, Frolich & Todesco 1975; O'Malley, Russo, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares & Kupper 1985, Oxford 1990; Oxford, Lavine & Crookall 1989).

Each of these factors is discussed in more detail in chapter 3 to show their influence on SLA, especially in the senior secondary school phase.

1.6 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

It has been indicated that limited ESL proficiency affects learners' general academic success (1.3.1), career prospects and choice (1.3.2), and successful adaptation to the demands of a multilingual society (1.3.3). A literature review (see 1.5.4 & 1.5.5) shows that contextual and learner factors exert a joint influence on the development of ESL proficiency. In their studies, Dreyer (1992), Naiman, Frolich, & Todesco (1975), O'Malley, Russo, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares & Kupper (1985), Oxford (1989;1990) and Oxford, Lavine & Crookall (1989) indicate that the learner is not a helpless being; there are some activities that he or she can undertake to improve his or her proficiency in the L2. In the light of the findings of the researcher's review of literature, the problem statement of this study can be formulated as follows:

What is the influence of contextual and learner factors on the development of ESL proficiency of senior secondary school learners?

This research problem can be stated in specific terms as follows:

- a) Which contextual factors influence the development of proficiency in an L2?
- b) Which learner factors are relevant specifically for the development of ESL

- proficiency of senior secondary school learners?
- c) Which language learning strategies promote the development of ESL proficiency of senior secondary school learners?
 - d) How do contextual and learner factors influence learners' language learning strategy use in ESL?

The researcher is of the opinion that getting answers to these questions will lead to a set of accountable recommendations on how to promote learner independence whereby the learner can take control of his or her own ESL learning without solely relying on the teacher.

1.7 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

In order to guide this research the following hypotheses can be stated as tentative answers to the problem stated above (1.6):

Hypothesis 1

There is a significant relationship between the senior secondary school learners' level of ESL proficiency and their **use of language learning strategies (LLS's)**.

Hypothesis 2

The more supportive the **contextual and learner factors** to strategy use, the higher the **level of ESL proficiency**

1.8 AIMS OF THE STUDY

1.8.1 GENERAL AIM

The general aim of this study is to investigate the influence of contextual factors and learner factors on the development of ESL proficiency of senior secondary school learners. The investigation is predicated upon the assumption that the research results can lead to improved understanding of the extent and the causes of limited ESL proficiency.

1.8.2 SPECIFIC AIMS

In specific terms the study aims at

- analysing and discussing research findings on contextual aspects relating to the development of ESL proficiency;

- identifying and analysing research findings on learner factors which promote the development of ESL proficiency of learners in the senior secondary phase;
- empirically determining the relationship between the development of ESL proficiency of the senior secondary school learners and the use of LLS's;
- empirically determining how contextual and learner factors influence the relationship between LLS use and the development of ESL proficiency, and
- recommending guidelines on how learner self-direction in learning ESL can be promoted at senior secondary school level.

1.9 THE FIELD OF STUDY

In order to adequately answer the questions that constitute the research problem, the field of this study has been so delimited as to include only the ESL learners in senior secondary schools. Senior secondary school learners are learners in the grades 10, 11 and 12 (which form part of the FET band on the NQF). In terms of chronological age, senior secondary school learners' ages vary between 15 and approximately 21 years. It must be pointed out that in the context of the new paradigm that emphasises lifelong learning, it is no longer important to classify learners according to their ages, more especially in the FET band of which the senior secondary school phase is a part. This study is focused on the senior secondary school learners because:

- the senior secondary schools have Grade 12 learners whose performance in the final examination reflects the successes and/or failures of the whole education system (Bengu 1997:18);
- learners who have obtained this level of education serve as a pool from which the country's labour force is obtained;
- it has been mentioned that learners have to be able to meet some workplace requirements in order to be readily acceptable in the job market (see 1.3.2), and
- the researcher also believes that, in order to improve the quality of student intake in higher education institutions, the focus of this research project should be on the senior secondary school learner.

1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

There are two research methods used in this study, namely literature review and empirical research. The literature review entailed the identification, tracing and analysis of documents containing information relating to the stated problem. These documents were professional journals, books, dissertations and papers delivered at different conferences. The aim of the review of literature was to gain insight into the relative influence of contextual and learner factors on the development of ESL proficiency and to provide a theoretical background for the design and evaluation of the empirical study. From the review of various studies, taxonomies were compiled. The need for such taxonomies can be motivated as follows:

- The **circumstances** (learning context) of learners in South Africa are mostly unfavourable to learning. A taxonomy of **contextual factors** can be used as a basis for research and the design of educational policy and provision.
- Learners are unique **individuals**. A taxonomy of learner factors is helpful to teachers and educational policy makers when assessing learner performance. On the basis of the results of assessment of learners, needs for improvement in the education system and assistance to learners can be determined.

In the empirical investigation a qualitative approach was used. As the focus of the study was gaining insight into factors that influence the development of ESL proficiency of senior secondary school learners, a case study design was used. The aim of using empirical research was to determine if there was any empirical evidence to support the stated research hypotheses.

1.11 RESEARCH PROGRAMME

Chapter Two consists of the review of literature on contextual factors which influence the development of ESL proficiency

In Chapter Three the learner factors which influence the development of ESL proficiency are identified and analysed for the purpose of this study.

Chapter Four exposes the design of the empirical investigation which consists of the description and explanation of the rationale for each of the following aspects:

- the focus of the empirical investigation;
- research design; and
- research instruments.

In **Chapter Five** the empirical research findings are presented and analysed.

Finally, in **Chapter Six** the research findings are evaluated in relation to the research problem and the research hypotheses. In the light of this evaluation guidelines are formulated and recommendations for future research are made.

CHAPTER TWO

ANALYSIS OF CONTEXTUAL FACTORS IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the contextual aspects of SLA in order to gain insight into the extent to which contextual factors influence learners' development of proficiency in an L2. On the basis of findings from the literature review (Bialystok 1978; Clement 1980; Dulay & Burt 1974; Ellis 1985a, 1985b & 1994; Gardner 1980; Giles & Byrne 1982; Hatch 1983; Krashen 1981 & 1985; Schumann 1975, 1976 & 1986; Tarone 1983) contextual factors in SLA are classified into three categories, namely societal context factors, home/family context factors as well as school/classroom context factors. At this stage it is important to briefly explain each of these categories. The term **societal context** is used to refer to the social living environment in which SLA takes place such as a country, province, region, town, township, rural or urban area. All the factors influencing SLA in any given societal context are referred to as societal context factors. These factors include all the socio-cultural, economic, socio-psychological, political, demographic and technological circumstances of the community. The terms **home/family context** and **school/classroom context** are used to refer to specific home/family and school/classroom environments in which SLA takes place. The home/family and school/classroom context factors comprise all those factors which are unique to and typical of each home/family and each school/classroom (Smith & Pacheco 1996:160,162).

The discussion of contextual factors is presented in three interlinked sections: the first section analyses relevant models that deal with SLA in a broader sense. The aim of analysing the various models is to identify the societal context factors which each model considers important for SLA. Each model is analysed by:

- a) identifying and discussing its underlying presuppositions;
- b) discussing its propositions in respect of SLA; and
- c) identifying and discussing those societal context factors which each model considers crucial for SLA.

The second and third sections consist of the discussions of home/family and school/classroom context factors respectively. The chapter ends with a summary of all contextual factors in SLA, presented in the form of a taxonomy. It should be noted that, although this chapter deals with context factors, it is not feasible to totally avoid any mention or reference to learner factors because contexts impact on the learner and his/her characteristics.

2.2 SOCIETAL CONTEXT FACTORS IN SLA

The subject of SLA is complex. Therefore, while a theory or model may, for example, put more emphasis on the process of SLA, such emphasis does not prevent a theory from making references to the product of SLA and the factors that account for the quality of the product. This means that models/theories cannot be neatly categorised into watertight compartments. The classification used in this section is based on each theory's thrust and emphasis rather than on what it excludes.

Research on SLA is usually done from either a process-analytic, product-analytic or factor-analytic perspective. The process-analytic perspective lays emphasis on the internal L2 processing strategies of learners as they acquire an L2. Bialystok's model (1978), Creative Construction theory (Dulay & Burt 1974), Discourse theory (Hatch 1983) and the Interlanguage theory (Tarone 1983) can adequately serve as examples of the process-analytic perspective on SLA.

The main focus of the product-analytic perspective is the description of the nature and quality of competence achieved by L2 learners. Adjeman's Homogenous Competence theory (Tarone 1983), Dual Competence theory (Krashen 1981 & 1985) and the Variable Competence theory (Ellis 1985a & 1985b) can be classified as product-analytic models.

The distinguishing characteristic of the factor-analytic perspective is that it intensively dwells on explaining the influence of learner factors, as mediated by contextual variables, on SLA. The models of Clement (1980), Gardner (1980), Giles and Byrne (1982) and Schumann (1975, 1976 & 1986), are typical of factor-analytic perspectives.

Because the focus of this study is on the role of contextual factors vis-à-vis learner factors in SLA, the models which can shed more light on the subject are those of Schumann, Gardner, Clement and Giles and Byrne. The choice of these models was made after a careful review of literature on the various models of SLA. It was acknowledged that none of these models could individually give a satisfactory account of the factors which influence SLA: they complement each other. It is only for the sake of clarity and convenience that each model is discussed individually.

2.2.1 SCHUMANN'S MODEL

Schumann's model is also called the acculturation model. It should be noted that the immigration of minority groups into the United States has heavily influenced Schumann's thinking.

Crucial to the understanding of Schumann's propositions are the concepts *socio-psychological openness/closeness* and *socio-psychological proximity/distance*.

Socio-psychological openness refers to the extent to which the L2 learner manifests the following characteristics:

- a positive attitude towards the L2 community;
- not threatened by the sound of the new language when it is spoken;
- motivated to learn the L2 either for instrumental or integrative reasons (see 2.2.1.2), and
- a permeable language ego boundary, which is the learner's willingness and openness to using the new language (cf. Schumann 1975:222; 1986:384).

If the L2 learner manifests characteristics opposite to this set, he or she may be regarded as socio-psychologically closed (impermeable) to acquiring the L2 concerned.

Socio-psychological proximity is used to describe the degree to which two or more ethnic groups (ethnolinguistic groups)

- develop social relations such as intermarriages;

- share resources such as schools, churches and cinemas;
- regard each other as equal, and
- feel they are equally or proportionally represented in all the instruments of government (Schumann 1986:381).

However, if the various ethnolinguistic groups do not intermix, regard one another as inferior or superior and one group feels dominated by the other in government, L2 acquisition is difficult because these factors create a socio-psychological distance among members of various ethnolinguistic units.

2.2.1.1 Presuppositions

Schumann (1986:379) presupposes that:

- (a) two groups of variables - social and affective - combine to form one causal factor called acculturation;
- (b) it is the position of the L2 learner on the continuum between socio-psychological distance and socio-psychological proximity which determines the degree to which he or she acculturates, and
- (c) the L2 learner acquires the L2 only to the degree to which he or she acculturates.

2.2.1.2 Propositions

Schumann defines acculturation as a degree of social and psychological integration of the L2 learner with the TL group. Clarifying his propositions, Schumann distinguishes between two types of acculturation. In one type the learner is socially integrated with the TL group, hence he or she has contacts that enable him or her to acquire the L2; the learner is also so psychologically open to the TL group that the language outputs from his or her contacts become his or her language intake (Schumann 1986:379-380). The second type comprises all the characteristics of the first only adding the fact that the L2 learner regards the TL group as his or her reference group whose values and style he or she would like to adopt. In the opinion of this researcher the distinction between the two types of acculturation is not possible in real life situations because the acquisition of both the L2 and the values of the L2 community takes place unintentionally and informally.

Schumann's model shows that SLA is influenced by two categories of factors, namely social and affective factors. The following sections deal with both categories of factors in detail.

(a) Social factors

According to Schumann's model, it is proposed that the social factors that facilitate or inhibit SLA are **social dominance, social integration strategies, enclosure, social cohesiveness, cultural congruence and attitudes and intended length of residence in the TL area.**

Social dominance refers to political, economic, cultural and technological superiority of the TL group over others. If the TL group enjoys this qualitative pre-eminence, it may be attractive to the subordinate groups to learn its language due to the political, economic, technological and cultural incentives this may have. If the TL group is not socially dominant, the prospective L2 learners may discern no advantages in learning the L2 (Schumann 1976:135-137; 1986:380-381).

Social integration strategies entail assimilation, preservation and adaptation (Schumann 1976:136; 1986:381). *Assimilation* involves the subordinate group adopting the values and styles of the dominant group and in the process the subordinate group loses its own cultural identity. Assimilation, therefore, increases the chance for the L2 learners to get exposure to the TL speakers, thereby facilitating SLA. *Preservation* is the opposite of assimilation since preservation means that each group clings to its own cultural values and lifestyles, thereby increasing the social distance between them. This makes it improbable for the L2 learners to get exposed to the TL. Consequently, SLA becomes unlikely. When social groups resort to the *adaptation strategy* it means that while they adopt the values and lifestyles of others, they still maintain their own. This results in varying degrees of social contacts and varying degrees of success of SLA.

The degree of social integration between the L2 group and the TL group is manifested by the extent to which the two groups share resources such as schools, churches, recreational

facilities, crafts and professions. The greater the extent of sharing, the lower the level of *enclosure* and vice versa. Low social enclosure facilitates SLA through social contacts (Schumann 1976:137; 1986:381). The extent to which the L2 group members

- tend to stick together and remain socially united;
 - are numerically larger than the TL group; and
 - are also characterised more by intragroup than intergroup contacts
- is termed ***social cohesiveness***.

Obviously, a socially cohesive group is not likely to successfully acquire L2 due to the lack of exposure to the TL. By *cultural congruence* it is hypothesised that if cultures share certain similarities, the shared similarities make it easier for the L2 group to acquire the TL (Schumann 1976:137). All these factors are influenced by the prevailing socio-cultural *attitudes* towards the TL group. *Intended length of residence in the TL area* is not discussed in this section because this factor is not applicable in the South African context. It is therefore not relevant for this study.

(b) Affective factors

Acculturation is also constituted by such affective factors as **language shock**, **culture shock**, **ego-permeability** and **motivation**. The result of the L2 learner's experience of incompetence or ridicule after failing to use the L2 in accordance with the L2 social conventions is termed *language shock*. It is related with the disorientation which the L2 learner feels on arrival in a new cultural setting. This feeling of disorientation is termed *culture shock*. The excessive amount of energy expended by a person trying to master the new environment can result in a feeling of self-rejection and a rejection of own culture (Brown 1987:128). These conditions can hardly be said to be conducive to SLA.

It is the L2 learner's ability and willingness to temporarily and partially abandon his or her separateness of identity from the speakers of the TL which is called *ego-permeability* (Schumann 1975:223; 1986:384). In order to make the L2 learner's ego permeable, his or her inhibition levels should be lowered. The resulting openness of the ego can contribute to the success of the L2 learner's attempt to acquire a new language.

The extent of language shock, culture shock and ego-permeability is influenced by ***motivation*** to learn the L2 and vice versa. Some learners may be integratively motivated, in which case the main motive for learning the L2 is to be able to meet with, to talk to, to find out about and to adopt the values and styles of the TL group. Others may be instrumentally motivated, in which case the aim of learning the L2 may be, for instance, promotion in a job or recognition by one's own group. Studies by Svanes (1987) and Vila Barreto (1985) indicate that both forms of motivational orientation are important for SLA, albeit under different circumstances.

2.2.1.3 Overview

Because the emphasis in this model is placed on acquiring the L2 through informal exposure, the model can only help to explain the development of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) in the learner, without accommodating the development of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) (cf. Cummins 1979a). In this model the societal context factors which are regarded as important for SLA are social dominance, social integration strategies as well as demographic factors. The influence of affective factors such as attitudes, motivation, culture shock, and ego-permeability is acknowledged.

This model does not sufficiently acknowledge the role of formal language teaching and learning. Neither does it give any theoretical status to the role of such cognitive factors as intelligence and language aptitude.

Another theoretical aberration of this model is its assumption that L2 learners are mostly from immigrant minority.

2.2.2 GARDNER'S MODEL

Gardner's model is influenced by the Canadian context in which it is based. The Canadian context is characterised by competition for dominance between the English and French languages. The empirical evidence which underpins Gardner's model was collected in

seven Canadian provinces (Gardner 1979: 200, 202).

2.2.2.1 Presuppositions

Gardner's (1979:191-220) model is based on three presuppositions:

- (a) SLA cannot be viewed in the same light as learning any other subjects because, whereas other school subjects involve learning the elements of the learner's culture, in SLA the learner is faced with internalising symbolic elements of a different ethnolinguistic community;
- (b) acquiring L2 means that the learner has to internalise the symbolic representation of another culture and make it part of his or her linguistic repertoire, which implies that another culture is imposed on his or her lifespace; and
- (c) language is a symbolic representation of culture and a primary means of maintaining interaction between individuals.

2.2.2.2 Propositions

Gardner's model consists of four interlinked categories, namely: **social milieu, individual learner characteristics, as well as linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes.**

The **social milieu** component is included in this model in order to show that L2 teaching and learning have to take into account the larger social context in which they take place. In the social context cultural beliefs concerning the extent to which bilingualism is an expected social norm and the extent to which the TL is valued, might facilitate or inhibit the rate of SLA. Socio-cultural factors may mediate effects of the individual learner characteristics (see below) on the level of performance achieved in L2.

The second component consists of **individual learner characteristics**. These are intelligence, language aptitude, motivation and situational anxiety. Gardner (1979:197) defines intelligence as a class or group of abilities which explain individual differences in the extent to which learners understand the nature of the task to be learned. The learner's ability to learn the language as assessed in terms of the learner's verbal abilities is referred to as language aptitude. Motivation, on the other hand, denotes the learner's desire to

achieve the goal of SLA and the amount of effort exerted in order to achieve that goal. Lastly, situational anxiety refers to any anxious reaction or feeling experienced by the L2 learner in specific situations involving the L2. It must be noted, firstly, that these factors operate individually or jointly to determine the L2 learner's approach to the SLA process and secondly, that their effect on the learner is influenced by the nature of the *context* in which the L2 is acquired (see previous paragraph).

The last feature of this model is the component called *linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes*. Gardner (1979:199) maintains that linguistic outcomes of SLA refer to L2 proficiency which includes knowledge of grammar, language rules, vocabulary, as well as such skills as speaking, listening, reading, writing and understanding the L2. Non-linguistic outcomes are indirect results of SLA. These include a favourable attitude towards, a general appreciation of, and general interest in the L2 cultural community (Gardner 1979:199). The differential success of learners in achieving these outcomes can be explained by the individual learner characteristics mentioned above.

2.2.2.3 Overview

Gardner's model is, in second language learning (SLL) terms, more advanced than Schumann's. It takes into account the roles and effects of:

- cultural beliefs about the TL group, as held in the social milieu;
- both affective and cognitive variables in SLA; and
- both formal and informal SLA contexts.

In sum, Gardner's main hypothesis is that SLA outcomes are dependent on both the context and learner characteristics and that the influence of both is mediated by cultural beliefs about the TL group, as held in the social milieu (Gardner 1979:217-220). It can be deduced from the discussion of this model that societal context factors such as socio-cultural beliefs, norms and values and the perceived utility value of the TL are considered important for successful SLA.

Despite his broader view (in comparison with Schumann,) which takes into account the roles of learner factors, as well as both informal and formal L2 learning contexts, Gardner's conceptualisation of the social milieu lacks details because

- a) it does not show that the influence of socio-cultural factors is multi-directional, that is, ethnolinguistic units in a particular area influence one another; it is not just one cultural group exerting influence on others; and
- b) there can be more than two ethnolinguistic groups in a particular area.

Moreover, distinction between learning and acquisition is not practically feasible because the two processes are not mutually exclusive (see 1.5.3).

However, if Gardner's model is studied in conjunction with Schumann's and Clement's models the deficiencies in it can, to some extent, be compensated for. Clement's model is discussed below.

2.2.3 CLEMENT'S MODEL

The concept *ethnolinguistic vitality* is crucial to the understanding of Clement's model (as well as Giles & Byrne's model). The concept originates from the social identity theory in which researchers were attempting to incorporate how individuals construe societal conditions as factors which mediate their inter-ethnic attitudes and behaviours (Garrett, Giles & Coupland 1989:204). Ethnolinguistic vitality consists of three factors, namely: status, demography and institutional support. The more of these factors a language group has in its favour the higher its ethnolinguistic vitality is said to be (cf. Giles & Byrne 1982:23).

Status means that the more a group has

- political and economic control over its own destiny;
- a high social status;
- a strong tradition and history which are sources of pride to the group, and
- an ethnic speech style which is highly valued even internationally;

the higher the vitality the group is said to have. *Demography* refers to the number (in terms of density) and cohesiveness of a group in a given area. Lastly, *institutional support*

means that the more an ethnic group is represented in mass media, religion, education, government, industry, culture and fashion, the more vitality it is said to have (cf. Garrett et al. 1989:205; Giles & Byrne 1982:23-24). These are the factors which determine group dominance or subordinateness.

2.2.3.1 Presuppositions

According to Clement, inter-ethnic interaction consists of the transmission and acquisition of norms, values and patterns of behaviour, as well as acquisition of the L2. In his model it is presupposed that only if the acquisition of the L2 is regarded as one of the aspects of interethnic interaction, can it be successfully achieved (Clement 1980:148).

It is further assumed that the status enjoyed by a language in a community (which is part of ethnolinguistic vitality) has an influence on the individual's inter-ethnic behaviour.

2.2.3.2 Propositions

It is imperative that this model should be understood in the light of the two presuppositions above. As has been pointed out before, this model is based on the concept of ethnolinguistic vitality. Taking into account the brief explanation of this concept given earlier (see 2.2.3), it is easy to understand why Clement concludes that in theory a language group with high vitality should be so attractive to the outgroups that the latter are willing to acquire the former's language. This is, however, not always the case in practice. Clement's model must be seen as an attempt to explain this discrepancy between theory and practice.

Clement distinguishes between individual and collective linguistic outcomes. An individual outcome refers to successful mastery of the L2 by individual learners. This mastery by individuals has collective results or outcomes. By collective outcome, Clement (1980:152) refers to the fact that after individual L2 learners have acquired the L2, they feel free to make even more contacts with the members of the TL community and these contacts can further lead to the establishment of relations across ethnic boundaries.

Clement argues that ethnolinguistic vitality does not have a direct impact on individual and collective outcomes (Clement 1980:149; cf. Gardner 1979). However, it triggers the individual's motivational process called *primary motivational process*. It is this process which mediates the influence of the social milieu on communicative competence. The primary motivational process consists of two diametrically opposed processes: integrativeness and fear of assimilation. **Integrativeness** refers to the individual's positive predisposition and willingness to become a member of the L2 cultural group. This predisposition increases chances of contact and acquisition of L2. **Fear of assimilation**, on the other hand, is a negative predisposition to the L2 community triggered by fear of loss of own cultural identity. This fear impedes inter-ethnic interaction, thereby minimising chances of contact and exposure to the TL cultural group.

In his model Clement further proposes that there is a *secondary* set of motivational processes which might operate to the advantage of the L2 learner. This set refers to the L2 learner's self-confidence to use the TL. This self-confidence is the result of frequent contact with the members of the TL group. Self-confidence is a product of the quality of contact. This means the more frequent and pleasant the contact is, the more confident the learner becomes. If, on the other hand, the social contacts are experienced as unpleasant, the result is situational anxiety which tends to accompany anticipated failure to use the L2.

The linguistic outcome of integrative motives and self-confidence is the successful acquisition of L2. However, in collective terms, the acquired competence may lead to even more contacts and intergroup mobility, which, in turn may lead to either integration or assimilation (Clement 1980:152; cf. Schumann 1986:381).

In conclusion, the main hypothesis of this model is that the L2 learner's success or failure to acquire the L2 can be explained by the learner's level of motivation as determined by the ethnolinguistic vitality of the L2, level of confidence to use the L2 and the quality of experiences the learner has had each time he or she tries to use L2.

2.2.3.3 Overview

Clement's contribution is his emphasis on the role of the learner's motivational processes. However, his model is found deficient as it neglects the role of the influence of the school and the classroom environments on SLA. The influence of motivation on SLA is absolutised at the expense of a variety of other factors. For example, integrative motives alone cannot increase chances of contact between two language groups. Other factors such as the degree of social cohesiveness and the state of social boundaries (social enclosure) should be taken into account. Clement also tends to equate ethnolinguistic vitality with status.

It is after taking cognisance of these weaknesses that Giles and Byrne (1982) take up the challenge of designing a model that they consider to be more integrated and balanced.

2.2.4 GILES AND BYRNE'S MODEL

Giles and Byrne's model is also called the Intergroup Model (IGM). Their work (1982) has been supported by Garrett et al. (1989), as well as Kelly, Sachdev, Kottsieper and Ingram (1993). The Intergroup Model derives from Giles and Johnson's (1981) social identity theory. In this theory Giles and Johnson propose that in a multicultural setting individuals are more likely to define an encounter with a person from another group (outgroup) in inter-ethnic terms and to adopt strategies for positive linguistic distinctiveness when they:

- a) *identify strongly with their ethnic group which considers language an important dimension of its identity;*
- b) *make insecure inter-ethnic comparisons (e.g. are aware of cognitive alternatives to their own group's status position);*
- c) *perceive their ingroup to have a high ethnolinguistic vitality;*
- d) *perceive their ingroup boundaries to be hard/closed;*
- e) *identify strongly with few other social categories (Giles & Johnson 1981:240).*

As these propositions form the backbone of the Intergroup Model for SLA, it is important to explain some concepts found in this model in order to make this model easy to understand. These concepts are *ingroup identification, salient dimension of group identification, awareness of cognitive alternatives* and *hard (closed) versus open (soft)*

ingroup boundaries. The explanation of these terms is based on the studies of Giles and Byrne (1982), Giles and Johnson (1981), Garrett et al. (1989), Hall and Gudykunst (1987) and Kelly et al. (1993).

Ingroup identification is a process whereby members of one ethnic group (an ethnolinguistic unit) try to achieve a sense of group identity in order to make their own group distinct from any other ethnic group. This ingroup identification can be based on any dimension that is highly valued by the group, such as political power, economic resources and/or language. If the language, for example, forms the basis of ingroup identification, it is described as a *salient dimension of group identification* and it is only by this means that the group can achieve a positive ethnolinguistic distinctiveness. As each group compares itself to others, it ultimately develops a positive or negative group concept. For example, a negative group concept is caused by the group's awareness that

- the group has an inferior status;
- their inferior status is based on an unfair (without any acceptable basis) advantage enjoyed by the dominant group; and that
- their existing status position is potentially changeable.

This awareness is termed the *awareness of cognitive alternatives*. Members of an ethnic group who have a negative group concept can, among other things, resort to moving out of the group which causes them evaluative discomfort to a more positively valued and usually dominant group. The ease with which this individual mobility in or out of the neighbouring ethnic groups takes place is referred to as *softness (openness) or hardness (closedness)* of intergroup boundaries (Giles & Byrne 1982:20,24). The discussion of Giles and Byrne's model below takes into account this brief explanation.

2.2.4.1 Presuppositions

The theoretical assumption of the intergroup model is that a SLA model should provide a framework which

- (a) examines conditions under which minority ethnic group members would successfully acquire native-like proficiency in a dominant group's language;
- (b) examines conditions under which minority ethnic group members would not

- successfully acquire native-like proficiency in a dominant group's language (Giles & Byrne 1982:34; Kelly et al. 1993:288),
- (c) indicates that it is the dominant group's language (in terms of ethnolinguistic vitality) which is learnt as L2 by minority ethnic groups and not vice versa, and
 - (d) places emphasis on the joint effects of the L2 learner's culture and the TL culture on SLA.

2.2.4.2 Propositions

Guided by the assumptions mentioned above, Giles and Byrne (1982: 34-35) propose that minority ethnic group members are likely to acquire native-like proficiency in the TL when:

- (a) *ingroup identification is weak and/or L1 is not a salient dimension of ethnic group membership;*
- (b) *quiescent interethnic comparisons exist (e.g. no awareness of cognitive alternatives to inferiority);*
- (c) *perceived ingroup vitality is low;*
- (d) *perceived ingroup boundaries are soft and open; and*
- (e) *strong identification exists with many other social categories, each of which provides adequate group identities, and a satisfactory intragroup status.*

According to this model, the conditions outlined above can lead to both linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes. They increase the learner's integrative motive to learn the L2. Under these conditions, the learner's confidence to use the L2 is increased by his or her informal exposure to the L2. The L2 learner's sociolinguistic competence is enhanced through frequent contacts with L1 speakers (Giles & Byrne 1982:25). In non-linguistic terms, these conditions can lead to either integration between the dominant and the subordinate ethnic groups or assimilation of the subordinate group by the dominant language group.

In line with the second theoretical assumption (2.2.4.1(b)), Giles and Byrne also make five proposals to account for the members of the subordinate ethnic group's failure to achieve a native-like proficiency in the L2. They propose that the members of a subordinate ethnic group are not likely to achieve native-like proficiency in the dominant groups' language when:

- (f) *ingroup identification is strong and language (L1) is a salient dimension of ethnic group membership;*

- (g) *insecure inter-ethnic comparisons exist (e.g. awareness of cognitive alternatives to inferiority);*
- (h) *perceived ingroup vitality is high;*
- (i) *perceived ingroup boundaries are hard and closed; and*
- (j) *weak identification exists with few other social categories, each of which provides inadequate group identities and an unsatisfactory intragroup status (Giles & Byrne 1982:35).*

In linguistic terms these conditions militate against successful acquisition of the L2. The only exposure to the L2 may be in the classroom. Consequently, proficiency may be a product of such learner factors as instrumental motivation, language aptitude and intelligence. In non-linguistic terms, such conditions may also run counter to any attempt at social integration because the main factor underlying these conditions among the members of a subordinate ethnic group may be the fear of being assimilated. Fear of loss of distinctiveness by the dominant group might also militate against any assimilation of or integration with the minority ethnic group (Giles & Byrne 1982:36).

Garrett, Giles and Coupland (1989:209-210) have identified some shortcomings in Giles and Byrne's work. They argue that the latter's work does not adequately accommodate conditions under which:

- (a) members of a dominant language ethnic group choose to learn the subordinate ethnic group's language;
- (b) members of a subordinate ethnic group completely neglect their own language in favour of another minority ethnic group's language; and
- (c) SLA is used as a strategy to preserve ingroup identity.

As a result of these weaknesses in the model, Garrett et al. (1989:212) have added five propositions which serve to extend and broaden the scope of the Intergroup Model. They propose that the willingness to learn the L2 may exist when ingroup members:

- (k) *identify weakly with their ethnic group and their language is not a salient dimension of ethnicity; or, if L1 is a salient dimension, it is not perceived to be threatened by SLA; or, if seen as threatened, there are alternative nonlinguistic dimensions deemed satisfactory for preserving ethnic identity;*
- (l) *construe no cognitive alternatives to their subordinate status to the extent that it is attributed as legitimate and there is little likelihood of change;*

- (m) or, when aware of alternatives, these are realisable only through SLA;
- (n) perceive ingroup and outgroup boundaries to be soft and open;
- (o) identify with many other social categories, each of which provides adequate group identities and satisfactory intragroup status; and,
- (p) perceive ingroup vitality as low and neglected relative to outgroup vitality; or, it is judged that SLA will maintain and promote satisfying nonlinguistic aspects of ingroup vitality.

The proponents of this theory point out that the three sets of propositions (a-e, f-j and k-o) are important components of one model (Garrett et al. 1989:211-212).

2.2.4.3 Overview

This model is seen as the most comprehensive and relevant for this study because in its analysis of social conditions which favour successful SLA, it affords a theoretical status to the role of cultural aspects such as the status of the TL, institutional support, as well as demographic factors. The role of learner factors is also highlighted. As in Clement's model, the SLA outcomes are presented in both linguistic and non-linguistic terms.

Another contribution of this model lies in the realisation that no SLA programme can ever succeed without the learner formally paying attention to grammar, and informally availing himself or herself of, and even seeking out, facilitative exposure and use (Garrett et al. 1989:214-215).

However, this model has several weaknesses. One such weakness is its preoccupation with the distinction between dominant and subordinate groups. This is not surprising taking into account the British multi-ethnic background in which the model originated. Another term found to be not of primary importance for this study is **native-like proficiency**. In the context of this study, the linguistic outcome of SLA is language proficiency which is defined as the degree of competence demonstrated by an individual in a given language at any given point in time independent of a specific textbook or pedagogical method (see 1.5.1). Lastly, this model also does not elaborate on the school and classroom as sociopedagogical units.

2.2.5 SUMMARY OF THE FOUR MODELS

The focus of this section is to summarise the major aspects of the four models discussed above to determine the extent to which each model contributes to the identification and understanding of the influence of societal context factors on SLA.

The preceding analysis of the four models of SLA clearly shows the extent to which societal context factors exert influence on SLA. The following societal context factors were identified and their influence on SLA was discussed:

- **Status**, which includes the degree of social, political, economic and technological dominance of the TL group;
- **Institutional support**, encompassing the extent to which the TL is used in the government service, industry, church, education and culture; and
- **Socio-cultural factors**, comprising the degree of ingroup identification, social integration strategies, social beliefs, norms and values about and perceived utility value of the L2, as well as the degree of social enclosure and social cohesiveness.

The review of literature (2.2.1.2, 2.2.3 & 2.2.4.2) shows that the status of the TL groups can facilitate the acquisition of its language as an L2.

An argument was advanced in 2.2.3 that, if the TL group is more strongly represented than other groups in government, mass media, industry, religion, education, culture and fashion, the TL is perceived by other ethnic groups as having higher institutional support. Due to the institutional support it has, the TL becomes more attractive to other groups to learn.

From the models discussed above socio-cultural factors have come out as another set of potent societal context factors.

- As it has been pointed out earlier, the L2 learner who resides in a community where bilingualism is regarded as part of the community's cultural heritage, can find that acquiring the L2 is easier than the L2 learner who comes from a community where monolingualism is the norm (see 2.2.1.2, 2.2.3.2).

- Giles and Byrne's model (see 2.2.4.2) has shown how fear of rejection by one's own community militates against successful acquisition of L2. They point out that this fear comes about if the learner knows that his or her success in acquiring the L2 is likely to be regarded by his or her community as cultural betrayal or as the onset of linguistic genocide (Garrett et al. 1989:209). Such an attitude to SLA is typical of communities where, among others, the language is the only salient dimension of comparison.
- The utility value of the language, as perceived by the community, has been shown to have an influence on SLA (see 2.2.4.2). If the community perceives the L2 as a means to socio-economic advancement, it views with pride, satisfaction and hope for a better future any child who can speak L2. It is this utility value of the L2 which explains why the members of the majority group sometimes choose to learn the language of the minority (Garrett et al. (1989:209-210).
- A large, rural and socially cohesive community can remain virtually untouched by any desire to acquire another language. As a result, they adopt an indifferent attitude towards SLA. Whether or not their children succeed to acquire the L2 at school, is not the parents' main concern since to them education or learning is not necessarily construed as synonymous with SLA.

In view of this analysis, it seems a valid argument to maintain that L2 teaching programmes have very little chance of success if they do not take into account the societal context factors operating in the community where L2 learners live, namely the status of the TL group as perceived in the community, the TL's institutional support, as well as socio-cultural factors. The nature of these factors plays a great role in influencing the learner to dedicate himself or herself to the task of learning L2.

2.2.6 IMPLICATIONS FOR SOUTH AFRICA

It is important to note that in South Africa there is no TL that has a high status. The tendency to want to learn English is caused more by institutional support than the status

of the TL group (the English people). In South Africa English is the language of economic, technological and political discourse. This can be used to explain the tendency of most learners and their parents to value proficiency in English.

South Africa is a multi-cultural country. It is, therefore, important to highlight the difficulties encountered by learners who opt for learning another language. Such difficulties might include fear of rejection and a negative attitude toward the use of English in the exclusively Nguni- or Sotho-speaking areas of South Africa.

SLA is facilitated by exposure to the TL cultural group. An analysis of the societal context factor implies that L2 teaching-learning programmes may be thwarted by South Africa's racially segregated past. Racial segregation led to the creation of ethnically cohesive, and completely enclosed residential areas. These social cohesive and enclosed areas remain impervious to linguistic influences of other languages outside the boundaries of each ethnic group's enclosure.

The study of societal context factors also highlights the implications of the rural-urban differences on the development of ESL proficiency. People in the rural parts of South Africa might have strong opinions for or against the use of a language (such as English) other than their own.

The positive or negative effects of societal context factors on SLA can be reinforced or cancelled out by the nature of home/family context factors. In the following section the influence of factors in this category is discussed.

2.3. THE HOME/FAMILY CONTEXT FACTORS IN SLA

The focus of this section is the discussion of the influence of the home/family context factors on SLA. A literature review shows that the **home/family context** category consists of a number of factors each of which is listed below:

- **Parents' level of education** (Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts & Fraleigh 1987; Ford 1993; Lockheed, Fuller & Nyirongo 1989; Marjoribanks 1986; 1989;

- Wilson & Wilson 1992; Yuk-lan 1994);
- **The family's socio-economic status (SES)** (Ford 1993; Miner 1968; Schneider & Lee 1990; Song & Hattie 1984; Stevenson, Chen & Uttal 1990);
 - **The learner's family configuration** (Dornbusch et al. 1987; Marsh 1990; Murray & Sandquist 1990);
 - **Parents' educational aspirations for their children** (Marjoribanks 1989; Prom-Jackson, Johnson & Wallace 1987; Steckman 1988; Wilson & Wilson 1992);
 - **Parental involvement** (Ferhmann, Keith & Reimers 1987; Redding 1992; Schneider & Lee 1990); as well as,
 - **The family value system** (Lockheed et al. 1989; Redding 1992; Steckman 1988; Wilson & Wilson 1992).

Because the parents' level of education tends to influence the family's socio-economic status, the first two factors mentioned above can be combined. This reduces the numbers of home/family context factors analysed below to five. The factors analysed are: the family's socio-economic status, the family configuration, parents' educational aspirations for their children, parental involvement, as well as the family value system. Each of these factors is discussed to determine the extent to which it influences academic performance in general, and SLA in particular.

2.3.1 THE FAMILY'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

The family's socio-economic status (SES) is defined by the parents' level of education, occupation and income (Dornbusch et al. 1987:1246; Lockheed et al. 1989:242; Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg 1988:218). The higher the level of education, the greater the possibility of job opportunities resulting into economic stability and enhancement (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg 1988:218). Parents' educational levels can range from little or no education at all to primary education, secondary education or tertiary education. In their studies, Carpenter (1985), Dornbusch et al. (1987) and Lockheed et al. (1989) have used these categories of parents' educational attainments. Moreover, the type of the job the parent does usually determines the level of wealth the family possesses. Miner (1968:373-374) argues that there is a significant relationship between the parents'

SES and their children's level of intelligence. This is due to the fact that the parents in a low SES family lack items such as books, magazines, radios, TV, TV games, computers and computer games that can serve to stimulate children intellectually. In some instances the low SES families cannot even afford such basic needs as food, shelter and security for the children. Du Toit's (1993:218-221) findings further highlight the extent to which the SES of the family affects the learner's academic performance in South Africa. She mentions that children from low SES families tend to be characterised by a lack of motivation, poor academic achievement, poor language skills, inductive rather than deductive reasoning, as well as the inability to use high-order cognitive strategies.

2.3.2 THE FAMILY CONFIGURATION

The role of **family configuration** (structure) in the education of the child cannot be ignored. This argument is supported by Murray and Sandquist (1990:21) who found, in their longitudinal study, that children who lived with single mothers scored low on aptitude and achievement measures; they also tended to select less demanding courses in junior high school and had lower levels of attainment at the age of 21 than their counterparts who lived with two natural parents. However, Ford (1993: 59-60) and Prom-Jackson, Johnson and Wallace (1987:118, 120-121) downplay the effects of the family's configuration on senior secondary school learners' academic performance in the USA context. In spite of the conflicting research findings, the researcher subscribes to the view that there is a significant relationship between the learner's school performance and his or her family configuration.

As pointed out earlier, one of the most important factors in the learner's home is the parents' level of education. This determines, to a large extent, the level of parents' educational aspirations for their children, parental involvement in the education of their children and the family value system. Each of these factors is discussed in more detail below.

2.3.3 PARENTS' EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

Wilson and Wilson (1992:52) define parents' educational aspiration in terms of the level of educational attainment a parent desires for his or her child. High parental aspirations may be a critical underlying factor for the formation of the learner's own perceptions and aspirations (Marjoribanks 1989:162). In this regard the difference between educated and uneducated parents lies in the fact that whereas both may have high educational aspirations for their children, the uneducated parent cannot qualitatively get involved in the child's schoolwork in order to realise those aspirations.

2.3.4 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

According to Ferhmann et al. (1987:330) and Lockheed et al. (1989:242) qualitative parental involvement entails parent's reinforcement of improved performance and excellence. In other words parents have to take into account the potential of their children and encourage them to strive for excellence in their work. According to Steckman (1988:6) parental involvement entails the following aspects:

- parents' insistence on high scholastic achievement;
- offering academic guidance (help provided by the parent to the child on school-related tasks), and
- control of work habits (the degree of structure and routine in home management and the emphasis on educational activities rather than pleasurable things).

In his description of the concept of *curriculum of the home*, Redding (1992:62) maintains this concept entails the following parent-child interactions:

- informed parent-child discussion of daily school learning experiences;
- parent's encouragement and discussion of leisure reading;
- monitoring and analysis of televiewing;
- deferral of the child's striving towards immediate gratification in order to focus on long-term goals;
- expression of affection and interest in the child's academic and personal growth, and
- family practices that contribute to motivation and positive self-concept.

On the basis of the foregoing, an inference can be drawn that the concept of curriculum of the home basically refers to involvement of parents and guardians in the education of their children.

2.3.5 FAMILY VALUE SYSTEM

Parent-child interactions that characterise the curriculum of the home are basically the practical manifestations of family values. In Redding's (1992:65) opinion, the deferral of gratification, pursuit of long-term goals, emphasis on personal effort, self-discipline, and productive use of time are based on a particular value system. It is a value system that sets a great store on individual responsibility, hard work, persistence and the importance of education.

In her study of the influence of the family on scholastic achievement, Siu (1992) confirms the role of the family value orientation. Prom-Jackson et al. (1987:118) found that graduates, who participated in their study, agreed that their success could also be attributed to the positive parental beliefs, values and attitudes towards education. Stevenson et al. (1990:521-522) aver that learners feel less motivated to do well in the classroom if the parents, peers and adults place greater value on things which have nothing to do with academic achievement. The school youth easily become disillusioned with diligence and continued devotion to school work as they see on a daily basis young adults and friends who have finished school and yet their socio-economic status has not changed. In their study of East Asians' academic success, Schneider and Lee (1990:374) conclude that parents' expectations about scholastic success, a better career, as well as a high professional status attainment, are powerful and are easily transmitted through a cultural context in which education is highly valued in so far as it leads to self-improvement and increased self-esteem.

An extrapolation of the above review of literature to SLA implies that in order to successfully acquire the L2, the L2 learner can benefit from parents who can offer support and appropriate guidance. This can be done by parents through verbal encouragement to excel in ESL tasks, helping the child in his/her English homework and practical projects,

demanding to see progress in English, praising every improvement, offering general academic guidance and support from an ESL perspective and providing English reading materials such as books, newspapers and magazines with topics of interest to the child.

In sum, the review of various studies shows that in the home/family context the learner's high scholastic performance is related to the family's socio-economic status and configuration, including parents' levels of education and occupational status, parents' high educational aspirations, parental involvement in the education of their children, the home curriculum, as well as a positive family value system.

2.3.6 IMPLICATIONS FOR SOUTH AFRICA

The study of the home/family context factors highlights the following pertinent facts:

- Education is not the responsibility of the school alone. For education to succeed parents have to be qualitatively involved (2.3.4).
- In South Africa one has to be mindful of the extent to which parents can be involved in the education of their children in view of the fact that many parents in South Africa are either not educated to help their children, or they do not have time to be involved as they spend most of their time at work.
- In South Africa a significant number of learners come from the disadvantaged areas, low socio-economic backgrounds and single-parent families. It is important to note how the learners' socio-economic backgrounds and the configuration of their families affect their learning.
- Most South African families have high educational aspirations for their children, as it is evident in some parents having to sacrifice portions of their wages for transporting their children to get education in the schools located in the affluent suburbs.

2.4 THE SCHOOL/CLASSROOM CONTEXT FACTORS

There is a great deal of consensus in researchers' findings regarding factors that influence the learner's academic performance in the school/classroom context. According to the literature review these factors are:

- **The school's teaching-learning culture** (Calitz 1998; Chrispeels 1992; Henning

- 1998; Mothibeli 1998; Liebenberg 1998; McCurdy 1983; Mecoamere 1997, 1998; SABC 1997; Naidu 1998; Ngcongo 1995; Perkins 1998; Ramphela 1997; Sergiovanni 1990; Smith & Pacheco 1996);
- **The availability and use of educational resources** (Askes 1989; Askes & Kritzinger 1990; Duminy and Sohnge 1986; Naidu 1998; Mahlobo 1995; Steyn, Badenhorst & Yule 1983; Vinjevold 1997);
 - **The influence of the learner-educator** (Fraser, Loubser & Van Rooy 1993; Powers & Woodgate 1998; Van Wyk 1991b); and
 - **The teacher's attitudes and skills** (Britten 1985; 1988; Cullen 1994; Edge 1988; Ellis 1986; Hayes 1995; Mandelsohn 1994; Milk 1990; Rhine 1995; Taylor 1997a; Tema 1997; Ur 1992; Van der Walt 1990a; 1990b; 1992; 1996).

In sum, the effects of the teaching-learning culture prevailing in a school translate into high or low academic performance in the classroom. Competent and well-motivated teachers are needed to facilitate the translation of the teaching-learning culture into learners' high academic performance. Learners' academic performance depends on the teacher's skill to effectively use educational resources, to effectively structure learning experiences and to choose and use effective instructional methods to achieve the specified outcomes. These skills make the teacher an indispensable factor in the classroom. The influences of the school's teaching-learning culture, the availability and effective use of educational resources, the learner-educator ratio and teacher's skills and attitudes are discussed below, in more detail.

2.4.1 THE SCHOOL'S TEACHING-LEARNING CULTURE

The school's learning culture is one of the preconditions for successful SLA and high scholastic achievement in general. According to McCurdy (1983:7) the school has the capacity to make a difference in the learners' scholastic achievements in spite of their family background, poverty, and other powerful influences. In the following section the concept *teaching-learning culture* is placed in the context of the whole *organisational culture* of a school. The participants in the creation and maintenance of the teaching-learning culture are identified and their individual roles discussed.

According to Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1989:175-200), Hoy and Miskel (1982:247-254) and Owens and Steinhoff (1989:12-15) the culture of a school as an organisation manifests itself at three levels, namely the basic or subconscious level, the conscious level and the visual level. The *subconscious level* includes the assumptions, beliefs and ideologies based on the philosophies of life of all the people who work in a school. This means that the culture of a school is determined by the assumptions and beliefs of the principal and staff and such assumptions are manifested in their teaching practice (Badenhorst 1995:80). The *conscious level* includes the stated vision, mission and the guidelines for action. These aspects derive from the first level. The *visual level* consists of the visible aspects of the school culture. These visible aspects can be grouped into:

- behavioural manifestations such as school rituals, ceremonies and teaching and learning;
- symbolic manifestations such as colours, symbols and school uniform; and
- conceptual/verbal manifestations such as school legends, heroes and organisation structures (Badenhorst 1995:80).

It can be noticed from this short exposition of the dimensions of the school culture that the teaching-learning culture of a school is one of the many aspects that constitute the organisational culture of a school. It can also be observed that the school's teaching-learning culture is a behavioural manifestation of the principal and staff's assumptions, attitudes, skills and beliefs about education and education management.

The school's *teaching-learning culture* can be defined as the teachers' and learners' spirit of hard work and dedication to school work prevailing in the school as made possible by the smooth interaction of learner characteristics, home/family factors and general school climate, as well as the influence of the community on the school, teachers and learners (Smith & Pacheco 1996:162). In an interview with the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC 1997) Mzamani expressed the view that the concept teaching-learning culture refers to a continuous, stable and undisrupted series of interlinked events planned, executed and managed by each school to realise educational (learning) goals. In Mzamani's (SABC 1997) and Smith and Pacheco's (1996:162) definition of the teaching-

learning culture several participants in the creation of a teaching-learning culture can be identified, namely the principal and the management team, teachers, learners and parents. These roles of the individual participants are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

2.4.1.1 The role of the principal and the management team

Schools with a positive teaching-learning culture are characterised by the school leadership (principal, deputy principal and head of departments and class teachers) which:

- makes high quality teaching the school's primary priority;
- sees to it that time is meaningfully used;
- combats (where humanly possible) all factors which interfere with the attainment of high quality teaching and learning, and
- creates a positive relationship between parents, teachers, learners and the community (Smith & Pacheco 1996:161).

In the researcher's view it is important for the principal and his management team to have a vision of what the school wants to achieve and to translate this vision into a school's mission statement. The extent to which the goals expressed in the school's mission statement are achieved, is usually a measure of the management team's successful execution of their managerial functions which promote the teaching-learning culture in a school.

2.4.1.2 The role of teachers

The school leadership cannot effectively establish a positive teaching-learning culture in the school without the contribution of teachers (Smith & Pacheco 1996:161). Teachers contribute by:

- executing their professional/academic duties with dedication;
- acting as professionals at all times;
- acting as role models to learners at all times; and
- creating a positive educator-learner relationship in the interest of learning (Smith & Pacheco 1996:161).

According to Sergiovanni (1990:62), for a school to excel academically, its teachers have

to work hard and give a good deal of themselves to teaching and learning. They have to go beyond giving “a fair day’s work for a fair day’s pay.” (Sergiovanni 1990:62). Learner creativity and enthusiasm for education are nurtured by good teachers (Henning 1998:14). Khambule (Naidu 1998:17) maintains that the culture of teaching-learning can be established by teachers who find teaching rewarding. Teachers who are capable of insights, intuition, teaching and organisational acumen can play an invaluable role in creating and maintaining the teaching and learning culture in a school (cf. Sergiovanni 1990:112).

2.4.1.3 The role of learners

Through learner representative councils (LRC’s) learners can contribute to establishing a positive teaching-learning culture. In order for them to effectively participate in the management of the school, the school must invest in training the members of the LRC so that they can understand the significance and magnitude of their role in the management of the school. If they have participated in the process of developing the school rules and code of conduct, learners can contribute to the establishment of a positive teaching-learning culture by developing self-discipline, willingness to accept authority and discipline, high learning motivation, high learning morale, positive attitudes and dedication to school work. Lack of discipline among learners has been cited as one of the causes of poor academic performance in schools (Calitz 1998:14; Sepotokele 1998:1)

2.4.1.4 The role of parents

Parents (individually and collectively) play a significant role in creating and maintaining a positive culture of teaching and learning. The roles of individual parents, according to Dekker and Van Schalkwyk (1995:26), are to

- offer the child security and love which the child needs to venture out into the world;
- care for the child’s physical needs by providing sufficient wholesome food, clothing, shelter and looking after his or her health;
- see to it that the child attends school regularly;
- reinforce the efforts of teachers in educating the child, and
- support teachers in their quest for better conditions of service.

Parents have to be willing to serve in school governing bodies so that they can formulate the school policies in respect of school rules, fees, a code of conduct for learners and the schools' mission statements. It is in this sense that in the opinion of the researcher parents in their individual capacities and in the form of governing bodies are indispensable for the creation and maintenance of the teaching-learning culture.

At this stage it is important to reiterate the point that the teaching-learning culture is part of the school climate. The degree of co-operation mentioned above among members of the management, between management and staff, between the staff and learners is a reflection of the school's climate. A school where the co-operation between the stakeholders mentioned above is good, is said to have a positive school climate. According to Chrispeels (1992:9) such schools are characterised by

- a clear **vision** for the school which the school leadership, teachers and learners strive to achieve;
- high expectations of teachers and learners as shown by good **final examination results** of each grade at the end of the school year;
- general **order and discipline** as evidenced in teachers' and learners' respect and meaningful use of time;
- recognition and reward of **both teachers' and learners' excellent achievements**; and
- a positive relationship between the school and home as seen in **parents'** formal and/or informal visits to the school in the interest of the learners.

From the preceding review of literature it can be concluded that the teaching-learning culture in schools can be sustained by efficient principals and management teams, competent and well-motivated teachers, learners who are committed to learning and parents who have interest in the education of their children. The teaching-learning culture of a school is further enhanced by the availability and use of educational resources which is the focus of the next section.

2.4.2 THE AVAILABILITY AND USE OF EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Effective teaching depends on the availability of resources such as teaching media, textbooks, well-equipped laboratories, electricity and classrooms. For example, Askes and Kritzinger (1990:120) emphasise the role of teaching media as effective tools for the development of reading. According to Askes (1989:370) the value of teaching media stems from the fact that learners can easily remember what they have seen and heard. Steyn, Badenhorst and Yule (1983:107-108) observe that teaching media are valuable for explaining new concepts, consolidating concepts and for presenting a meaningful picture of an abstract situation. In schools where there is a shortage of teaching media, it becomes difficult for learners to acquire ESL proficiency because the means by which English concepts can be clarified are not available.

Another invaluable school resource is the textbook. Duminy and Sohnge (1986:74-75) maintain that the textbook serves as a basis around which the subject content can be organised; it is also a basis for independent study. The textbook also serves as the source of appropriately graded materials and exercises for various school grades (Askes 1989:372). Language readers, prescribed novels, plays and short stories help develop learners' imagination, increase their aesthetic sense, and serve as sources of topics for discussion and debates in the classroom (Mahlobo 1995:81). The discussions and debates are effective means of developing the ESL learner's language command and ESL confidence. However, the unavailability of ESL textbooks deprives the ESL learners of the opportunity for independent reading and practising. In a study conducted by Mahlobo (1995:137) teachers argued that one of the factors contributing to low motivation to learn English as L2 was the shortage of resources such as teaching media and libraries. The success of group work and self-activity as envisaged for Curriculum 2005 depends also on the availability of learning materials.

2.4.3 THE INFLUENCE OF THE LEARNER-EDUCATOR RATIO

One of the important didactic principles is the principle of individualisation. According to Fraser, Loubser and Van Rooy (1993:64) the principle of individualisation acknowledges the fact that in the classroom learners differ from one another and that the teacher has to

take cognisance of the individual learner differences when planning and executing his or her teaching strategies. The application of the principle of individualisation means that the teacher is committed to investigating, developing and applying methods which make provision for the unique characteristics of each learner (Fraser et al. 1993:65; Tema 1997:7). Big class sizes hamper the teacher's commitment to the application of the principle of individualisation. If the class is too big, individual learner problems are difficult to identify, learners cannot receive individual attention, neither will the learners be able to progress at their individual tempos (cf. Van Wyk 1991b:143). According to Dreyer and Duminy (1983) cited by Van Wyk (1991b:143), overcrowding causes unfavourable situations for teaching and learning activities on account of a lack of space and fresh air, and high noise level. In a study conducted by Mahlobo (1995:120) teachers reported an average learner-educator ratio of more than 50:1 in junior secondary schools in Northern KwaZulu-Natal. The teachers listed large classes as one of the factors contributing to ESL learners' poor academic performance. In Jansen's (1997:7) view small classes are one of the preconditions for the success of the OBE paradigm in schools. On account of its influence on learning as discussed in this section, the effects of the learner-educator ratio on SLA cannot be ignored.

2.4.4 THE TEACHER'S ATTITUDES AND SKILLS

The classroom context (also referred to as the didactic situation) is of great importance for SLA, more especially in places where the classroom is the only means of the learner's exposure to L2. In the classroom context the teacher and the learner are co-determinants of the latter's success in acquiring L2. One of the factors which enable the teacher to efficiently play such a role is his or her quality of training. Teacher training is indeed a major determinant of the learner's level of proficiency in L2. Despite diachronic variations in teaching models, the review of literature (Britten 1985a&b; Dutton 1983; Edge 1988; Hayes 1995; Mandelsohn 1994; Milk 1990; Mitchell 1989; Palmer 1993; Cullen 1994; Stern 1983; Stevens 1983; Van der Walt 1990a, 1990b & 1996) shows that the target profile of the teacher trained in teaching English as a second language (TESL), is generally a composite of

- the teacher's mastery of the English language;

- the teacher's attitudes towards teaching English as a second language;
- the teacher's mastery of the skills for TESL;
- the teacher's mastery of various approaches to TESL;
- the effects of the teacher's experience in TESL; and
- the role of in-service training for ESL teachers.

Although these qualities of the ESL teacher are discussed individually, the complexities involved in real classroom situations are acknowledged. Classroom dynamics demand of the teacher to have these qualities and to be able to use them simultaneously. ESL teacher qualities are discussed below on the premise that a teacher with these qualities is able to effectively organise the classroom activities to the benefit of ESL learners.

2.4.4.1 The teacher's mastery of the English language

The teacher's mastery of the English language has three dimensions, namely the mastery of the language used to control didactic activities, the knowledge of or familiarity with the English culture, as well as the knowledge of linguistics (Britten 1985a:117; Mitchell 1989:73-80; Stern 1983:27). In Cullen's (1994:165) view the poor command of the English language undermines the teacher's confidence, affects his or her self-esteem and professional status and makes it difficult for him or her to execute such didactic procedures as asking meaningful questions.

As a classroom practitioner, the ESL teacher should master the language in such a way that he or she can organise, guide, evaluate, argue, express emotions and be able to use it to maintain positive classroom relations (Britten 1985a:117). The ability to adjust to the learner's level of understanding is typical of an ESL teacher with a high command of the English language. This ability to adjust one's language to the level of learners is important because it enables learners to gain from the teacher's output and it also enables the teacher to organise meaningful and productive class work (Britten 1985a:117).

The teacher's knowledge of or familiarity with the English culture is also essential. L2 teaching programmes always include a literary component. In order to effectively teach the L2 literature, the L2 teacher should have knowledge and understanding of the L2

group culture. This knowledge enables the teacher to interpret the nuances of the L2 group culture implicit in its literature (Britten 1985a:118). According to Dutton (1983:3), in order to understand a nation, one must read its books. This stems from the fact that text is not only a powerful mode of acculturation, but also provides a vehicle through which the teacher can share the L2 group culture with his or her learners (Mitchell 1989:73-80). The idiomatic expressions, the proverbs, the literary themes, literary conflict and the behaviour of characters in the text are all culture-bound. It is only the teacher with the knowledge of the L2 group culture who can effectively use literature as a tool for acculturation.

No language teacher can effectively teach without any theory of language teaching, even if it is implicit in his or her value judgements, decisions, actions or in the organisational pattern within which he or she operates (Stern 1983:27). The knowledge of linguistics equips the teacher with the theory of language teaching. Knowledge of linguistics is necessitated by the fact that over the years every TESL orthodoxy has always been based on linguistic theories of SLA (Van der Walt, 1992:8-10). Even the most recent task-based approach has its foundation in Applied Linguistics (Van der Walt, 1996:75-76).

The knowledge of Applied Linguistics benefits the teacher in so far as it enables the teacher to play his or her multiple roles of language teacher, language analyst and language user (Edge 1988:10). As a language teacher, the teacher needs the knowledge of linguistics in order to be able to properly model his or her language output to the learner, to motivate the learner by using the language correctly and to be able to explain how the L2 works. As a language analyst the ESL teacher must be able to talk with colleagues about the language itself, to analyse it, to understand how it works and in doubtful cases, to be able to pass judgement of acceptability (Edge 1988: 10-12). As a language user, the ESL teacher has to be aware of how the language is structured and organised. He or she has to be able to locate, interpret and apply information (Edge 1988:10-11). Only the knowledge of Linguistics and/or Applied Linguistics can equip the teacher to perform these roles. In support of the role played by linguistic theory in TESL, Ur (1992:58-60) asserts that effective classroom practice is always based on a coherent

set of principles which enables the teacher to reflect on what he or she has been able or unable to achieve. The teacher has to be able, for instance, to study the L2 learner's language output in order to discover why it is as it is, that is, the teacher must be able to explain the L2 learner's linguistic output (cf. Corder 1971:152). For the ESL teacher as a professional, it is not enough to know *how*; he or she also has to know *why*, because without the ability to explain and justify own preferences and practices, the ESL teacher is in a vulnerable position (Mandelsohn 1994:88).

2.4.4.2 The teacher's attitude towards TESL

According to the Thesaurus of ERIC descriptors (Britten 1985a:122), attitudes are defined as predispositions to react to persons, objects, situations and ideas in a particular manner not always consciously held or readily verbalised. In the researcher's opinion the teacher's attitude to work can be defined as the degree of commitment to his or her work as manifested by the teacher's striving for excellence and his or her dissatisfaction with mediocrity.

The ESL teacher's attitude to his or her work will be influenced by the level of commitment during training. If the teachers are not committed to methods and approaches of TESL in which they were trained, there is no chance that they ever will be committed later (Britten 1988:6). Furthermore, Wragg (1974) cited by Britten (1985a:122), points out that the ESL teacher can undergo a spontaneous attitude change from a progressive pole of attitude measurement to a retrogressive one due to subsequent socialisation after training. This change of attitude may result in the recently qualified teacher's adoption of patterns of teaching behaviour which have been stigmatised during training, but which the teacher has earlier seen used and are perhaps still being used by his or her older and more experienced colleagues (Britten 1985b:225; 1988:6).

The attitudes of the ESL teacher have significant implications for ESL teaching and learning:

- Whereas skills execute, attitudes command (Britten 1985a:122; 1988:6). This means that the teacher may master the ESL approaches, methods and relevant skills, but if

he or she has no personal commitment to apply them, they are as good as non-existent.

- Attitudes lead to a more consistent teaching behaviour. If this consistent behaviour is educationally objectionable, the ESL goals may remain forever unachieved.
- Attitudes may lead to transfer of learning. If transfer of learning entails the transfer of recommended effective approaches and methods, this can benefit learners.
- Attitudes may also lead to either a low or a high professional self-esteem.

In conclusion, it can be pointed out that the efficiency of the teacher in the classroom is influenced by his or her attitudes in terms of degree of commitment to his or her professional tasks, in general, and the willingness to apply the effective skills, methods and approaches of teaching English as an L2, in particular.

2.4.4.3 The teacher's mastery of the skills for TESL

In order to effectively teach ESL, the teacher should master ESL teaching skills during his or her pre-service training. The first set of skills the teacher should master is called the **pre-active skills**. Pre-active skills are the skills that the teacher executes in the absence of the learner group. They include the teacher's ability to effectively:

- plan the lesson;
- interpret the ESL syllabus;
- take the characteristics of his or her learners into account during lesson planning;
- identify learning and teaching goals to be achieved;
- choose the didactic principles, as derived from applied linguistics, on which the lesson is to be based;
- choose content (what he or she exactly wants to teach), and
- choose materials and methods whereby his or her teaching goals will be realised.

Also part of the pre-active skills repertoire are the skills which are grouped under **management of learning** (Britten 1985b:220). These include the ability to devise and apply a work scheme, plan the ESL programme for the whole year, and the ability to plan strategies for helping the learners learn best.

Pre-active skills alone cannot help the teacher effectively achieve ESL learning goals. He or she should also master the interactive skills. **Interactive (pedagogic) skills** refer to the skills which the teacher applies during the actual lesson presentation. Unlike pre-active skills, these require the presence of the learner group (Britten 1985b:220). Comprising the ESL teacher's interactive skills are the teacher's ability to

- organise his or her class for effective learning;
- adapt his or her lesson presentation to the level of learners;
- make use of teaching aids and other materials to the benefit of the learners;
- motivate L2 learners by rewarding all achievements however slight these may be and
- link the ESL lesson with the learners' day-to-day practical experiences (Britten 1985b:220)

The ESL teacher's interactive skills listed above are more or less similar to those discussed in detail by Van der Walt (1990a:30).

Pre-active and interactive skills have a reflective element. This means that the teacher has to be able to subject his or her planning and lesson presentation to critical self-evaluation. The ability to objectively pass judgement on own performance, i.e. **reflective skill** is requisite for the teacher because these judgements lead to changes and improvements of the teacher's own practice and they also increase the teacher's repertoire of interactive skills.

In sum, the teacher's mastery of the skills of TESL refers to the mastery of pre-active, interactive and reflective skills. These skills serve as means of dynamically manipulating the classroom context to the benefit of the L2 learner.

2.4.4.4 The teacher's mastery of various instructional approaches to TESL

The teacher's command of the methodology component as dealt with during pre-service training, equips the teacher with

- the awareness of the rationale for ESL procedures;
- the awareness of when these procedures are useful;
- the ability to relate one procedure to another;

- the ability to relate short-term to long-term goals; and
- the understanding of the organisation of ESL content (Britten 1985a:121-122; Edge 1988:12).

The teacher's choice of any mode of cognitive input (i.e. method) is influenced by his or her approach to L2 teaching. In spite of the fact that today's TESL orthodoxy may be tomorrow's heresy (cf. Van der Walt 1992 & 1996), two approaches to TESL have been empirically found to be effective in the teaching of ESL, namely the communicative and the task-based approaches (cf. Long & Porter 1985; Milk 1990; Stevens 1983).

To effectively use the **communicative approach**, the teacher has to keep checking whether or not his or her activities are really communicative. To do this a set of criteria pertaining to the class activities should be used. Each activity, according to Ellis (1986:96) and Johnson (1988:59-60), should

- involve the learners in performing an authentic communicative task;
- create in each learner the desire to communicate ;
- lead learners to concentrate on what they are saying, not on how they are saying it;
- not involve the teacher correcting the learners;
- involve learners using a variety of language structures, not just one;
- not be designed to control what form the learners should use.

The definitions of the roles of the teacher and the learner take these principles into account. According to Breen and Candlin (1980:99) the role of the teacher is to facilitate the communication process between all learners in the classroom. He or she also has to act as an independent participant in the classroom. This role implies that while he or she is a resource for each group, the teacher is also an organiser of teaching-learning resources.

In accordance with the principles listed above, the role of the learner according to the communicative approach, is to negotiate meaning between himself or herself, the learning process and the learning objectives (Breen & Candlin 1980:110). This role of the learner

emerges from and interacts with his or her role as a negotiator within the group and with the classroom procedures and activities that the group undertakes (Breen & Candlin 1980:110; Richards & Rodgers 1986:77-78).

The basic principles of the communicative approach as outlined above eventually determine the mode of cognitive input the teacher uses. The communicative approach can be effectively applied if the teacher uses such modes of cognitive input as role-playing, pair work, group work, debates, discussions and problem-solving (Becker 1991:126-127; Nattinger 1984:384-400; Richards & Rodgers 1986:79).

Another approach that has been recommended for the effective teaching of L2 is the *task-based approach* (Long & Crooke 1992). This approach was recommended as an alternative to *synthetic approaches*. Synthetic approaches are approaches characterised by the teaching of rules and structures as separate entities (Long & Crookes 1992; Sheen 1994:141). The notion of *task-based* refers to a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the TL while their attention is primarily focused on meaning rather than form (Van der Walt 1996:75). The analysis of the studies of Long and Crooke (1992) Sheen (1994) and Van der Walt (1996) revealed that the task-based approach is based on the presupposition that

- maximum exposure of learners to the comprehensible language input facilitates SLA;
- the learner does not learn isolated items one at a time. The SLA process is not linear; but rather a complex mapping one. It is an integrated process rather than a set of discrete outcomes;
- the more comprehensible input learners receive, the faster and better they learn;
- learners have the innate capacity to subconsciously analyse the discourse into constituent parts of their L2 system and use these parts appropriately both receptively and productively;
- L2 learning input is not necessarily processed by the learner in the same way as the teacher intended. Learning is controlled more by the learner rather than by the teacher;
- The language input can be provided by mean of various types of tasks.

On the basis of the above presuppositions, the task-based approach focuses on

- ensuring the maximum exposure of the L2 learner to comprehensible language input; and
- promoting interaction among the learners and between them and the teacher, and the negotiation of meaning (Van der Walt 1996:78).

The role of the teacher in the task-based approach is significantly reduced. He/she is not as intensively involved in learning activities because task work is a central planning tool used to provide learners with maximum exposure to comprehensible language input. The relegation of the teacher's role in this approach is based on the assumption that language tasks can be designed in such a way that they present learners with the TL input that they are able to reshape through the application of their general processing capacities (Long & Crooke 1992:43). The role of the learner in this approach does not differ from the role of the learner in the communicative approach, except that in the former the learner does not have the mediating assistance of the teacher (Sheen 1994:141).

The modes of cognitive input which can be used with the task-based approach to realise ESL teaching goals are problem-solving and information-gap exercises, opinion-gap exercises, reasoning-gap exercises (Van der Walt 1996:75), role-playing, simulations, pair work, debates and group activities (Becker 1991:125-127). The aim of using these exercises is also to give learners the opportunity to practise conveying meaningful messages rather than practising language forms (cf. Johnson 1988:60).

Although the task-based approach is regarded by its exponents as an improvement on the communicative approach, it also has the weakness of failing to improve the L2 learner's grammar and lexicon (Van der Walt 1996:78). Consequently, Long (1991), cited by Van der Walt (1996:79), has recommended an **eclectic approach** characterised by alternating in a principled way between focus on meaning and focus on form. This has the advantage of focusing the learner's attention on specific linguistic properties in the course of carrying out a communicative task, as well as providing the learner with valuable feedback (Van der Walt 1996:79).

In a nutshell, the teacher's ability to use suitable methods and to adapt his or her choice of L2 approaches are enabling factors in structuring the classroom environment in such a way that learner success in acquiring the L2 is enhanced.

2.4.4.5 The effects of the teacher's experience in TESL

The concept **experience** implies getting to know, becoming aware or the acquisition of background skills through being practically involved in a particular practice or activity (cf. Van Rensburg & Landman 1986:323). For the ESL teacher this definition implies that through the teacher's practical involvement in TESL, he or she has over the years acquired some practical background skills. These background skills make the teacher more assured and capable of evaluating his or her teaching behavioural patterns on the basis of the learners' reactions (Britten 1985b:221). It also implies that the teacher is capable of

- integrating theory and practice;
- differentiating between what works and what does not;
- adapting to the needs of his or her learners;
- being receptive to the changes and innovations in ESL content, skills, approaches and methodology;
- admitting ignorance when he or she is found wanting, and embarking on a search for the required knowledge, and
- being exemplary to the new inexperienced colleagues and collaborating with them in order to share his or her experiences with them in the interest of learning.

There can, however, be a less attractive side of the teacher's experience. This side is characterised by the teacher's satisfaction with mediocrity in his or her work and in learners' performance, clinging to the use of one method regardless of whether it is effective or not and a closed mindset which sees no need and allows no room for innovation. Teachers of this kind have no interest in the learner but are merely concerned with their own material well-being. They tend to ridicule their new colleagues who still diligently do their job.

In spite of its potentially darker side, it is clear that the teacher's experience in teaching ESL can be an invaluable asset whereby ESL goals can be realised.

2.4.4.6 The role of in-service training for ESL teachers

The aims of in-service training (INSET) in respect of TESL can be classified into two sets, namely: to retrain teachers to do the same job better and/or to prepare them for their changed professional roles as in the case of teachers who have been promoted. It is the first set of aims which is of particular relevance for this study. This set of aims entails the teachers' professional development by upgrading their skills, knowledge, and instructional methods as well as improving their attitudes (Britten 1985b:234-235).

Mandelsohn (1994:92-93) posits that effective INSET is based on the assumption that

- teaching is developmental and cannot be limited to pre-service training only;
- good INSET enables teachers to deal with their problems effectively; and that
- teachers' mindsets change and grow over time.

In the light of these assumptions, Mandelsohn (1994:93) states that INSET is not just desirable but it is essential for effective ESL instruction.

Depending on the needs of teachers, INSET courses are usually based on either a transmission, problem-solving or exploratory approach (Palmer 1993:168). The **transmission approach** is trainer-centred and usually used for teachers with little experience and a wide range of backgrounds. The trainer is the only one who gives input on the recommended innovation and the participant teacher has no personal investment in such innovation (Palmer 1993:168). The **problem-solving approach** is used for teachers with a wide range of classroom experiences. In this approach the participant teachers co-operate to relay personal teaching problems and recount personal experiences. The trainer's role is limited to suggesting solutions based on his or her experience and knowledge (Palmer 1993:168). Although the trainer is still an all-powerful knower in this approach, the teachers do have personal investments in the course because solutions are provided to their problems. In the **exploratory approach**, usually used for teacher development, the role of the trainer is to facilitate teachers' efforts in exploring their own

classroom experiences and resources, and finding solutions to their own problems with the help of others in a group. In this approach the teacher's investment in the outcome of the course is much higher than in the other two approaches (Palmer 1993: 168-169).

Referring to a model of INSET which is based on the principles of both problem-solving and exploratory approaches, Palmer (1993:170) concludes that such INSET sessions have the advantages of allowing the teacher to

- experience the innovation;
- reflect upon the possible impact on own teaching;
- adapt the innovation to one's own particular circumstances and teaching style and
- evaluate innovation in the light of actual experience.

Basing his suggestions on his work experience in Thailand, his research on the Rural Primary English Programme (RuPEP) in Malaysia and the Project for Improvement of Secondary English Teaching (PISET) in Thailand, Hayes (1995:256-260) suggests a set of principles that should guide INSET. He maintains that, in order to be effective, INSET sessions should

- be teacher-centred to make them relevant to the teacher's school situation and thereby increasing the teacher's personal investment in the course;
- involve teachers in the preparation of the course to allow for collaborative development thereof;
- be run by trainers who are teachers themselves since INSET should be grounded on one's own personal experience rather than on prescriptions from some forgotten experiences;
- employ task-based and inductive methods to get teachers to consider the rationales and principles underlying the use of a particular teaching orthodoxy;
- value the participant teachers' knowledge and experience by allowing them to talk about their perceptions of teaching and learning;
- raise the awareness of teaching-learning issues in respect of innovation and give teachers the opportunity for in-depth analysis;
- enable teachers to form generalisable conclusions about each topic under review to

- ❑ equip them with theory derived from classroom practice, and
- ❑ give participant teachers the opportunity to practise what they have learnt before they return to their classes.

However, the results of a study conducted by Rhine (1995:388) shows that sometimes even after attending in-service training, teachers still maintain instructional biases in their classroom practice. Britten (1985b:235) thinks this may be due to, among others, the fact that attitudes which command the teacher's teaching behaviour take a long time to change after the new skill has been acquired. In other cases, some school pressures such as a lack of materials and resources, as well as big classes, deter the teacher from implementing the recommended innovation. Lastly, it should be pointed out that the smaller the teacher's personal investment in the recommended innovation, the smaller his/her commitment will be to apply it.

From the preceding analysis of INSET and its effect on the ESL teacher, it is clear that a sound education system is one that supports its teachers with effective INSET sessions. These sessions change the teacher's attitudes and equip him or her with the knowledge and skills which he or she will have to use to improve the quality of ESL instruction.

The discussion of the teacher's skills shows that in order to enhance SLA by ESL learners, the teacher should himself/herself master the English language, master various instructional approaches to TESL, have attitudes conducive to teaching ESL, have experience in TESL and should regularly undergo INSET in order to develop himself/herself professionally. These requirements characterise the teacher's skills and attitudes as an important classroom factor. Answering to these requirements is crucial for the teacher's successful implementation of the OBE approach in the classroom (see 1.4.2.1)

In the foregoing analysis of the school/classroom context factors, the roles of the school's teaching-learning culture, the availability of teaching media, the learner-educator ratio and the teacher's skills and attitudes were discussed. It was argued that the teaching-learning

culture of a school is determined by the degree of co-operation among the school management team, the teachers, learners and parents. The availability of teaching media and other resources was discussed as one of the factors that enhance the teaching-learning culture of a school. The negative effects of big classes on teaching and learning were cited. Lastly the role of the teacher's skills and attitudes was discussed.

2.4.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR SOUTH AFRICA

The relevance of the foregoing analysis of school/classroom factors stems from a number of aspects. The analysis highlights the fact that for a school to operate effectively, it is imperative that

- the management team, teachers, learners and parents are dedicated to promoting the teaching-learning culture of the school. In South Africa this issue is pertinent in view of intermittent strikes that tend to have deleterious effects on the culture of teaching and learning. It is also pertinent in the light of many parents' reluctance to support schools regarding the discipline of their children.
- the school should have sufficient educational resources. For example, in South Africa the shortage of classrooms is so acute that some teachers in the Eastern Cape, North West and the Northern Province have to share classrooms, teach outside, teach in shifts or teach in turns (South Africa 1997g:7-8). The shortage of teaching-learning materials is so serious that in 1998 some learners wrote the grade 12 examination without a complete set of prescribed books. It is for these reasons that the issue of the availability and use of resources cannot be ignored.
- the school is so staffed that it has an acceptable learner-educator ratio because the high learner-educator ratios have detrimental effects on the quality of teaching and learning, more especially on the OBE system that is being gradually introduced in South African schools.
- the school, the parents and the Department of Education do not underplay the role of well-qualified and well-motivated teachers in the provision of quality education. In this respect, South African schools often have to contend with teachers who
 - are under-qualified and unskilled to execute their professional duties;
 - who have negative attitudes towards managing and executing their duties, and

- spend too much time and energy on activities calculated to advance their conditions of service without any compunction for the welfare of learners.

2.5 SUMMARY: A TAXONOMY OF CONTEXTUAL FACTORS IN SLA

A taxonomy is a formal classification of items into classes and subclasses (Richards, Platt & Weber 1992:289). It can also be defined as a scientifically-based classification system according to some relationship (Biehler & Snowman 1993:278; Fraser et al 1993:114). Taxonomies are valuable research tools. As comprehensive classification systems, taxonomies are used as bases for further research into a particular phenomenon, for example, SLA. Taxonomies are means by which researchers organise and summarise their findings in a coherent way. It is important to understand that while researchers strive to make taxonomies comprehensive, taxonomies are never cast in stone: they can be revised in the light of new research findings (Yorio 1976:62).

A taxonomy of contextual factors affecting SLA, as discussed above, is presented in Table 2.1. Table 2.1 is divided into three sections, namely: (A) societal context factors, (B) home/family context factors (C) and school/classroom context factors. Section A is derived from the models of Schumann (2.2.1) Gardner (2.2.2), Clement (2.2.3) and Giles and Byrne (2.2.4). This section consists of **status, institutional support and socio-cultural factors**.

Status refers to the position and role of the TL group as perceived by other groups. It comprises the TL group's social dominance, economic dominance, political dominance and technological dominance. These were discussed in sections 2.2.1.2 and 2.2.3.2. It was argued that status factors make the TL group's language attractive to learn because of the economic and technological incentives.

Institutional support refers to the degree to which the TL group is represented in mass media, religion, education, government, industry, culture and fashion. The higher the representation a group has in these institutions, the more frequent is the use of its language in these institutions. Other language groups tend to learn the language which has

high institutional support due to, inter alia, vocational and career opportunities in the economic sectors mentioned above.

Socio-cultural factors entail the ethnolinguistic group's degrees of social enclosure, social cohesiveness, dimension of ingroup identification, social integration strategies, socio-cultural norms, beliefs and values, as well as the total number of people who belong to that particular group. It was argued earlier (2.2.1.2) that the lower the degrees of social cohesiveness and social enclosure of one group, the easier it is for such a group to learn another language. If the learner group does not use its own language as a salient **dimension of ingroup identification** (see 2.2.4) it may learn the L2 and allow itself to be **assimilated** into the TL group or resort to **adaptation** by learning the L2 while keeping its own culture. However, if the learner's group uses its own language as a dimension of ingroup identification, it may try to **preserve** its own language. It was pointed out earlier that the preservation strategy militates against SLA. Also mentioned in section 2.2.4 is the fact that, if in a particular social milieu bilingualism is a valued cultural norm, it is easy for L2 learners to acquire the L2. However, if acquiring L2 is regarded by the community as cultural betrayal, members of such a community are reluctant to learn another language. The belief held in the community about the L2 being a tool for social and economic advancement was discussed and its facilitative/inhibitory role in SLA was mentioned. **Affective factors** such as language shock, culture shock, ego-permeability are also part of socio-cultural factors.

As far as **section B** is concerned, the analysis of home/family context factors revealed that the family's socio-economic status and configuration (2.3.1), parents' educational aspirations for their children (2.3.2), parental involvement and the home curriculum (2.3.3), as well as the family value system (2.3.4) are determinants of the learners' scholastic success.

Section C shows the factors which influence SLA in the school/classroom context. It was shown earlier that the school's teaching-learning culture (2.4.1), the availability and use of teaching media and other resources (2.4.2), the learner-educator ratio (2.4.3) and the

teacher's skills and attitudes (2.4.4) are preconditions for good scholastic attainments. The teacher's skills and attitudes entail

- the teacher's mastery of the English language, as well as the skills, approaches and methods of TESL;
- the nature of teachers' attitudes and dispositions to TESL;
- the quality of teacher experience; and
- the role of INSET.

The necessity for the taxonomy of contextual factors (Table 2.1) was indicated in section 1.10, where it was argued that, as the teaching-learning circumstances of learners in South Africa are mostly unfavourable to learning, the taxonomy can be used as a basis for further research and the design of educational policy aimed at improving teaching-learning conditions. For the purpose of this study, the taxonomy serves as a focus for the empirical investigation.

During the analysis of the models which deal with societal context factors in SLA, the roles of such learner factors as intelligence, language aptitude, motivation, anxiety and learner's L2 self-confidence were described, albeit not in detail (see 2.2.2.3, 2.2.3.3, 2.2.4.3. The influence of these learner factors on SLA is discussed in detail in **Chapter Three**.

Table 2.1. A TAXONOMY OF CONTEXTUAL FACTORS IN SLA

A. SOCIETAL CONTEXT FACTORS

- Status
 - Social dominance
 - Economic dominance
 - Political dominance
 - Technological dominance
- Institutional support
 - Government
 - Industry
 - Religion
 - Media
 - Culture
 - Education
- Socio-cultural factors
 - Social enclosure
 - Social cohesiveness
 - Language as a means of ingroup identity
 - Social integration strategies
 - Socio-cultural beliefs
 - Affective factors
 - Perceived utility value of L2

B. HOME/FAMILY CONTEXT FACTORS

- The family's socio-economic status
- The family configuration
- Parents' educational aspirations
- Parental involvement
- Family value system

C. THE SCHOOL/CLASSROOM CONTEXT FACTORS

- The school's teaching-learning culture
 - Management team
 - Teachers
 - Learners
 - Parents
- The availability and use of educational resources
- The influence of learner-educator ratio
- The teacher's skills and attitudes
 - The teacher's mastery of the English language
 - The teacher's attitudes towards TESL
 - The teacher's mastery of the skills for TESL
 - The teacher's mastery of the various approaches to TESL
 - The effects of the teacher's experience in TESL
 - The role of INSET for ESL teachers

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS OF LEARNER FACTORS IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to investigate the influence of contextual factors and learner factors on the development of ESL proficiency of senior secondary school learners. As the contextual factors have been identified and analysed in chapter two, the main focus of this chapter is the analysis of research findings on learner factors that promote the development of ESL proficiency of learners in the senior secondary phase in the South African context. These factors have already been identified in section 1.5.5. Each factor is discussed below with a view to determining, on the basis of a review of literature,

- its theoretical nature;
- the relationship between each factor and L2 proficiency; and
- the extent to which the relationship between each factor and L2 proficiency is supported by both theoretical and empirical evidence.

From this analysis conclusions are then drawn as to the influence of learner factors on the development L2 proficiency, and an integrated classification system or taxonomy of learner factors in SLA is presented in order to coherently summarise the findings from the literature review.

3.2 CLASSIFICATION OF LEARNER FACTORS

In order to learn successfully the learner has to be involved in the learning act in totality, that is, intellectually, physically and emotionally (Dreyer 1992:7-8). Because language learning is so inextricably linked with every aspect of the learner's behaviour and circumstances, it becomes difficult to classify learner factors into neat watertight categories. The problem of classifying learner factors is aggravated by the fact that different researchers use different labels to describe more or less one and the same thing. For example, referring to learner factors in the affective domain, Gardner, Smythe and Clement (1979:305) use the term "attitudinal/ motivational characteristics"; Tucker et al. (1976:214) use the terms "affective, cognitive and social factors" whereas Chastain (1975: 153) uses the terms "affective and ability factors".

Some attempts have been made at systematising the classification of learner factors. One such attempt is Yorio's (1976:61) classification shown in Table 3.1

Table 3.1 Yorio's classification of learner factors

MAIN FACTOR	SUB-FACTORS
Age	Biological factors Social factors
Cognition	Intelligence Language aptitude Language learning strategies
Native language	Phonology Grammar Semantics
Affective domain	Socio-cultural factors Personality factors Motivation
Input	Formal context Informal context
Background	Family educational background Family socio-economic status

The essence of Yorio's classification is that

- learners in different **age** groups acquire the L2 in different ways as they are differentially affected by biological and social factors in their acquisition of L2;
- **cognition**, which includes intelligence, language aptitude and language learning strategies, has a direct influence on the acquisition of L2;
- **native language** has phonological, grammatical and semantic influence on the acquisition of L2;
- **affective factors** which exert an influence on the development of L2 proficiency are socio-cultural factors, personality factors, as well as motivational orientation;
- **input**, which refers to whether the L2 is acquired in a formal or informal context, has a role to play in the development of L2 proficiency and

- **the background**, which refers the family's socio-economic status and to whether or not the L2 learner's parents are literate and/or professional, should always be considered important for enhancing the process of SLA.

The rationale for Yorio's classification is to provide a comprehensive list of factors that are sources of variation in learner's linguistic output. He does not attempt to distinguish between contextual and learner factors.

Another attempt at classification has been made by Ellis (1985a:100). He classifies learner factors into two broad categories, namely: personal and general factors. To distinguish between the two categories, Ellis (1985a:100) points out that personal factors are those factors which are peculiar to each learner's approach to the task of L2 learning, whereas general factors are characteristic of all learners; learners do not differ in **whether** these factors are present in each individual's learning, but in the **extent** to which they are present or in the manner in which they are realised. The personal factors category includes group dynamics, learning strategies and attitudes. Under the general factors category are subsumed age, intelligence, language aptitude, cognitive style, motivation and personality (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2. Ellis's classification of learner factors (1985a)

CATEGORY	FACTORS
GENERAL FACTORS	Age Intelligence Language aptitude Cognitive style Attitudes and Motivation Personality
PERSONAL FACTORS	Group dynamics Attitudes to the teacher and course materials Individual learning techniques

(Ellis 1985a:100-123)

In the researcher's view it is not appropriate to classify the learner factors into neat categories of general and personal factors because there are interrelationships among variables. For example, age and personality can influence the learner's reactions in a group context. In this regard, it must be emphasised that, if classification is done as in the case of Ellis, it does not represent a universal immutable rule. It largely represents the researcher's perspective, e.g. a peculiar characteristic in Ellis's classification is his grouping of attitudes with both general and personal factors.

The fact that classifications do not represent universal immutable rules is evident in Ellis's (1994:471-560) later classification of learner factors affecting SLA (see Table 3.3).

Table 3.3 Ellis's classification of learner factors (1994)

CATEGORY	FACTORS
Learners' beliefs about language learning	L2 learning methods Past experiences
Learners' affective states	Anxiety
General factors	Age Language aptitude Learning style Motivation Personality
Language learning strategies	

Ellis classifies learner factors into four categories, namely learner's beliefs about language learning, affective states, general factors and language learning strategies.

Ellis (1994:522) maintains that L2 learners hold different **beliefs** on how L2 is best learnt. The different beliefs tend to reflect individual learners' past experiences and the influences of such learner factors as personality and cognitive style.

Regarding learners' **affective states**, Ellis (1994:22) points out that learners' affective states vary dynamically and they have a significant impact on the learners' ability to learn L2. For example, anxiety arising out of poor academic performance can have debilitating

effects on the development of L2 proficiency.

Also evident in Table 3.3 is that Ellis classifies age, language aptitude, learning style, motivation and personality as “**general factors**”. He maintains that age affects the development of L2 proficiency. Whereas children have a long-term advantage over adult learners in respect of accent and fluency, only in the short term do adults enjoy any advantage over children in respect of syntax and grammar (Ellis 1994:484-494). In Ellis’s opinion, language aptitude is one of the predictors of success in L2 learning. This is evidenced by learners’ aptitude differences that can account for differences in the development of BICS and CALP. The strength of motivation also serves as a powerful predictor of success in L2 learning, though it may itself be the result of previous learning experiences (Ellis 1994:508-517). Furthermore, learners have different styles of cognitive processing, the influence of which manifests itself in the learner’s BICS and CALP developing at different rates (Ellis 1994:499-508). He asserts that some personality traits are conducive to learning L2 whereas others tend to militate against some aspects of L2 learning. He maintains that language learning strategies affect the rate of SLL and the ultimate level of proficiency achieved (Ellis 1994:519-560).

In this classification (Table 3.3) Ellis no longer uses the category of “personal factors” as he did in the 1985 classification. This change is not motivated in his 1994 work. Another notable feature of his 1994 classification is the unexplained omission of intelligence. Furthermore, what was termed “individual learning techniques” in the 1985 classification (Table 3.1) is referred to as “language learning strategies” in the 1994 classification and forms an independent category.

In his classification, Brown (1987:79-97) distinguishes between cognitive and affective factors. He further divides the affective domain into intrinsic and extrinsic sides of affectivity. According to Brown's classification the cognitive domain comprises **cognitive processes** (such as transfer, interference, overgeneralisation, inductive and deductive reasoning), **cognitive styles** (such as field independence, left- and right-brain functioning, tolerance of ambiguity, and reflectivity and impulsivity) and **learning strategies**. The intrinsic side of affectivity consists of such personality factors as, inter alia, self-esteem,

risk-taking, empathy and extroversion. Grouped under the extrinsic side of affectivity are such socio-cultural factors as attitudes, acculturation, social distance and social stereotypes (see Table 3.4 below).

Table 3.4 Brown's classification of learner factors

CATEGORY	FACTORS
Cognitive factors	Cognitive processes Transfer Interference Overgeneralisation Inductive and deductive reasoning Cognitive styles Field independence Left- and right-brain functioning Tolerance of ambiguity Reflectivity and impulsivity Learning strategies
Affective factors (intrinsic domain)	Personality factors Self-esteem Inhibition Risk-taking Anxiety Empathy Extroversion Motivation
Affective factors (extrinsic domain)	Socio-cultural factors Cultural stereotypes Attitudes Acculturation Social distance

(Brown 1987:78-143)

Brown classifies context factors (socio-cultural factors) as part of learners's affectivity. He also classifies transfer, overgeneralisation, deductive and inductive reasoning as

cognitive processes yet other researchers (O'Malley, et al. 1985:582-584; Rubin 1981:117-131) regard these as learning strategies. It is also not easy to comprehend any classification of learner factors (or cognitive variations) which excludes intelligence and language aptitude. Moreover, it must be mentioned as a general comment that the conventional classification of learner factors into cognitive and affective categories can be problematic. Aptitude and intelligence, for example, which are cognitive in nature, also involve affective and social aspects. Age can affect cognitive, affective and social aspects (Ellis 1985a:100) and it cannot be classified exclusively under any of these.

Other researchers whose classifications of learner factors are found in literature are Altman (1980), Skehan (1989) and Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991), all cited by Ellis 1994:472. Each of these classifications is shown in Table 3.5 below.

Table 3.5 Altman, Skehan, Larsen-Freeman and Long's classification of learner factors

Altman (1980)	Skehan (1989)	Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991)
Age	Language aptitude	Age
Sex	Motivation	Socio-psychological factors
Previous experience with language learning	Language learning strategies	-Motivation -Attitudes
L1 proficiency	Cognitive and affective factors	Personality
Personality factors	-Extroversion/introversion -Risk-taking -Intelligence -Field independence -Anxiety	-Self-esteem -Extroversion -Anxiety -Risk-taking -Sensitivity to rejection -Empathy -Inhibition -Tolerance of ambiguity
Language aptitude		Cognitive style
Attitudes and motivation		-Hemispheric specialisation -Learning strategies
General intelligence		
Sense modality preference		
Sociological preferences		
Cognitive styles		
Learner strategies		

(Ellis 1994:472)

Of importance in these classifications is the fact that each researcher decided on the classification that suited his or her study best. This means that the classification of learner factors is always responsive to the research problem that the researcher is investigating.

On the basis of the foregoing brief analysis of various classifications of learner factors, the following points can be made:

- classification of learner factors varies from one researcher to another depending on the researcher's interest and focus, and thus
- labelling , categorisation and sub-categorisation of constructs vary from researcher to researcher.

In the light of these points, the classification of learner factors in this study has taken into account the focus of this study (see 1.8), as well as the findings from literature reviewed.

Accordingly, the learner factors are classified into two broad categories, namely **independent and dependent learner factors**. **Independent learner factors** are those learner factors which are not influenced by the context from which the learner comes and/or in which SLA takes place. **Dependent factors**, on the other hand, are those learner factors which are completely or partly subject to the influence of the context from which the learner comes or in which SLA takes place. The dependent factors are also subject to the influences of independent factors. It is important to acknowledge that the following classification is not watertight. The existence of overlaps and interrelationships among variables is inevitable. The categorisation is done in order to present a logical and meaningful classification of learner factors in terms of the focus of this study. Factors in each category are discussed in detail below.

3.2.1 INDEPENDENT LEARNER FACTORS

The category of independent learner factors consists of age, first language, language aptitude, intelligence, personality and cognitive style (Brown 1987:42; Cummins 1979a & 1979b; Ellis 1985a:112-114; Genesee & Hamayan 1980; Guiora, Brannon & Dull 1972; Hansen and Stansfield 1981; Sasaki 1993a & 1993b). These are termed independent learner factors because in the senior secondary school phase these factors can no longer be significantly influenced by the context in which SLA takes place. The influence of

these factors in SLA is discussed in the sections that follow below.

3.2.1.1 Age

Some researchers agree that age does not affect the route of SLA (cf. Ellis 1985a:104), but basically there is no unanimity among researchers about the role age plays in influencing the rate of success in SLA. In essence two hypotheses, namely the critical period hypothesis (Brown 1987:42; Fromkin & Rodman 1988:411-412; McLaughlin 1984:45) and the sensitive period hypothesis (Patkowski 1980) have been postulated to explain the influence of age in SLA

The **critical period hypothesis** posits that there is a period when L1 acquisition takes place naturally and effortlessly. This critical period falls within the first ten years of life (Ellis 1985a:107) during which time the brain has not yet lost its cerebral plasticity, which is deemed critical for language acquisition (McLaughlin 1984:46; Harley 1986:5-18). The hypothesis further posits that initially the neurological capacity for understanding and producing language involves both hemispheres of the brain. However, with the onset of puberty begins the process of lateralisation of language functions to the left brain hemisphere. The implication of the critical period hypothesis for SLA is that the learner cannot easily acquire a high quality of accent, fluency and pronunciation in L2 after puberty (Ellis 1994:449-491).

The influence of age in SLA has been put in the forefront by the proponents of the **sensitive period hypothesis**. The premise of the sensitive period hypothesis is that children have the capacity to acquire the L2 quicker than adults. On the basis of this premise, this hypothesis posits that

- age limitation on SLA is not as absolute as it is maintained in the critical period hypothesis in respect of L1 acquisition;
- it is possible to acquire L2 after the sensitive period though not to the extent of acquiring native-like pronunciation, accent and fluency; and
- the sensitive period refers to the age at which the learner has developed sufficient mastery of the L1 (cf Patkowski:1980:449).

It is worth noting that the last proposition of the sensitive period accords well with the definition of associative memory (see 3.2.1.3).

Empirical support for the two hypotheses can be found in the studies of Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle (1978), Ervin-Tripp (1974) and McLaughlin (1984). The findings of these studies support the claim of the sensitive period hypothesis that in respect of learning grammar rules and syntax the learners need not start learning the L2 before puberty; even after puberty it is still possible to acquire these L2 aspects (Ellis 1994:486-492). However, Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle (1978:1122) and Ellis (1994:491) concede that, although the older L2 learners have an initial advantage where rate of learning, especially of grammar is concerned, they are eventually overtaken by younger learners who received more exposure to the L2.

Rosansky (1975:98) has advanced the argument that older L2 learners of 15 years and above outperform younger learners of 12 years and below in the rate of acquiring syntax and morphology because of the former age group's capacity for meta-awareness: a predisposition to recognise differences and similarities and to think flexibly. While this meta-awareness facilitates conscious language acquisition, in Rosansky's opinion it tends to militate against naturalistic learning. Because younger learners lack the capacity for meta-awareness and flexible thinking, they are not consciously aware that they are acquiring a language. Rosansky further maintains that the lack of meta-awareness and flexible thinking characteristics are pre-requisites for naturalistic language acquisition.

According to Ellis (1985a:106; 1994:490-491) the effects of age on SLA can be summarised as follows:

- the age at which SLA is started does not affect the course of SLA;
- starting age affects the rate of learning: if the length of exposure is the same, adolescents do better in grammar than either adults or children, whereas where pronunciation is involved, there is no significant difference between the age groups.
- the younger the learner starts and the longer the exposure to L2, the greater are the learner's gains in communicative fluency.

The foregoing exposition basically implies that the differences in L2 proficiency among the L2 learners in the secondary school phase can be explained by the amount of previous exposure to the L2.

3.2.1.2 First language (L1)

The developmental interdependence hypothesis has been used to explain the functional role of the L1 in the acquisition of the L2 (Cummins (1979a & 1979b). The developmental interdependence hypothesis posits that:

- the level of L2 proficiency the learner attains is partly a function of the level of proficiency the learner has already attained in the L1;
- intensive exposure to the L2 can result in high levels of proficiency if the L1 development in respect of concepts and vocabulary development is strongly promoted by the child's home environment; and
- whereas a high level of proficiency in the L1 promotes a similar level of proficiency in L2, for children whose L1 skills are less developed, intensive exposure to the L2 in the initial grades is likely to impede the continued development of L1 skills. This impediment, in turn, exerts a limiting effect on the development of L2 skills.

Olshtain et al. (1990:35-36), in a study investigating the relationship between L1 (Hebrew) proficiency and success in ESL, found that L1 proficiency accounted for 47% of the variance in the ESL achievement. This made them conclude that proficiency in the L1 plays an important role in predicting the learner's success in an L2 within the school (formal) situation (Olshtain et al. (1990:38). The findings of the research project conducted by Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa (1976) also support the developmental interdependence hypothesis. Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa investigated the effect of Finnish (L1) proficiency on the success rate of acquiring Swedish (L2) proficiency. They found that the extent to which the L1 (Finnish) had been mastered before contact with the L2 (Swedish) was significantly related to Swedish (L2) learning success. Children who migrated from Finland at the age of 10 were able to maintain a level of Finnish proficiency that was qualitatively close to that of Finnish learners in Finland, and yet they were able to achieve a level of Swedish proficiency comparable to that of their Swedish counterparts

(Skutnabb-Kangas & Toukomaa 1976:74-76).

Ramirez and Politzer (1976), cited by Cummins (1979b:236), reported that the use of Spanish (L1) at home resulted in high level of Spanish proficiency at no cost to L2 (ESL) performance, whereas the use of English (L2) at home resulted in the deterioration of Spanish skills without improving English skills. Saville-Troike (1984:213-214) also reported that in her research she found that the L2 learner's relative proficiency in the mother tongue was significantly related with the same learner's achievement in L2.

The implication of this analysis of the relationship between L1 and L2 is that performance in L1 can be used as a predictor of success in L2.

3.2.1.3 Language aptitude

Language aptitude is a specific ability to learn a language. According to Skehan (1991:276) this ability is independent of general intelligence, is relatively stable and varies between people. Studies by Carroll and Sapon (1959) and Pimsleur (1966) are the most important landmarks in the field of language aptitude research. Carroll and Sapon developed the Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT) whereas Pimsleur developed the Pimsleur Language Aptitude Battery (LAB). Referring to the above works, Skehan (1991:277), Wesche, Edwards and Wells (1982:130), Spolsky (1969:273) and Ellis (1985a:112) maintain that language aptitude is a composite ability consisting of phonemic coding ability, associative memory, grammatical sensitivity and inductive language learning ability. **Phonemic coding ability** refers to the learner's capacity, not only to make sound discrimination, but also to code foreign linguistic sounds in such a way that they can be recalled later. By **associative memory** is meant the learner's ability to make connections between stimuli (native language words) and responses (TL words). The ability to recognise the functions that individual words fulfil in a sentence is termed **grammatical sensitivity**. **Inductive language learning ability** refers to the learner's ability to examine the language material, and from this examination, be able to notice and identify patterns of correspondence, as well as relationships involving either meaning or syntactic form.

Cummins (1979a:198-199) has documented the role of these abilities in SLA. He mentions the fact that abilities that constitute language aptitude can only help explain success in the acquisition of cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). Language aptitude factors cannot, in his opinion, accurately predict success in the acquisition of L2 basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS).

In his study investigating the role of aptitude in learning French as a second language (FSL), Gardner (1980:260-263) found that the correlation between the two variables varied between 0.4 and 0.59 with a median of 0.41. He then concluded that the proportion of variance in FSL grades accounted for by language aptitude ranged between 4% and 35% with a median of 17%. This is basically an indication that the role of aptitude as a possible predictor of L2 success cannot be discounted.

From the empirical evidence provided by Cummins (1979a), Gardner (1980) and also by Smythe, Stennett and Feenstra (1972) an inference can be drawn that language aptitude plays a significant role in the learner's performance in L2. However, a word of caution has already been sounded against simplistically making such an inference (Mahlobo 1995:77). This caution stemmed from Ellis's (1985a:113) assertion that aptitude tends to develop along with the ability for abstract reasoning which, in turn, is influenced by the learner's age.

3.2.1.4 Intelligence

Intelligence is an underlying ability to learn, not the actual knowledge that is measured by different intelligence tests. This notion of intelligence is derived from McDough's (1981:126) argument that intelligence is more of a capacity than the contents of the mind. According to Gardner (1983), cited by Brown (1987:72-73), intelligence refers to the following types of abilities that enable the learner to learn:

- **linguistic intelligence:** the ability to understand ideas as expressed in words;
- **logical-mathematical intelligence:** the ability to reason and work with numbers rapidly and accurately, as well as handling quantitative problems and recognising

- quantitative differences;
- **spatial intelligence**: the ability to find one's way in the environment and to form mental images of reality;
 - **musical intelligence**: the ability to perceive and create pitch as well as rhythmic patterns;
 - **bodily-kinesthetic intelligence**: the capacity for fine motor movements and athletic prowess;
 - **interpersonal intelligence**: the ability to understand others, how they feel, what motivates them and how they interact;
 - **intrapersonal intelligence**: the ability to see and understand oneself in relation to others and to develop a sense of personal identity.

These aspects of intelligence do not differ significantly from those identified by Thurstone (1947), as cited by Jordaan and Jordaan (1989:478-479). The relevance of these aspects for the study of SLA can be seen when one considers that, whereas linguistic and logical-mathematical abilities may account for learner differences in cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), musical intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, as well as interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence might explain the differences in the relative ease with which some learners acquire phonology, pronunciation and communicative competence (aspects of BICS) respectively (cf. Brown 1987:73).

Although there is evidence in literature that there is a significant relationship between intelligence and language proficiency, there is no agreement among researchers on the direction of the causal relationship, i.e. whether intelligence affects language proficiency or vice versa. Oller (1981) subscribes to the notion that at the root of any intelligent behaviour lies language proficiency. He (1981:466) argues that "language may not be merely a vital link in the social side of intellectual development, but it may be the very foundation of intelligence itself". He cites the works of Spearman and Jones (1950) who reported a correlation of 0.80 between verbal reasoning (VR) and non-verbal reasoning (NVR) abilities. He points out that this high correlation can be explained by the language proficiency factor which, according to him, underlies all cognitive skills. Oller (1981:482)

further refers to the work of Oller and Chesarek (1981) who found that the language proficiency explained as much as 35% of the proportion of variance in the three non-verbal test measures they used to determine the nature of the relationship between intelligence and language proficiency.

Sasaki (1993a:339) reports that in his study as high as 42% of the variance of the L2 performance could be explained by intelligence, i.e. verbal intelligence and reasoning. In a research project investigating the suitability of French immersion programmes for children of relatively low intellectual ability, Genesee (1976:279) found that

- students with above average intellectual abilities scored higher than the children with below average intellectual abilities on the FSL tests; and
- there was no significant difference between the two groups' average performance on measures of interpersonal communication skills such as listening, pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar.

Consequently, it can be inferred from Genesee's study that, whereas intelligence can be regarded as a reliable predictor of L2 success in areas involving cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), it cannot accurately predict L2 success in learning the L2 basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) (cf. Spolsky 1989:103). Regarding the controversy surrounding the cause-effect relationship between language proficiency and intelligence, the researcher subscribes to the view that the relationship is interactive rather than unidirectional. It is an interactive relationship whereby language and intelligence are of service to one another. This means that low intelligence or low intellectual potential retards the rate of language acquisition, and linguistic deficiency, on the other hand, retards cognitive (intellectual) growth.

3.2.1.5 Personality

Personality is yet another construct which defies precise definition, and as a result researchers have resorted to defining it as an aggregate of various traits. The review of research done by Ellis (1985a:120) shows that differences of opinions regarding traits which constitute personality abound. Nevertheless, sociability (Pritchard 1952:147-148), empathy (Guiora et al. 1972:121), extroversion (Tucker et al. 1976:214-226; Busch

1982:113; Suter 1977:233-253; Genesee & Hamayan 1980:95-110; Strong 1983:247-248), **talkativeness, responsiveness, gregariousness, assertiveness, social competence, popularity** (Strong 1983:247-248) and **self-efficacy** (Van der Walt & Dreyer 1997:214) have been identified as constituents of personality.

Sociability is defined as the degree to which one engages in social activities, participates in games and/or engages in friendly conversation (cf Pritchard 1952:147-148). **Empathy** is defined as the quality of being able to imagine and share the thoughts and experience the feelings of another person as one's own (Richards, Patt & Weber 1992:91; Guiora et al. 1972:121). Busch (1982:113) defines **extroversion** as a high level of sociability and impulsivity. Strong (1983:248) extends Busch's definition as he defines extroversion as a degree of sociability that a child exhibits through both positive emotional response to people and a tendency to interact with people boldly and freely. In this study (Strong 1983) other personality traits are also defined. **Talkativeness**, for instance, is defined as "the relative tendency to initiate conversation". **Responsiveness** is "the tendency to respond to the verbal initiations of others" (Strong 1983:248). In the same study **gregariousness** is defined as "the relative tendency to interact with a wide variety of people and peers". The degree to which a child is active, assertive and aggressive as opposed to being docile is called **assertiveness**. **Social competence** is "the adequacy of the child's interpersonal behaviour and the degree to which that child can assume social responsibility". Lastly, "the relative degree to which the child is nominated by peers as a best friend or a person they like to play with or sit next to in class" is termed **popularity**. **Self-efficacy** is defined as the degree to which the learner thinks he or she has the capacity to cope with the L2 learning task (Ehrman 1996:137; Van der Walt & Dreyer 1997:214)

Some of these personality traits have been tested empirically to determine their role in SLA. In Guiora et al.'s (1972) study involving various groups of students who were studying different languages (Japanese, Chinese-Mandarin, Thai, Spanish, and Russian) no conclusive evidence was found to support the hypothesis that there is a significant correlation between empathy and performance on the L2 pronunciation test.

Busch (1982:109-132), exploring the relationship between the extroversion tendencies of the Japanese students and their performance in English as a foreign language (EFL), found no support for her hypothesis that extroverts were more proficient in EFL. Genesee and Hamayan (1980:95-110) did not find any significant relationship between first graders' performance in French as measured by the Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT) and their personality traits as measured by the Early School Personality Questionnaire (ESPQ). In her study investigating whether certain personality traits might affect ESL performance of Afrikaans-speaking first year university students, Dreyer (1992:118) found that only two (intelligence and degree of tough-mindedness) out of fourteen personality factors in the High School Personality Questionnaire (HSPQ) correlated significantly with ESL performance. In their study investigating the relationship between ESL proficiency and personality traits of the Afrikaans-, Sesotho- and Tswana-speaking ESL students at the University of the North West, Van der Walt and Dreyer (1997:220) found that self-efficacy was significantly related with ESL proficiency. They concluded that learners with positive self-efficacy generally excel in their studies, in comparison with those learners who have low levels of self-efficacy.

It is important to note that the studies reviewed do not show a cause-effect relationship. The low correlations found in some instances might have been due to the inability of the researchers to take into account the role of age of the subjects, cultural differences and nationality of the subjects and the validity of test instruments as factors which have been shown to affect performance in personality tests (Dreyer 1992:118, 130-131). As personality influences learning jointly with other factors, its role in SLA cannot be discounted completely on the basis of the results of studies that tended to deal with personality as if it were the only factor that influences the development of L2 proficiency, which was more or less the case with the studies of Busch (1982) and Genesee and Hamayan (1980).

3.2.1.6 Cognitive style

The review of literature indicates that the terms cognitive style and learning style are used interchangeably (Ellis 1994:499; Oxford 1989:241; Reid 1987:87; Skehan 1991:288). Cognitive style is a term used to describe individual learner differences in the way each learner tends to perceive, organise, analyse and/or recall information (Chapelle 1988:66; Dreyer 1992:25; Dreyer 1996b:294; Ellis 1985a:114; Hansen & Stansfield 1981:350 & 1982:263; Reid 1987:87; Oxford 1989:241). Brown (1987:85) identifies field independence/dependence, tolerance of ambiguity (Brown 1987:89-90; Dreyer 1996b:294-295) and reflectivity/impulsivity as dimensions of cognitive style (cf. Ellis 1994:500-508). However, some researchers (Chapelle 1988; Dreyer 1992; Ellis 1985a; Hansen & Stansfield 1981) have shown that of these dimensions only field independence significantly influences performance in the L2. In the researcher's opinion, the capacity for tolerance of ambiguity and degree of reflectivity can be subsumed under either the field dependent (FD) or field independent (FI) style of cognitive processing. In other studies field dependence is referred to as field sensitivity (Ehrman 1996:77-89).

FD is the learner's personal orientation characterised by reliance on an external frame of reference in processing information (Ellis 1985a:115). An FD learner tends to perceive the world globally or holistically in which case parts become fused with the background. The self-perception of such learners is derived from the views of others. Because of their social sensitiveness they become competent in handling interpersonal relationships (Ellis 1985a:115; Hansen & Stansfield 1981:350-351). One hypothesis which has been advanced in favour of an FD style is that FD learners can be successful in acquiring the communicative aspects of L2 by virtue of their social outreach, empathy, and social perception (Brown 1987:86). However, Brown (1987:86-87) further maintains that there has been no empirical evidence to support this hypothesis.

In contrast to an FD style, FI learners have an impersonal orientation, that is, they have developed greater autonomy from external sources of information such as other people when performing intellectual tasks or participating in social situations (Hansen & Stansfield 1981:350). FI learners tend to be analytic: they perceive a field in terms of

component parts which are always distinguished from the background. Their sense of a separate identity and the fact that they seem to be socially unaware, deprive them of the skills of handling interpersonal relations successfully (Chapelle 1988:66; Ellis 1985a:115; Hansen & Stansfield 1981:350).

The hypothesis advanced in favour of an FI style is that FI is closely related to SLA success in the classroom environment because this SLA environment involves analysis, attention to detail and mastering exercises, drills and other focused activities (Brown 1987:86; Ellis 1985a:114; Hansen & Stansfield 1981:351). In their study involving English-speaking eighth, tenth and twelfth graders, Naiman, Frolich, Stern and Todesco (1978) found that FI was significantly related with French L2 success, more especially in the twelfth grade. Studies by Hansen and Stansfield (1981), Stansfield and Hansen (1983), Chapelle and Roberts (1986) involving various groups of adult L2 learners, found significantly strong relationships between learners' FI as measured by the Group Embedded Figures Test (GEFT) and L2 performance in cloze tests. Abraham (1985) also found that FI learners performed better in deductive lessons whereas FD learners were more successful in inductive lesson designs. In her study Dreyer (1992) found a statistically significant relationship between FI and ESL proficiency amongst the first year Afrikaans-speaking students.

It is clear from the preceding account that FD/I is one of the factors that should be taken into account when learner factors in SLA are discussed. It is imperative that in all such discussions the understanding of FD/I always involves a bi-polarity indicating that each pole has some adaptive value under some circumstances, and may be judged positively in relation to those circumstances (Chapelle 1988:66). Brown (1987:87-88) also feels that it is a misconception to view FD/I in complementary distribution (that is, the learner's manifestation of an FI inclination precludes an FD one). Some learners may be both highly FD and highly FI depending on the demands of the context. It is for this reason that Dreyer (1992:123) maintains that, though the findings of her study indicate that there is a significant relationship between FI style and ESL performance, it was not possible to establish a relationship between FD style and ESL performance since a low score in the

Group Embedded Figures Tests (GEFT) does not necessarily indicate a FD style.

The foregoing exposition of cognitive style has shown that the concept entails FD and FI styles of cognitive processing and that the FI style is most influential on the development of ESL proficiency.

The foregoing discussion on the influence of independent learner factors on ESL proficiency shows that factors that can be classified under this category are age, L1, language aptitude, intelligence, personality and cognitive style. The many hypotheses and supporting empirical evidence regarding the influence of age have shown that there is no agreement on the way age influences the development of the L2. It was pointed out that the grammar, phonology and semantics of the L1 significantly influence the development of L2 proficiency. The influences of language aptitude and intelligence were emphasised particularly in respect of the development CALP. The learner's personality was discussed as consisting of a number of factors that individually or jointly affect the development of L2 proficiency. The FI cognitive style was mentioned as the most influential, especially where the L2 is acquired in the classroom.

3.2.2 DEPENDENT LEARNER FACTORS

Subsumed under the category of dependent factors are those learner factors whose influence on the learner varies according to the context in which SLA takes place. These factors are motivation, group dynamics, learner attitudes and language learning strategies (Brown 1987:114-117; Clement, 1980; Ellis 1985a:116-119; Hermann 1980; Lukmani 1972; Gardner 1979; Gardner, Smythe & Brunnett 1977; Gardner, Smythe & Clement 1979; Gardner, Lalonde & Moorcroft 1985; Ely 1986a & 1986b; Olshtain et al. 1990 Dreyer 1992; Oxford 1990; Oxford, Lavine & Crookall 1989). The influence of these factors on SLA is analysed below.

3.2.2.1 Motivation

Motivation is defined as the driving force that is put into effect by an act of will in accordance with what the learner wants to do (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg

1988:138). Defined in terms of the learner's degree of involvement, motivation refers to the psychic vitality with which a meaningful objective is pursued and achieved (Vrey 1979:37). According to Spolsky (1989:150), motivation comprises four aspects; namely: a goal, effortful behaviour, a desire to attain the goal and a favourable orientation or disposition towards the activity which, in this case, is L2 learning. These definitions imply that the learner who is motivated to learn L2

- can be affected by the nature of his or her attitude towards L2;
- intentionally involves himself or herself in the L2 learning activities;
- experiences the L2 learning activities as meaningful to him or her;
- has a goal and anticipates achieving that goal;
- engages in an effortful behaviour out of his or her own choice in order to achieve his or her goal, and
- has an interest in learning L2 because of its meaningfulness to his or her own life.

In his effort to characterise motivation, Skehan (1989:50) proposes four hypotheses, namely: the intrinsic hypothesis, the carrot and stick hypothesis, the internal cause hypothesis and the resultative hypothesis. These hypotheses are discussed below in order to explain the concept of motivation as it applies to SLA.

a) The intrinsic hypothesis

The premise of the intrinsic hypothesis is that motivation to learn L2 derives from the learner's inherent interest which underlies the task of learning. The correlate of this hypothesis in SLA research is what Gardner and Smythe (1975:219) term integrative motive. An integrative motive to L2 learning refers to the desire to learn the L2 in order to communicate, interact with and become a member of the L2 community (Gardner & Smythe 1975:219; Gardner et al. 1977:244; Gardner et al. 1979:306; Smythe et al. 1972:308; Strong 1984:1). According to Gardner (1974), cited by Ellis (1994:509), an integrative motive involves an interest in learning L2 because of 'a sincere and a personal interest in the people and the culture represented by the L2 group'.

The literature reviewed in respect of this hypothesis shows that integrative motives play

a significant role in SLA. Studies conducted by Spolsky (1969) and Lambert (1972) attribute higher scores in L2 performance to the integrative motives. Smythe et al. (1972:319-320) reported that, in their study evaluating the effectiveness of the French audiolingual programme, integrative motives were related to high performance on several measures of French (L2) performance and that the integrative motives were primarily related to success in oral language skills. However, integrative motives (or the intrinsic hypothesis) cannot be used under all circumstances to account for high ESL proficiency. In other contexts, success in L2 can be explained by the carrot-and-stick hypothesis.

b) The carrot-and-stick hypothesis

The carrot-and-stick hypothesis posits that external influences and incentives affect the learner's strength of motivation to learn L2 (Skehan 1989:50). The correlates of this hypothesis are instrumental motives. Instrumental motives refer to the desire to learn the L2 for utilitarian purposes such as promotion in a job, furthering a career or in order to be able to understand the technical material used in another field or occupation (Brown 1987:115-116; Gardner et al. 1977:244; Smythe et al. 1972:308).

The studies of Lukmani (1972) and Villa Barreto (1985) found empirical support for the carrot-and-stick hypothesis. In a study conducted in Bombay to determine the relationship between motivational orientation and achievement in English (L2), Lukmani (1972:271) found that achievement in ESL was significantly related to instrumental motives. From his study, Lukmani concluded that proficiency in ESL grew from the desire to use English as a tool to understand and cope with the demands of modern life. In their studies Villa Barreto (1985:51,60) and Svanes (1988:367-368) found that higher proficiency in ESL was accounted for more by instrumental than integrative motives.

c) The internal cause hypothesis

According to this hypothesis the L2 learner brings to the learning situation a certain amount of motivation as a given (Ellis 1994:509; Skehan 1989:49). In the researcher's knowledge not much research has been done to test this hypothesis.

d) The resultative hypothesis

The resultative hypothesis states that L2 learners who perform well will persevere, whereas those learners who do not do well will be discouraged and try less harder than before (Herman 1980:249). Empirical support for this hypothesis can be found in the studies of Herman (1980) and Strong (1983; 1984). In her study of the German-speaking children, Herman (1980) found that the children who had achieved a higher level of proficiency had a more positive attitude towards the English (L2) culture than the low proficiency group. From this she concluded that the positive attitude towards the L2 culture could be explained by the level of success achieved by these learners in L2 learning. This to her was the confirmation of the resultative hypothesis. In his research project involving Spanish-speaking kindergarten children, Strong (1983) found that fluency in English preceded the desire to associate with the children from the TL group. In his later study, Strong (1984) further found that older ESL learners, who were already competent in ESL, were more inclined to be integratively motivated whereas the younger and less proficient learners were highly prejudiced against ESL. In the case of the studies cited in this paragraph motivation was the result of a certain level of proficiency already acquired in the L2. The resulting motivation served as an additional support for further learning of the L2.

In the researcher's view the integrative and instrumental motives are not mutually exclusive. The inclination of the learner towards either of the two motivational orientations is influenced by the learner's age (Svanes 1988:367; Villa Baretto 1985:60), length of exposure to and level of competence in the L2, socio-political circumstances and the learner's general attitude towards the L2 community (Lukmani 1972:271; Svanes 1988:357-371). The learner's sustained effort to learn the L2 depends on the success achieved. This means that the resultative hypothesis should not be viewed as a separate entity from the intrinsic and carrot-and-stick hypothesis. From this review of literature on motivation one can conclude that:

- the learner comes to the learning situation with a certain degree of motivation to learn;
- the motivation to learn the L2 may derive basically from integrative or instrumental motives;

- the greater the success achieved in learning the L2, the more motivated the learner becomes to further learn the L2 , and the more positive his/her attitudes become towards the TL group.

3.2.2.2 Group dynamics

In Bailey's (1983) research, cited by Ellis (1985a:102), the learner's self-confidence or anxiety as effects of group dynamics were identified. L2 self-confidence or anxiety derives to a considerable extent from the learner's successful or unsuccessful interaction with peers in the medium of the L2. Though self-confidence and anxiety are discussed separately in the following paragraphs, it should be borne in mind that in practice these factors operate interactively. In practice, this means that low anxiety is due to higher self-confidence or, that low self-confidence triggers high anxiety.

a) L2 self-confidence

The resultative hypothesis discussed above (3.2.2.1 d) can be used to explain the relationship between the learner's L2 self-confidence and success in the L2. The resultative hypothesis states that the L2 learners who perform well will persevere, whereas those learners who do not do well will be discouraged and try less harder than before. In respect of L2 confidence this implies that the willingness to work hard is associated with the gradual increase in self-confidence, whereas the avoidance of any further engagement in learning activities is related with the decline in learner self-confidence and a rise in debilitating anxiety. In SLA terms the hypothesis implies that the satisfaction the learner derives from his or her successful interaction with peers in the L2 or achievement of his or her L2 learning goals may influence his or her attitudes towards the TL, the TL ethnolinguistic group and further involvement in L2 learning activities (cf. Hermann 1980:249).

Gardner's **non-linguistic outcomes** and Clement's **collective outcomes hypotheses**, discussed earlier (see 2.2.2.2 and 2.2.3.2), support the propositions of the resultative hypothesis and the influence of group dynamics in SLA. Gardner (1979) and Clement (1980) maintain that additional motivation to learn the L2 is directly related to the self-

confidence experienced by the learner when he or she uses the L2, especially in group context. This self-confidence results from frequent involvement in L2 learning activities and frequent contacts with other L2 speakers. According to Clement (1980:151) not only the frequency of involvement and contacts influences the learner's self-confidence, but also the quality of experiences emanating from such involvement and contacts. The more pleasant the learner experiences his or her participation in the L2 learning activities, the greater his or self-confidence becomes and the more motivated he or she becomes to exert himself or herself to learn the L2 (Skehan 1991:281).

b) Second language learning anxiety

Three related types of performance anxiety constitute L2 learning anxiety. These are communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation (Horwitz et al. 1986:127; Lucas 1984:593-598).

Communication apprehension manifests itself in the learner's shyness in the L2 class. It can also manifest itself in the learner's tendency to avoid taking any risks. Risk-taking involves the learner's attempt to use of L2 when, for example, answering the teacher's questions, in class debate and other discussions (Ely 1986b:3). The antecedents of this anxiety are often the many abortive attempts at mastering the L2 communication skills. This situation may be aggravated by being ridiculed by the teacher, the class or other speakers of L2 (Ely 1986b:3-4; Mahlobo 1995:136). Fear of ridicule is far more intense in older learners. **Test anxiety** stems from fear of failure. At this stage it is important to distinguish between facilitating and debilitating test anxiety. **Facilitating anxiety** refers to the fear of failure which prompts the learner to work hard in order to succeed and to be evaluated by others as successful, whereas debilitating anxiety is fear which leads to an affective block which militates against effective information processing by the brain (Krashen 1985:3; Madsen 1982: 133-134; Olivier 1981:100). It is this debilitating anxiety which is triggered by continued failure.

Fear of negative evaluation is broader and more inclusive than the two types described above. The L2 learner with a dented self-confidence tends to expect to be negatively

evaluated by his audience: teachers, classmates, as well as peers outside the classroom or the school. As a result L2 anxiety may be associated with the L2 teacher, the L2 class, as well as L2 use in and out of the classroom or school (Gardner 1980; Gardner et al. 1977; Gardner et al. 1979).

It is evident from this analysis that group dynamics can have negative or positive effects on the learner's self-confidence. The negative effects of group dynamics result in debilitating anxiety, which further results in an affective block of negative attitudes and low or no motivation to learn L2.

3.2.2.3 Learner attitudes

An attitude is an evaluative reaction to a specific phenomenon on the basis of an individual's beliefs and opinions (Cann 1992:51) which, in some instances, may or may not have an accurate cognitive basis (Brown 1987:126). Allport (cf. Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg 1988:26) defines attitude as a mental state of readiness organised through experience which exerts a directive and dynamic influence upon the learner's reaction to all objects and situations with which it is related. The two definitions indicate that attitudes are cognitively and affectively toned dispositions acquired through maturation and experience. In the case of SLA, the cognitive tone refers to the factual information, belief or opinion the learner has about L2, the L2 cultural group as well as the teaching and learning of L2. The cognitive tone becomes the basis of the affective tone that may be a negative or positive feeling towards L2 learning.

A close analysis of Vila Baretto's (1985:72) Spanish Language Attitude Questionnaire (SLAQ), reveals that attitudes towards the L2 can involve

- the learner's attitude towards the L2 cultural group;
- the learner's belief and opinion about the utility value of L2;
- the extent to which the learner enjoys learning L2;
- the L2 learner's perceived rate of progress (L2 self-confidence);
- the extent to which the learner is always prepared to learn the L2 and always does his/her work without external pressure; and

- the extent to which the learner experiences L2 learning as easy or difficult.

Wenden (1987), cited by Ellis (1994:541), maintains that learner beliefs affect the development of ESL proficiency by influencing the choice and use of strategies of learning the L2. In her study, Wenden (1987) found that learners who believed in the importance of learning in general tended to use cognitive strategies that helped them understand and remember specific language items, whereas those who believed in the importance of using a language relied on social communication-orientated strategies.

The opinion or belief the L2 learner has about the ideal L2 teacher can also be the basis for negative or positive attitudes towards the teacher. Studies reviewed by Ellis (1985a:103), involving adult learners, show that adult learners tend to prefer a teacher who uses a democratic teaching style, that is, a teacher who structures a learning space so that each learner is able to pursue his or her own learning agenda or path. However, learners who have limited or no previous exposure to the L2 might prefer a teacher who shows in his or her teaching that he or she has mastered L2 knowledge, TESL skills, TESL instructional methods and approaches, and who has a positive attitude towards his or her subject and the class. If the teacher does not fall within the ambit of learners' expectations, negative attitude towards him or her may result.

Earlier in this chapter (3.2.2.1) studies were reviewed which argued that, if the L2 learner's attitude to the L2 cultural group is positive, he/she might want to learn the L2 in order to integrate with and become a member of the L2 group. This type of attitude serves as the basis for integrative motivation. On the other hand, the L2 learner may want to learn the L2 mainly because of the belief or opinion he or she has about the utility value of the L2. This utilitarian attitude serves as the basis for instrumental motivation.

It can be noted that the attitudes that the learner has in the classroom may be of two kinds: attitudes based on the learner's belief about L2 learning, and those stemming from the learner's learning experiences. In order for the learner to succeed in his or her task of learning the L2, these attitudes have to be shaped by the teacher in such a way that they

enhance SLA. Failure to do so might lead to abortive attempts at teaching the L2 learner the L2 because of the affective block mentioned above.

To conclude, it can be mentioned that the L2 learner's attitude towards the L2 cultural group, the L2 teacher, L2 learning materials, as well as his or her beliefs and opinions about the utility value of L2 determines the degree of his or her involvement in the L2 learning activities and the level of success he or she ultimately achieves in acquiring the L2.

3.2.2.4 Language learning strategies

Language learning strategies (LLS's) are specific methods of approaching a language learning task which vary intra-individually, from moment to moment, task to task and from individual to individual (Brown 1987:79). The learner uses the strategies in order to facilitate acquisition, storage, retrieval and use of information (Dreyer 1992:38). In Oxford's (1990:8) opinion LLS's are actions to which the learner commits himself or herself in order to facilitate language learning and to make it more enjoyable, effective and easily transferable to new situations.

Different researchers use different labels when they refer to LLS's. Designations such as "techniques", "tactics", "potential conscious plans", "consciously employed operations", "learning skills", "basic skills" and "problem-solving procedures" have been used to refer to LLS's (Dreyer 1992:39). This use of a wide array of designations stems from the fact that there is no unanimity in literature on the identification, naming and definition of learning strategies (Naiman, Frolich & Todesco 1975:59).

In spite of the lack of agreement, some pioneering attempts have been made at classifying LLS's. The essence of these classifications is to distinguish among the learner's

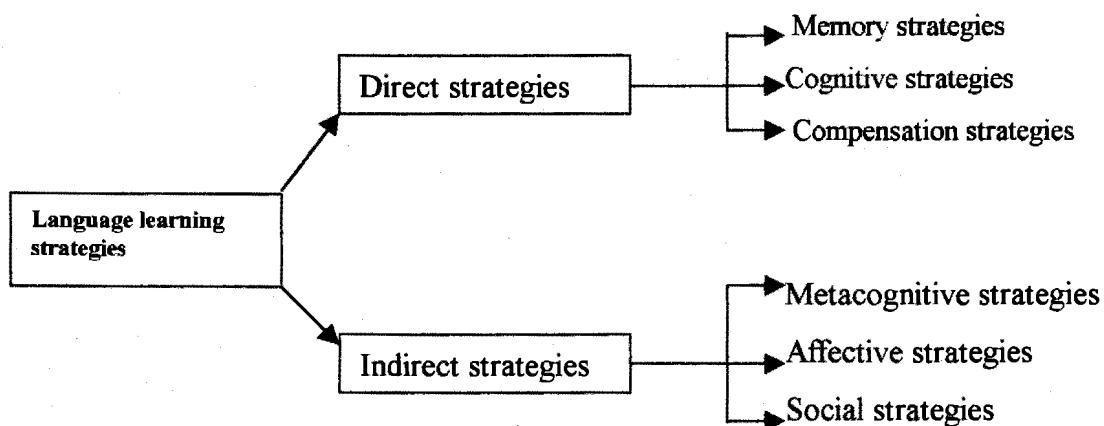
- capacity to impose himself or herself on the language learning situation (as evident in seeking out and responding positively to learning opportunities);
- technical language disposition (which entails making use of crosslingual comparisons, analysing the TL and making inferences about it); and

- capacity to evaluate himself or herself.

Accordingly, Naiman, Frolich, Stern and Todesco (1978:257) classify LLS's into primary and secondary learning strategies. The **primary category** consists of an active task approach, realisation of language as a system, management of affective demands and monitoring of own L2 performance. An **active language task approach** refers to the learner' capacity to impose himself or herself on the language learning task as evident in seeking out and responding positively to learning opportunities (Ellis 1994:535-536). **Realisation of a language as a system** refers to the learner's technical language knowledge. The learner's capacity to evaluate himself or herself is evident in the extent to which he or she monitors his or her own linguistic output. A **secondary category of LLS's**, according to Naiman et al. (1978:257), consists of strategies such as seeking communicative situations and clarification by asking questions or asking for further explanation. Rubin (1981:117-131) also groups the LLS's into the primary and secondary categories. Rubin's primary strategies category consists of clarification/ verification, monitoring, memorisation, as well as inductive and deductive reasoning. In the secondary category are such strategies as creating practice opportunities and using language production strategies.

Even more detailed classification systems have been developed by O'Malley et al. (1985) and Oxford (1990). Whereas O'Malley et al. group their twenty-four learning strategies under metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective strategies, Oxford has identified two broad categories, namely **direct** and **indirect** strategies, as illustrated in Fig 3.1 below.

Fig 3.1 Oxford's (1990) categorisation of language learning strategies



Direct strategies refer to those strategies which involve the mental processing of the TL, albeit in different ways and for different purposes (Oxford 1990:37). **Indirect strategies** are those strategies which underpin the process of language learning. Each of the two broad categories is further divided into three subcategories.

The subcategories of memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies are subsumed under direct strategies, whereas the subcategories referred to as metacognitive, affective and social strategies are subsumed under indirect strategies (Oxford, Lavine & Crookall 1989:31; Oxford 1990:37, 135). Dreyer (1992:40) points out that the degree of overlap between the classifications of O'Malley et al. and Oxford is considerable: Oxford's memory strategies can be located in O'Malley et al.'s cognitive strategies; just as her social and affective strategies seem to be an extension of O'Malley et al.'s social category. The main contribution of Oxford is her addition of a category of LLS's called compensation strategies. Because of its comprehensiveness, Oxford's (1990) classification is used in this study to identify constituents and definitions pertaining to LLS (see Table 3.6).

Table 3.6: OXFORD'S LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGY CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

DIRECT STRATEGIES

<u>SUBCATEGORIES</u>	<u>STRATEGIES</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
<u>MEMORY STRATEGIES</u>	Creating mental linkages by:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * grouping - means classifying or reclassifying language material into meaningful units either mentally or in writing to make it easy to remember. * associating/elaborating - refers to relating the new language information to concepts already in the mind. * placing new words into a context - denotes placing a word or phrase into a meaningful sentence or conversation in order to remember it.
	Applying images and sounds by:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * using imagery - whereby the new language information is related to concepts in the memory by means of meaningful visual imagery either in the mind or in an actual drawing. * semantic mapping - which means arranging words into a picture which has a key concept at the centre or on top and related words and concepts are linked to it by lines or arrows. * using key words - means remembering a new word by using auditory and visual links. * representing sounds in memory - means remembering the new language information according to its sound (e.g. using phonetic spelling).
	Reviewing well by:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * using the structured reviewing technique whereby the material is reviewed at spaced intervals which are initially close together but gradually becoming widely spaced apart.
	Employing action by:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * using physical response or sensation - refers to physically acting out a new word or

COGNITIVE STRATEGIES

Practising by:

- * expression, or by meaningfully relating a new expression to a physical feeling or sensation.
- * **using mechanical techniques** - as in writing words on cards and moving cards from one stack to another when the word is learnt.
- * **repeating** - which is saying or doing something over and over again.
- * **formally practising with the sounds and writing systems** - e.g pronunciation, intonation and register.
- * **recognising and using formulas and patterns** - this means being aware and/or using formulas (single unanalysed units such as "how are you").
- * **recombining** - this refers to combining the known elements in new ways to produce a longer sequence as in a phrase or sentence.
- * **practising naturally** - through participating in conversation, reading books or articles, listening or writing a letter in the new language.

Receiving and sending messages by:

- * **using the skimming technique** to determine the main ideas or scanning to find specific details of interest.
- * **using resources for receiving and sending messages** - as in the ability to use print or non-print resources to understand incoming messages or to produce outgoing messages.

Analysing and reasoning by

- * **reasoning deductively** - which involves using general rules and applying them to new target language situations.
- * **analysing expressions** - whereby the meaning of the new expression is determined by breaking it down into parts and using the meaning of the various parts to understand the

COMPENSATION STRATEGIES

Creating structure for input/output by:

- * expression.
- * **analysing contrastively** - that is, comparing elements such as sounds, vocabulary and grammar of the new language to one's own language to determine similarities and differences.
- * **translating** - which means converting the target language expression into one's own language.
- * **transferring** - which involves directly applying knowledge of words, concepts and structures from one language to another in order to understand or produce an expression in the new language.

taking notes - that is writing down the main ideas of a specific point.

summarising - which is making an abstract of a longer passage, conversation or speech.

Guessing intelligently by:

- * **using linguistic clues** - that is seeking and using language-based clues in order to guess the meaning of what is heard or read in the target language.
- * **using other clues** such as context, text structure and personal relationships.

Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing by:

- * **switching to L1** without translating.
- * **asking someone for help** by hesitating or explicitly asking another person to provide the missing word or expression in the target language.
- * **using mime or gesture** in the place of an expression to indicate the meaning.
- * **partially or totally avoiding communication** if difficulties in the target language are anticipated.

- * **adjusting the message** by omitting some items of information or making the idea simpler.
- * **selecting the topic of conversation** in order to direct the communication to one's own personal interest and to make sure that the topic is the one for which the learner has sufficient vocabulary and grammar to converse.
- * **coining words** to communicate the desired idea.
- * **using circumlocution or synonyms** - that is, getting the idea across by describing the concept or using a word that means the same thing.

INDIRECT STRATEGIES

METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES

Centering your learning by:

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- * **comprehensively overviewing a key concept, principle or set of materials** and associating it with what is already known.
- * **paying attention** - which involves deciding in advance to pay attention in general to a learning task and ignore distracters (directed attention) or paying attention to specific aspects of the language (selective attention).
- * **deciding in advance to delay speech production** in the new language either partially or totally until the learner's listening and comprehension skills are fully developed.

Arranging and planning your learning by:

- * **finding out about language learning** - this entails making an effort to find out how the new language works by reading books and talking to other people.
- * **organising** - this refers to understanding and using the conditions that favour optimal learning of the new language such as space, temperature, sound and lighting.
- * **setting goals and objectives** of learning the new language.

AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

Lowering your anxiety by:

- * using **progressive relaxation, deep breathing and meditation.**
- * using **music** such as classical music as a way of relaxing.
- * using **laughter** as in watching a funny movie or reading a humorous magazine.

Encouraging yourself by:

- * **making positive statements** to oneself in order to feel more confident in learning the new language.
- * **taking risks wisely** - that is all risk-taking in the language learning situation must be tempered with good judgement.
- * **giving oneself a valuable reward** for a particularly good performance in the new language.

Evaluating your learning by:

- * **identifying the purpose of a language task** - whether the task involves listening, reading, speaking or writing.
 - * **planning for the language task** - this involves describing the task, determining its requirements, checking one's own linguistic resources and determining any other element necessary for the situation.
 - * **seeking out or creating practice opportunities** such as watching a film in L2 or attending a party where the L2 will be spoken.
-
- * **self-monitoring** - this means identifying errors in understanding or producing the new language and determining which ones are likely going to cause confusion, tracking the source of these errors and trying to eliminate them.
 - * **self-evaluation** - may, for instance, involve the learner checking to see whether he/she can read faster or whether he/she understands a greater part of a conversation than before.

SOCIAL STRATEGIES

Taking your emotional temperature by:

- * **listening to one's body** - this means paying attention to positive and negative signals given by the body such as happiness and pleasure or stress, tension, worry and fear.
- * **using a checklist** to discover one's feelings, attitudes and motivation concerning learning the new language in general, as well as learning the specific language tasks.
- * **writing a language learning diary** to keep track of events and feelings in the process of learning a new language.
- * **discussing one's feelings** with someone else (teacher, friend or relative) to discover and express feelings about language learning.

Asking questions:

- * **asking for clarification** by repeating, paraphrasing, explaining, slowing down the speech tempo or giving examples.
- * **asking for correction** by either a teacher or friend who has sufficient knowledge of the new language.

Co-operating with others:

- * means **working with other learners** to improve language skills. This strategy involves the use of pairs or small groups.
- * means **working with native speakers or proficient speakers** of the new language mostly outside the classroom in order to improve one's own listening and speaking skills.

Empathising with others by:

- * **developing understanding** of another person's culture and his/her relationship to that culture.
- * **becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings** through observing their behaviours as possible expressions of thoughts and feelings

Various researchers have documented the significance of the LLS's in SLA.

- According to Oxford et al. (1989:34) LLS's are significant for the development of the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. To develop speaking and listening skills, social strategies (such as asking questions and co-operating) and compensation strategies (such as gesturing unknown words) can be used. Competence in the skill of writing requires the use of metacognitive skills such as planning, self-evaluation and self-monitoring (Oxford et al. 1989:34).
- Literature reviewed by Dreyer (1992:63) shows that the appropriate use of LLS's results in improved proficiency and self-reliance. Dreyer also maintains that the use of LLS's can enable learners to participate in authentic communicative situations. In a study investigating the extent to which the use of LLS's affect language proficiency, Bialystok (1981) as cited by Dreyer (1992:72) found that self-monitoring, practising, and inferencing (guessing intelligently using linguistic and contextual cues) had a significant relationship with L2 proficiency.
- In another study conducted to determine whether there is a significant mutual influence between the LLS's used by the learner and his or her level of L2 proficiency, O'Malley et al. (1989:21-46) found that the intermediate level students who participated in their study used proportionately more (34,9%) metacognitive strategies than the beginner students (who used only 27,4%). The same study further revealed that both beginner students and intermediate students used cognitive strategies more than they used metacognitive strategies.
- From her review of literature, Dreyer (1992:73) concludes that the more proficient the learner, the wider the variety of strategies used or the lesser the proficiency of the learner, the more limited his or her repertoire of language learning strategies. In her own study Dreyer (1992:124) found a significant relationship between LLS use and L2 proficiency.

The studies reviewed above show that there is strong relationship between L2 proficiency

and the use of LLS's. However, none of them indicate a cause-effect relationship. There is no indication of what comes first: L2 proficiency or use of LLS? None of these studies show the extent to which the LLS use is or is not a function of language aptitude.

In the light of the aim of this study it is important to note that the understanding of the role of the LLS's in the development of ESL proficiency is essential as the LSS's reflect the influence of both the contextual and learner factors on the development of ESL proficiency. On the basis of this understanding the two hypotheses were stated. Consequently the LSS's serve as a focal point for the empirical investigation as explained in Chapter four.

3.3 SUMMARY: A TAXONOMY OF LEARNER FACTORS

The aim of this section is to present in the form of a summary the learner factors which affect SLA. These factors are summarised by means of a taxonomy (Table 3.7) in order to present them clearly and coherently. In this taxonomy (Table 3.7) learner factors are classified into two broad categories, namely (A) independent and (B) dependent learner factors. The independent learner factors were described in section 3.2. as those learner factors that are not influenced by the context from which the learner comes and/or in which SLA takes place. These factors include age, L1, language aptitude, intelligence, personality and cognitive style. In section 3.2 dependent learner factors were defined as the factors that are completely or partly subject to the influence of the context from which the learner comes or in which SLA takes place. This category of learner factors entails motivation, group dynamics, learner attitudes and LLS's.

3.3.1 INDEPENDENT LEARNER FACTORS

It has been indicated above that **independent learner factors** entail the learner's age, L1, language aptitude, intelligence, personality and cognitive style. **Age** has been shown to have biological, socio-affective and cognitive effects on the learner. These effects affect the manner in which the learner tackles the L2 learning tasks. It was shown (3.2.1.1) that age has a significant influence on SLA as it affects the rate and success thereof. It was further argued, on the basis of the review of literature, that the earlier (before the age of

10) the learner starts learning the L2, the greater are the gains in L2 proficiency. On the basis of the findings from the review of literature, it can be postulated that the senior secondary school learners who have received pre-school and/or early education in L2 would have the potential to achieve high levels of proficiency due to the amount of exposure they have had to L2.

The L1 grammar, phonology and semantics also exert a significant influence on the process of SLA. From the discussion on the role L1 plays in the acquisition of L2 (3.2.1.2) it can be inferred that successful SLA depends, *inter alia*, on the development of L1. All the studies reviewed advocated for parallel maintenance of L1 while attempts are made to foster L2 development. South Africa can be no exception to the principle of L1 maintenance as its mastery has a direct influence on SLA, more especially for children whose only exposure to L2 occurs in the classroom.

This taxonomy shows **language aptitude** as consisting of four dimensions, namely phonemic coding ability, associative memory, grammatical sensitivity and inductive language ability, all of which have been discussed in section 3.2.1.3. The fact that language aptitude, as does intelligence, tends to affect CALP rather than BICS was highlighted in the review of literature on language aptitude as a factor in SLA. It was indeed pointed out that a significantly large proportion of variance in L2 performance measures was accounted for by language aptitude.

It was argued in section 3.2.1.4 how the various dimensions of **intelligence** (linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal) can affect various aspects of L2 development such as BICS and CALP (see Table 3.7). It was also indicated that the relationship between language proficiency and intelligence should be regarded as interactive rather than linear and unidirectional. This supports the notion that the level of L2 proficiency is a product of a combination of factors including the learner's intelligence, and that among factors which account for learners' intellectual differences is the level of proficiency achieved in the language of instruction which, in South African schools, is mostly English.

As indicated in table 3.7 **personality** is another independent learner factor. It consists of traits such as sociability, empathy, extroversion, introversion, talkativeness, responsiveness, gregariousness, assertiveness, social competence, popularity and self-efficacy. The role of these traits in SLA was discussed in section 3.2.1.5. It was also argued that attempts at accurately determining the contribution of personality (traits) to SLA are thwarted by a lack of suitable measuring instruments. This factor assumes an even greater importance in the senior secondary school phase since at this stage the learner can attribute his or her own meaning to learning and he or she is, to an extent, capable of taking independent decisions and making choices which are influenced by the nature of his or her personality.

Another independent learner factor is the **cognitive style**. To successfully learn the L2, the L2 learner must have a suitable style of cognitive processing particularly in terms of FD or FI that was discussed in section 3.2.1.6. It was pointed out that of the two cognitive styles FI is the most significant for SLA, more especially in the classroom context. However, due to lack of suitable tests, insufficient empirical work has been done to determine the role of a field dependent style.

3.3.2 DEPENDENT LEARNER FACTORS

Classified as **dependent learner factors** are motivation, group dynamics, learner attitudes and beliefs, as well as the LLS's. Subsumed under motivation are integrative and instrumental motives, as well as L2 learning success. In section 3.2.2.1 the integrative motive to L2 learning was defined as the desire to learn the L2 in order to communicate, interact with and become a member of the L2 community. Instrumental motives, on the other hand, were defined as the desire to learn the L2 for utilitarian purposes such as promotion in a job, furthering a career or in order to be able to understand the technical material used in another field or occupation. On the basis of the literature review in section 3.2.2.1, motivation can be regarded as the driving force that propels the learner to action in order to achieve the goal of L2 learning. Success in L2 learning (regardless of the type of learning motives) leads to self-confidence that enhances further involvement in L2

learning tasks. It is important that a senior secondary school learner should have learning goals and the will to achieve them as the learners at this stage have so developed that their learning can no longer solely depend on motivation by teachers and parents.

The influence of **group dynamics** on SLA cannot be ignored. Under this factor are classified the learner's L2 self-confidence and L2 anxiety (see 3.2.2.2 a & b). It was indicated that the learner's participation in a group can leave him or her with a low or high self-confidence in respect of L2 use. The higher the self-confidence the more willing the learner is to participate further. It was argued that low self-confidence leads to debilitating anxiety which, in turn, results in negative attitudes towards L2 learning.

The importance of **learner attitudes** in SLA was emphasised (3.2.2.3). Learner attitudes entail the learner's attitudes towards the L2 cultural group, the L2 teacher and the material used to teach and learn the L2. Studies showed that the nature of learner attitudes tend to influence the motives for L2 learning, the learners' expectations about their L2 teacher and the quality of learning materials.

The final dependent factor as listed in Table 3.7 is LLS's. The LLS's are classified into two categories, namely direct and indirect LLS's. Direct LLS's are memory, cognitive and compensation strategies. Metacognitive, affective and social strategies are classified as indirect LLS's (also see 3.2.2.4) The importance of LLS's in the development of various L2 skills and general proficiency was highlighted. The review of literature on the role played by the LLS's in SLA showed that there is a significant correlation between the use of LLS's and the development of L2 proficiency.

The learner factors analysed in this chapter are summarised by means of the taxonomy below. The need for such a taxonomy was highlighted in section 1.10 where it was stated that, as learners are unique individuals there is a need for a taxonomy of learner factors which teachers and educational policy makers have to take into account when assessing learner performance.

and L2 acquisition

3.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the influence of learner factors on the development of L2 proficiency was discussed. In this discussion various classifications of learner factors were analysed. A classification of learner factors for purposes of this study was done. Within the classification framework for this study, the analysis of learner factors that exert influence on the development of L2 proficiency of senior secondary school learners were analysed. The discussion of learner factors was summarised by means of the taxonomy (Table 3.7).

In the two taxonomies, namely Table 2.1 and 3.7, it can be observed that a multiplicity of contextual and learner factors exert their influence on the development of L2 proficiency. In view of the fact that the development of L2 proficiency is influenced by so many factors, it was deemed necessary that the two taxonomies should form the foci for the empirical investigation. It was pointed out (1.10) that the focus of the study is to gain insight into factors that influence the development of ESL proficiency of senior secondary school learners. In the light of this aim, the empirical research is used to determine the extent to which the factors listed in the taxonomies affect the development of ESL proficiency in the South African context.

The researcher was of the opinion that providing answers to the questions posed below could serve as a means of determining the focus of the empirical investigation. The questions are as follows:

- What variables could serve as the foci for answering the questions posed as part of the statement of the problem in 1.6?
- What research design and research instruments are best suited for the collection of data to be used to answer the questions mentioned above?
- What are the rationales for the choice of the research design, research method and research instruments used in the empirical investigation?

Answers to these questions are provided in detail in the next chapter.

Table 3.7 A TAXONOMY OF LEARNER FACTORS IN SLA

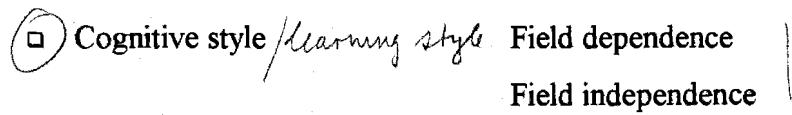
A. INDEPENDENT LEARNER FACTORS

□ Age	Biological effects Socio-affective effects Cognitive effects
□ First language	Phonology Grammar Semantics
□ Language aptitude	Phonemic coding ability Associative memory Grammatical sensitivity Inductive language ability
□ Intelligence	Linguistic Logical-mathematical Spatial Musical Bodily-kinesthetic Interpersonal Intrapersonal
□ Personality	Sociability Empathy Extroversion Introversion Talkativeness Responsiveness Gregariousness Assertiveness

Social competence

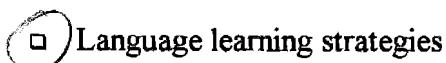
Popularity

Self-efficacy



B. DEPENDENT LEARNER FACTORS

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| □ Motivation | Integrative motives
Instrumental motives
L2 success |
| □ Group dynamics | L2 self-confidence
L2 anxiety |
| □ Learner attitudes | Towards L2 cultural group
Towards L2 teacher
Towards L2 materials
Opinions about the utility value of L2 |



- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Direct Strategies: | Memory
Cognitive
Compensation |
| Indirect Strategies: | Metacognitive
Affective
Social |

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DESIGN OF THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the specific aims of this investigation as stated in 1.8.2, the empirical investigation focused on the influence of the use of LLS's on the development of ESL proficiency of senior secondary school learners. It also focused on how the relationship between LLS use and the development of ESL proficiency was influenced by both contextual and learner factors. In the following sections the rationale for this focus is discussed in terms of:

- Outcomes-Based Education, the paradigm within which the study is undertaken;
- contextual factors in SLA; as well as
- learner factors in SLA.

Each of these aspects of the rationale is discussed below.

4.2 RATIONALE FOR THE FOCUS ON LLS'S

4.2.1 RATIONALE IN TERMS OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

In the discussion of the OBE paradigm (section 1.4.2.2) it was pointed out that self-direction or independent learning whereby learners take responsibility for their learning is one of the main characteristics of this paradigm. Focusing the empirical study on LLS use was regarded as important because the use of LLS's encourages overall self-direction so that learners can take control of their own learning even when there is no teacher to guide them.

The changed role of the teacher (see 1.4.2.1) in the OBE paradigm necessitates that the teacher identifies learners' learning strategies and conducts training of learners to effectively use the LLS's, thereby helping learners to be independent (Oxford 1990:10).

There is evident congruence between the LLS's and the OBE's critical cross-field outcomes (see Table 1.1). One of these outcomes is the learner's ability to solve problems. LLS's are problem-orientated in that they can be used whenever there is a language learning problem to solve, a language learning task to accomplish or goal to attain. LLS's have an action basis in that in the classroom situation it is not only

teacher talk that matters, but also the learner actions or activities such as, for example, note-taking, planning for the learning and self-monitoring. The use of LLS's entails more than the learner's cognition as it also involves his/her metacognitive, affective and social functions.

4.2.2 RATIONALE IN TERMS CONTEXTUAL FACTORS IN SLA

The taxonomy of contextual factors in SLA (Table 2.1) consists of societal, home/family and school/classroom factors. It was shown that these factors lend indispensable support to learning L2, ESL in particular. Societal context factors such as status, institutional support and socio-cultural factors were shown to play a major role in influencing learner attitudes for or against learning L2. The level of the learner's motivation to learn ESL is influenced by, *inter alia*, the nature of societal context factors. For example, the effective use of metacognitive strategies such as seeking out or creating practice opportunities depends on, *inter alia*, whether the societal context is multi- or monolingual, urban or rural, and whether the learner has a negative or a positive attitude towards multilingualism. It was also indicated that the home/family context factors such as SES, the learner's family configuration, parents' educational aspirations, parental involvement and the family value system play important roles in the learner's general academic attainment. In respect of the school/classroom context, it was pointed out that the learner's academic performance is influenced mainly by the school's teaching-learning culture, the availability and use of educational resources, the learner-educator ratio and the teachers' skills and attitudes. For example, the choice and use of the LSS's may be a reflection of TESL aims and methodology.

In view of the examples cited above, it is evident that these factors provide a contextual background that may encourage or inhibit the learner's willingness to take responsibility for his/her own learning. Therefore, in empirical research terms, the contextual factors were acknowledged to be **intervening variables**. This means that the influence of the contextual factors can best be empirically established in terms of the LLS's. In sum, it was the researcher's contention that the focus on the use of LLS's indirectly involved contextual factors, as the use of LLS's is a manifestation of the extent to which the learner was supported by the learning context.

4.2.3 RATIONALE IN TERMS OF LEARNER FACTORS IN SLA

Two sets of learner factors are reflected in the relevant taxonomy of learner factors in SLA (Table 3.7), namely: independent and dependent learner factors. The focus of the empirical study on the use of LLS's was premised on the fact that the learner's use of LLS's was a manifestation of the influence of both independent and dependent learner factors. This premise was based on the evidence discussed below.

4.2.3.1 Independent learner factors

The learner's age, L1 proficiency, language aptitude, intelligence, personality and cognitive style are classified in the taxonomy as independent learner factors. The learner's choice and use of LLS's indicate the influence of these factors in varying degrees. In Oxford (1986) and Ehrman and Oxford's (1989) studies cited by Oxford (1989:238) it was found that adult learners preferred to use metacognitive strategies in contrast with young learners, who preferred social strategies. It must be conceded that, although this difference in the choice and use of strategies was explained in terms of age and the aim of learning the language, it could also be attributed to the learning or input context. Whereas the adult learners were limited to learning L2 in the classroom only, the children were learning it mostly through actually communicating with their peers (Oxford 1989:238).

Leino (1982), cited by Oxford (1989:242) and Ellis (1994:541), found that learners with high conceptual levels or meta-awareness (which reflect the learner's age, intelligence and aptitude levels) were more able to give descriptions of their strategies than learners with low conceptual levels (cf. Rosansky 1975:98). It can be further argued that the learner's effective use of memory and metacognitive strategies depends upon his or her level of intelligence and aptitude as meta-awareness and memory are some of the aspects constituting these factors (see 3.2.1.3 & 3.2.1.4).

In the researcher's opinion, although the influence of L1 on the use of LLS's is not documented in the studies reviewed, there is evidence to suggest that L1 development is one of the factors influencing LLS choice and use. For example, the high conceptual level referred to in the previous paragraph has to be achieved first in the

L1 before it can be used as a foundation for L2 development. The LLS's such as reasoning deductively, analysing contrastively, translating and transferring to the L1 (see Table 3.6) can only be effectively used by learners who have a well-developed L1. The use of compensation strategies, such as using linguistic cues and switching to the L1, is facilitated by a well-developed L1.

In their study, Ehrman and Oxford (Oxford 1989:241) found that personality traits also explained the choice and use of LLS's. In the study cited above it was found that extroversion was related with the choice and use of social strategies whereas introversion was related with strategies involving searching for and communicating meaning.

In a study investigating the relationship between the learners' cognitive styles and the use of LLS's, Dreyer (1996b:302) found that the field-independent analytic learners, due to their concern for accurate details, did not like to use such strategies as guessing meanings of new words or using synonyms.

It was argued, on this account, that focusing the empirical study on the learners' use of LLS's is justified in so far as LLS choice and use are manifestations of the influence of the independent learner factors.

4.2.3.2 Dependent learner factors

Classified as dependent learner factors in the taxonomy (Table 3.7) are learner's attitudes, motivation, group dynamics and the use of the LLS's. Citing the work of Oxford and Nyikos (1985), Oxford (1989:239) maintains that motivational level and orientation influence strategy choice and use. In Oxford and Nyikos's study cited above most learners preferred formal rule-related, functional practice strategies as well as input elicitation strategies. In Oxford's (1989:239-240) opinion, the learners' preference for rule-related strategies could be attributed to instrumental motives for language learning, which were reflected in the goals of L2 learning of most learners in their sample. In sum, there is evidence (Oxford 1989) to support the argument that:

- a) integratively motivated learners tend to use communication-oriented social and affective strategies;

- b) instrumentally motivated learners tend to use formal practice, rule-related, cognitive and memory strategies and
- c) avoidance to use any strategy is associated with low or no motivation at all to learn L2.

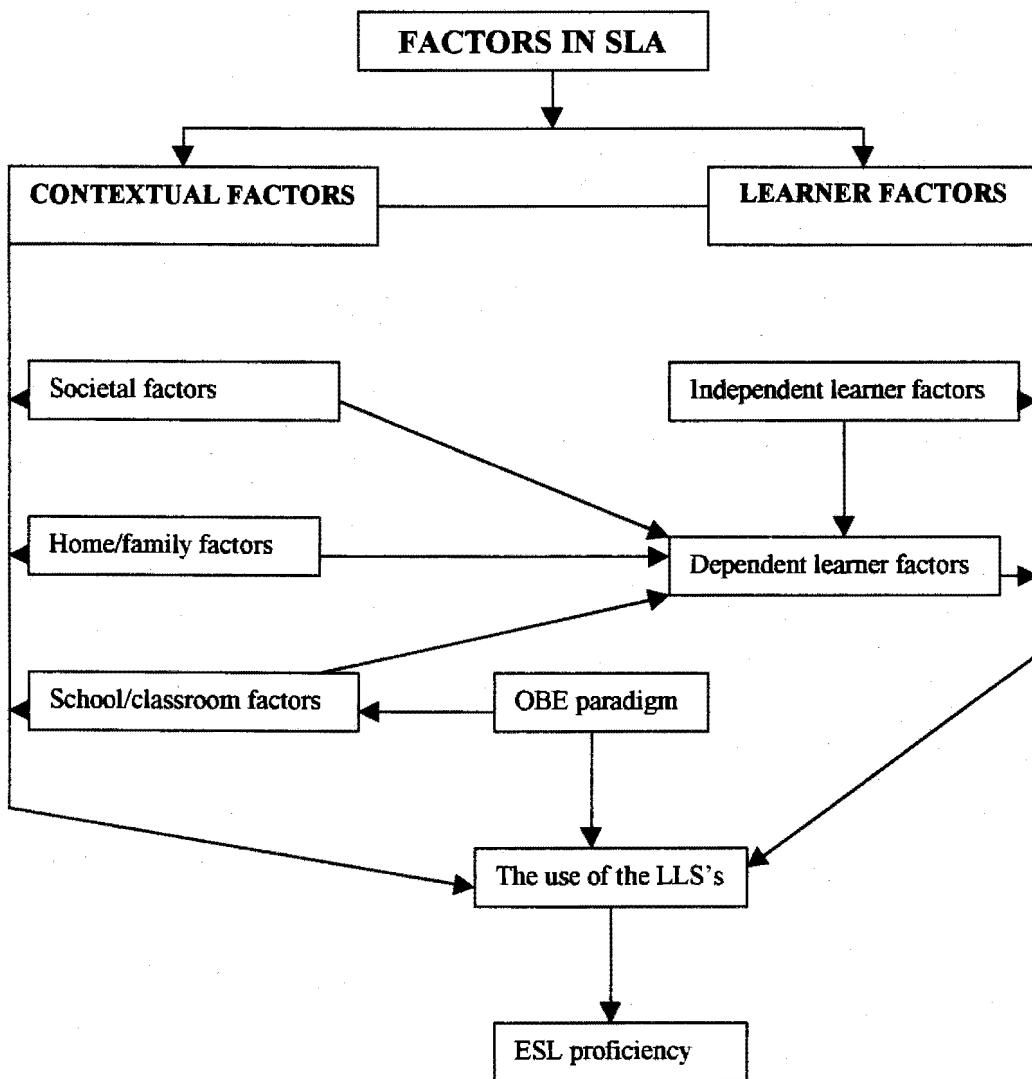
Learner's attitudes towards language learning have also been found to account for differences in strategy choice and use. Wenden (1987), cited by Ellis (1994:541), found that learners who believed in the importance of learning in general tended to use cognitive strategies that helped them understand and remember specific language items, whereas those who believed in the importance of using a language relied on social communication orientated strategies. Citing the work of Wenden (1987), Oxford (1989:239) highlights the effects of attitudes on the use of LLS's. She argues that unless attitudes towards learner self-direction are improved, no amount of training in LLS use can have a sustained positive effect.

There is some ambivalence regarding the relationship between the aspects of group dynamics and LLS use. According to Bailey (1983), cited by Oxford (1989:241), strong feelings of anxiety about the language task caused some learners in Bailey's study to give up all efforts to learn, whereas others tried even harder. In the researcher's opinion, facilitating and debilitating anxiety can explain the differential effects of anxiety on learners' performance in Bailey's study. Whereas debilitating anxiety leads to task abandonment, facilitating anxiety makes the learner want to try harder. It must also be understood that the point at which facilitating anxiety becomes debilitating depends on the learner's previous successes in language learning tasks (see 3.2.2.2 b).

4.2.4 SUMMARY

The rationale for focusing the empirical investigation on the use of the LLS's is diagrammatically illustrated in Figure 4.1. According to Fig. 4.1 it is posited that, on the basis of the taxonomy as given in Table 2.1, SLA takes place in a particular context, which may be the wider society, home/family and school/classroom. These contextual factors exert influence on the use of the LLS's, and indirectly on the development of the learner's ESL proficiency.

Fig. 4.1 Interaction among contextual and learner factors determining LLS use in SLA



It is also indicated that the learner comes to the learning context with his/her own set of factors that are independent and/or dependent. These factors exert their own influence on the learner's use of the LLS's, thereby indirectly influencing the development of ESL proficiency (see Table 3.7). According to Fig. 4.1, the focus on the LLS use can also be justified in terms of the OBE paradigm.

4.3 DESIGN

In order to guide the empirical investigation, two hypotheses were stated (1.7), namely:

Hypothesis 1

There is a significant relationship between the senior secondary school learners' use of LLS's and their level of ESL proficiency.

Hypothesis 2

The more supportive the contextual and learner factors to strategy use, the higher the level of ESL proficiency

In the light of the focus of the empirical investigation discussed above, it was necessary to refine the first hypothesis. For the purpose of the study ***hypothesis I*** was further refined into six sub-hypotheses, each of which was stated in such a way that it accentuated the relationship between ESL proficiency and each of the six LLS groupings, namely memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social strategies (see 3.2.2.4 & Fig 3.1). Each sub-hypothesis is stated as follows:

Sub-hypothesis A

The greater the learner's reported average use of the strategies for remembering effectively, the higher the level of ESL proficiency.

Sub-hypothesis B

The greater the learner's reported average use of the strategies for involving all cognitive processes, the higher the level of ESL proficiency.

Sub-hypothesis C

The greater the learner's reported average use of the strategies for compensating for the missing knowledge, the higher the level of ESL proficiency.

Sub-hypothesis D

The greater the learner's reported average use of the strategies for organising and evaluating his/her ESL work, the higher the level of ESL proficiency.

Sub-hypothesis E

The greater the learner's reported average use of the strategies for managing his/her emotions emanating from ESL learning, the higher the level of ESL proficiency.

Sub-hypothesis F

The greater the learner's reported average use of the strategies for learning in co-operation with others, the higher the level of ESL proficiency.

The rationale for the refinement of *hypothesis 1* into the six sub-hypotheses was that it allowed the researcher to focus on specific learner strengths and weaknesses regarding LLS use. A general average for strategy use could not effectively discriminate between learners who use the LLS's successfully and those who use the LLS's less successfully.

The main proposition of *hypothesis 2* was that the relationship between each group of strategies and the level of ESL proficiency should be understood against the background of both contextual and learner factors mentioned in 1.5.4, 1.5.5 and 4.2.

The statement of the problem in 1.6, the hypotheses stated above, as well as a set of questions listed below were used to serve as further guides for the choice of the research design, the sampling methods and instruments used in this investigation. The questions were:

- a) What is each participant's level of ESL proficiency?
- b) Which LLS's have accounted for the development of each participant's ESL proficiency?
- c) What is the nature of the relationship between LLS choice and use, and the participants' level of ESL proficiency?
- d) Which contextual and learner factors influenced the participants' LLS choice and use?

In view of the preceding research guidelines and foci, in this research project the case study design was used. This design was regarded as appropriate for the empirical study because:

- of its ability to allow for deep and comprehensive understanding of the multi-faceted nature of language learning; and
- the researcher's aim was not to generalise about SLA, but to use the project as a source of insight into factors that influence the development of L2 proficiency of senior secondary school learners.

4.4 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

In order to collect data whereby the questions posed above, as well as in the statement of the research problem of this study (see 1.6) could be answered; the following instruments were used:

- Reading Performance Test in English (Advanced Level)**
- Writing Performance Test in English (Advanced Level)**
- Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL version 7.0; ESL)**
- SILL-Based Interview (SBI) Schedule**
- Observation Checklist**

Each one of these instruments is described below and the rationale for the use of each is given.

4.4.1 READING PERFORMANCE TEST IN ENGLISH (ADVANCED LEVEL)

4.4.1.1 Introduction

The Reading Performance Test (RPT) is a standardised test incorporating the aims of an achievement test, as well as a proficiency test (Roux 1996:1). The use of the test is aimed at determining the testee's reading performance level within the range of Senior Secondary Performance Level (that is Grades 10, 11 and 12). The test is applicable to L1 as well as L2 speakers, though different norms apply for these groups.

4.4.1.2 Rationale for using the test

The RPT was used in this study because it could serve as an objective, valid and reliable indicator of the learner's reading proficiency, i.e. the ability to get meaning from print. It was necessary to use an objective instrument at the stage of identification of learners who were ultimately going to participate in the project. The use of the RPT was based on the assumption that the testee's ability to indicate a correct answer from four possible options regarding the denotation and connotation of words and phrases in sentences and passages presented in written form, was a valid indication of his/her reading ability in English (Roux 1996:2).

4.4.1.3 The contents of the test

The RPT consists of 50 items testing different English language skills at L1 and L2 levels at senior secondary school level. The contents of the test are shown in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 Specification Table for the Reading Performance Test (Advanced)

Aspects	Skills being tested	Items	Item numbers
A	Recognising denotative meanings of words	18	7,10,12,15,16,17,18,19,20,21,25, 31,33,39,41,42,44,45.
B	Understanding details of content	4	4,6,32,37
C	Making general inferences based on the given text	7	1,2,5,11,24,28,50
D	Making inferences related to the writer's intention	4	9,35,46,49
E	Recognising inferences related to tone	2	26,29
F	Recognising correct use of punctuation	1	22
G	Recognising meaning of figurative language	4	23,34,36,38
H	Recognising correct use of tenses	3	13,40,43
I	Recognising correct use of pronouns	1	14
J	Recognising different types of discourse	1	30
K	Identifying source of material	1	8
L	Interpreting non-verbal conveyors of information	2	3,47
M	Inferences to paralinguistic features	1	48
N	Recognising inferences related to atmosphere	1	27

(Source: Roux 1996:3)

In this test, questions are based on prose passages, advertisements, a film review, a cartoon and two cloze-test passages. All questions are in multiple choice form consisting of four options per item (Roux 1996:3-5).

4.4.1.4 Test validity and reliability

The ideal reliability coefficient is 0,80 and above. The reliability coefficients for the RPT were regarded as satisfactory because they were higher than the cut-off point of 0,80. The actual reliability coefficients for this test are 0,86 and 0,92 for the L1 and L2 norm groups respectively (Roux 1996:4).

Although the content validity of the RPT could not be determined statistically, the items of this test were accepted by a committee of subject experts after a specification table had been drawn up and a thorough study had been made of the suitability of items to test reading comprehension (Roux 1996:5).

4.4.1.5 Test administration procedures

The test is a paper-and-pencil test that must be completed within an hour. In order to write the test, the testee has to be in possession of a pencil, eraser, answer sheet (no. 2177) and test booklet (no. 3516). A typical question asks the testee to read the passage and then answer a set of questions based on that passage. Answers to all the questions are in multiple-choice form and the testee has to choose the correct answer from options A, B, C, or D. He/she has to respond by shading or darkening with a pencil the oval that contains the correct option (Roux 1996:6).

4.4.1.6 Scoring the test

A scoring stencil was used to score the test. The test was marked out of 50 marks. The researcher marked the test with the help of a research assistant.

4.4.2 WRITING PERFORMANCE TEST IN ENGLISH (ADVANCED LEVEL)

4.4.2.1 Introduction

The Writing Performance Test (WPT) is a standardised test incorporating the aims of an achievement test, as well as a proficiency test (Roux 1997:1). The use of the WPT aimed at determining the testee's writing performance level within the range of Senior Secondary Performance Level (that is Grades 10, 11 and 12). The test is applicable to L1, as well as L2 speakers, though different norms apply for these groups.

4.4.2.2 Rationale for using the test

The use of the WPT was based on two assumptions. Firstly, it was assumed that English proficiency could be demonstrated through receptive skills (reading and listening), as well as productive skills (speaking and writing). Whereas the RPT was used to measure the learners' receptive skills, the WPT was used to assess their productive skills, which meant that the two instruments were used to complement each other. Secondly, it was assumed that proficiency in English could be accurately assessed in terms of the learner's overt ability to communicate in writing by

- using the appropriate register for the situation or task, linguistic cohesion and ease of expression;
- using correct words, phrases and sentences structure;
- being original and able to employ emotive and figurative language;
- giving a correct and apt response to a given assignment, as well as demonstrating richness and logical flow of thought and argument, and
- using appropriate punctuation, spelling, paragraphing and format.

4.4.2.3 The contents of the test

The test consists of four tasks that entail a description of a picture, the writing of a short report, the writing of a formal letter and a short structured essay. Details of the test contents are reflected in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2 Contents of the Writing Performance Test in English (Advanced Level)

TASK NO.	TASK	SKILL(S) TESTED
1	Describing a picture of an accident	The ability to give a detailed description and to develop the description in a detailed way.
2	Reporting on an incident in the shop	The ability to organise and express facts clearly and concisely, omitting insignificant details
3	In the form of a formal letter, requesting more information in response to an advertisement	The ability to respond clearly and correctly in a given format
4	Writing an essay of at least three paragraphs on the advantages of modern transport.	The ability to express views and to discuss issues on a given topic.

(cf. Roux 1997:2-3)

4.4.2.4 Test validity and reliability

The content validity of this test was accepted by a committee of subject experts after a specification table had been drawn up and a thorough study had been made of the suitability of items to test writing performance (Roux 1997:5).

According to Roux (1997:4), a reliability coefficient of 0,80 or higher is acceptable for this kind of a test. The actual reliability coefficients for this test are 0,952 and 0,950 for the L1 and L2 norm groups respectively. The implication of these coefficients was that the test could be used reliably to measure the learner's English language proficiency and to make important decisions about learners' English language productive skills.

4.4.2.5 Test administration procedures

To write the test the candidates were supplied with a test booklet, a pen and blank folio paper for planning answers. Answers to each question (task) were written on the spaces provided in the test booklet. Although there was no strict time limit set for the completion of the test, one hour was deemed sufficient to complete all the tasks.

4.4.2.6 Scoring method

The 3-Point and 9-Point Writing Scales (Roux 1997:15-16) were used in scoring the test. The 3-Point Writing Scale was used in scoring the first and the second tasks, and the 9-Point Scale was used to score tasks 3 and 4.

4.4.3 STRATEGY INVENTORY FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING (SILL)

4.4.3.1 Introduction

The SILL (version 7.0; ESL) is a Likert-scale, self-report inventory that assesses the frequency with which the participant uses a variety of LLS's when he or she learns a L2. A typical SILL item asks the participant to indicate the frequency of strategy use on a five-point rating scale. The items, which are all strategy descriptions, were drawn from a comprehensive taxonomy of LLS's that cover the four language skill areas of listening, reading, speaking and writing (cf. Van der Walt & Dreyer 1995:310; Oxford 1990:293-296)

4.4.3.2. Rationale for using the SILL

The aim of using the SILL in this study was to determine

- the extent to which ESL proficiency of senior secondary school learners was related with strategy use;
- which strategies were associated with the different aspects of L2 proficiency (listening, speaking, writing and reading), and
- the extent to which strategy use reflected the influence of contextual and learner factors.

The SILL was used because it was regarded as an objective, valid and a reliable indicator of the strategies used by learners to learn the L2 (4.4.3.4).

4.4.3.3. Contents of the SILL

The SILL consists of six parts (A-F). Each part represents a group of strategies as reflected in Table 4.3 below (also see Appendix A).

Table 4.3: The contents of the SILL (version 7.0; ESL)

PART	GROUP	STRATEGY FUNCTION
A	Memory strategies	Remembering more effectively ✓
B	Cognitive strategies	Using all mental processes ✓
C	Compensation strategies	Compensating for missing knowledge ✓
D	Metacognitive strategies	Organising and evaluating your learning ✓
E	Affective strategies	Managing your emotions
F	Social Strategies	Learning with others

(cf. Table 3.6, Oxford 1990:293-296 & Appendix A)

4.4.3.4. Validity and reliability

The validity and reliability of the SILL was field-tested at the Defence Language Institute (DLI) in Monterey, California. According to Oxford (1986) cited by Dreyer (1992:86) the results of the DLI survey assessing construct validity, the content

validity assessment report by Oxford and Cuevas, and a report of highly trained linguists on concurrent validity, confirmed the fact that the SILL was a valid instrument.

The reliability of the SILL (internal consistency) was 0,95 on the DLI test sample of 483 participants. Since the reliability coefficient for the SILL is greater than 0,80, the SILL could be regarded as a reliable indicator of the student's strategy use.

4.4.3.5. Test administration procedures

In order to respond to the SILL items, each participant was given the SILL, the answer sheet, a pen or pencil. Participants had to answer in terms of how well each statement in the SILL described them. For example, a student would be asked to respond to a statement such as: "I use rhymes to remember new English words". The student had to choose from one of the following options:

Responses	Marks allocated
1. Never true of me	[1]
2. Usually not true of me	[2]
3. Somewhat true of me	[3]
4. Usually true of me	[4]
5. Always true of me	[5]

4.4.3.6. Method of scoring

Marks for the responses in each part of the SILL were summed up to get a total for each part. The total was then divided by the number of items contained in that part. This division was done to determine the participant's average use of that particular group of strategies. To get an overall strategy use average, the totals of different parts of the SILL are added up and then divided by 50 (see Oxford 1990:299-300).

4.4.4 THE SILL-BASED INTERVIEW

4.4.4.1 Introduction

The individualised SILL-Based Interview (SBI) schedule was an open interview schedule designed by the researcher. The researcher decided on using this instrument because of his understanding of problems associated with self-report instruments such

as the SILL. The SBI can be described as a refined version of the SILL as it contained probing questions based on each learner's responses to the SILL items. Some of the problems that the researcher wanted to solve by means of the SBI were

- unclear and ambiguous responses;
- implausible responses (elicited by unclear phrasing of some SILL items);
- inclination by learners to choose the mid-point response in a five-point rating scale, as well as
- the participants' tendency to want to please instead of being honest when responding to the items.

The interviewing process did not always follow the sequence of questions as they appeared on the schedule. The deviation allowed the researcher to respond to the demands of the interaction between him and each interviewee.

4.4.4.2 The rationale for using the SBI

The rationale for the use of the SBI in this study was to

- use it as a means of ascertaining certain tendencies and of clarifying some ambiguities evident in the participants' responses to the SILL;
- determine which LLS's participants use;
- gather data on each learner's home/family background, and
- determine the level of the learner's oral proficiency with a view to complementing the results of the RPT and the WPT.

4.4.4.3 Contents

The SBI schedule contents varied from one learner to another, depending on the learner's responses to the SILL items. If, for example, 20 of the 50 responses to the SILL items in the participant's answer sheet were either unclear, ambiguous or implausible, questions focusing on such responses were formulated in order to seek more clarity on the responses. Only questions focusing on such unclear, ambiguous or implausible responses constituted the SBI. For each participant, the SBI schedule consisted of no less than twenty questions (see example in Appendix B). There were no correct or incorrect answers to the questions; each learner was expected to answer the questions honestly.

4.4.4.4 Interviewing procedures

The interviewing process took place at each school in the room temporarily allocated for this purpose by the school principal. At the beginning of the interview the interview procedure was explained to each learner. In order to calm the participants down, it was pointed out to them that

- the interview was not a test;
- they had to be honest in answering questions, and
- they would not be penalised because there was no correct or incorrect response to any of the questions.

4.4.4.5 Scoring the SBI responses

Responses to the SBI questions were scored in exactly the same way as the SILL. The difference was that the SBI did not allow for a mid-point response (see Appendix C). For example, if the SBI had been designed to clarify 20 responses, the scores of the corrected responses were combined with the other scores of the 30 responses that did not need clarification. The new set of scores was combined to form the SBI scores. The scores were then summed up to get an SBI total for each part as it was done in respect of the SILL. The total was then divided by the number of items contained in that part. This division was done to determine the participant's average use of that particular group of LLS's. To get an overall LLS use average for each participant, the totals of different parts of the SBI were added up and then divided by 50 (see Appendix C).

4.4.5. OBSERVATION OF THE SCHOOL/CLASSROOM CONTEXTS

4.4.5.1 The rationale

The rationale for the general observation of the school/classroom contexts was that factors such as the school's teaching-learning culture, the learner-educator ratio, availability and use of educational resources, as well as teacher attitudes and skills can be used to predict the level and quality of learner performance in general, and performance in ESL in particular.

4.4.5.2 Contents

Regarding the schools' teaching-learning culture the following aspects were observed concerning the management team, teachers and learners (also see 2.4.1):

PARTICIPANTS	ASPECTS OBSERVED
The principal and the management team	i) Quality of the school policy ii) The school's mission statement iii) Co-operation in managing the school iv) Methods of maintaining the teaching-learning culture
Teachers	i) Appearance ii) Discipline iii) Attitude towards work
Learners	i) Appearances ii) Discipline iii) Attitude towards school iv) Attitudes towards teachers

Another two aspects that were observed as part of the teaching-learning context were the teacher's TESL skills and the availability and use of the teaching and learning media. The teacher's TESL skills were observed because these skills are crucial to the development of ESL proficiency in the classroom context. The observation of the latter aspect was based on the assumption that effective teaching and learning of ESL depend on the availability and use of such teaching and learning media and resources as textbooks and classrooms. It was also pointed out earlier (2.4.2) that teaching media are valuable for explaining new concepts, consolidating concepts and for presenting a meaningful picture of an abstract situation. In schools where there is a shortage of teaching media, it becomes difficult for learners to acquire ESL

proficiency because the means whereby English concepts can be clarified, are not available. The aspects that were deemed relevant for observation in respect of the development of ESL proficiency were libraries, prescribed books and additional reading materials. The learner-educator factor was dealt with under document analysis.

4.4.6 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

4.4.6.1 The rationale

The assumption underlying document analysis was that the level of the learner's L2 performance is influenced by, *inter alia*,

- his/her general intellectual ability, as reflected in the level of his/her performance in other subjects,
- his/her level of proficiency in L1,
- the manner in which the school is managed, as well as
- the learner-educator ratio in the school.

4.4.6.2 Focus of document analysis

In the light of these assumptions, the document analysis focused on such school documents as mark schedules, learner's personal files, school policy documents and admission register in order to determine

- each learner's general ability across all subjects,
- each learner's level of proficiency in L1 (Zulu),
- the extent to which the school is managed on sound educational principles and
- school enrolment.

4.5 SAMPLING

4.5.1 SAMPLING METHOD

In this study, a combination of two **purposeful sampling** strategies was used. Purposeful sampling refers to the selection of information-rich cases (learners in this case) for in-depth study, more especially when the researcher wants to understand the phenomenon without needing to generalise to all such learners (Schumacher & McMillan 1993:278). The purposeful sampling strategies used were **site selection** and **typical-case sampling**. The criterion for site selection was the school's results

obtained in the provincial grade 12 final examination in the previous years (1996-1997). The assumption was that schools with a poor teaching-learning culture (see 2.4.1) would obtain poor final examination (grade 12) results whereas schools with a good teaching-learning culture would obtain good examination results. The researcher opted for two schools, one at either end of the teaching-learning culture continuum. The rationale of using purposeful sampling was that a few cases selected by means of this method had the potential of yielding valuable insights into the role played by the learners' LLS choice and use in the development of ESL proficiency. The learners were selected on the basis of their ESL proficiency levels. The identification of learners by type or characteristic either as high performance learners (HPL's) or low performance learners (LPL's) is called typical-case sampling.

4.5.2 RESEARCH SAMPLE

The sample of this investigation was constituted from the Grade 11 learners of two senior secondary schools referred to as school XY and school QP in the Newcastle district in KwaZulu-Natal. The two schools were chosen on the basis of their

- accessibility to the researcher;
- having information-rich participants;
- general learner performance of grade 12 learners in the provincial final examination since 1996; and
- offering ESL both as a subject and a medium of instruction.

In order to eliminate any bias towards or against any class, the procedure of selecting classes that would participate in this investigation was as follows: The grade 11 classes in the two schools were assigned numbers 1 to 5 at school QP and 1 to 4 at school XY. By means of Quattro Pro's Statistical Analysis tool, a random selection of only one class per school was done. At school QP number 2 was selected, whereas at XY school number 4 was selected. In school XY the class that was selected in this way thereafter wrote the Reading Performance Test (Advanced Level), which was a means of identifying two (2) low proficiency learners (LPL's) and two high proficiency learners (HPL's) in the school. Because of the erratic nature of learners' school attendance in school QP, in stead of identifying learners only from the class selected for this purpose, all five classes wrote the RPT. From all the five Grade 11

classes, two learners were identified as HPL's and two were identified as LPL's. In order to guarantee the confidentiality of the learners' names, only admission numbers were used. After the eight learners had been selected from both schools, one of them dropped out of school at school XY. Ultimately seven (7) learners constituted the research sample that sat for the Writing Performance Test (Advanced Level) and responded to the SILL and the SBI. A sample of seven participants was deemed sufficient for this study because the researcher was of the opinion that a few participants would allow for deep and comprehensive understanding of the multi-faceted nature of language learning. It was also pointed out earlier that the researcher's aim was not to generalise about SLA, but to use the project as a source of insight into factors that influence the development of L2 proficiency of senior secondary school learners. For these reasons a sample of seven participants was deemed sufficient.

4.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the rationale for focusing the empirical investigation on LLS use was discussed. It was argued that the focus on LLS use was essentially a means of studying the influence of contextual and learner factors on the development of ESL proficiency. The chapter also dealt with the design of the empirical investigation and the research instruments. The chapter was concluded with a discussion of the research sample. The data collected by means of the methods discussed above are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS OF THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this study was to analyse the influence of contextual and learner factors in the development of ESL proficiency. The discussion of the influence of contextual and learner factors in SLA was done in the second and the third chapters respectively. Contextual and learner factors in SLA were summarised by means of the taxonomies in Tables 2.1 and 3.7 respectively. In the fourth chapter it was argued that the empirical investigation should focus on the use of LLS's as these manifest how contextual and learner factors influence the development of ESL proficiency.

In line with the rationale for focusing on the influence of LLS use on the development of ESL proficiency, the following questions, based on the statement of the research problem and the hypotheses (also see 1.6 & 1.7), guided the empirical investigation:

- a) What was each learner's level of ESL proficiency?
- b) Which LLS's accounted for the development of ESL proficiency of each learner in the sample?
- c) What was the nature of the relationship between LLS choice and use, and the learners' level of ESL proficiency?
- d) Which contextual and learner factors influenced the learners' LLS choice and use?

The results of the empirical investigation are presented and discussed in three interlinked sections. These deal with presentation of the findings of the empirical investigation (5.2) and the analysis of data in terms of ESL proficiency vis-à-vis LLS use, taking into cognisance the second and the third questions above (5.3). In section 5.4 the data were analysed with a view to identifying the factors that influenced the learners' LLS use and the development of ESL proficiency (see the last question above).

5.2 PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH DATA

5.2.1 SELECTION OF THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

On the basis of their performance in the RPT, the seven learners mentioned in Table 5.1 were identified in schools XY and QP for participation in this study's empirical

investigation. All learners selected from school QP had their admission numbers prefixed QP, e.g. QP013, whereas all learners from XY School had their admission numbers prefixed XY, e.g. XY116. The following table shows learners selected as well as how they performed on all the skills (A-N) of the RPT.

Table 5.1 Results of the RPT

LEARNER	PERFORMANCE PER RPT SKILL														TTL	ST.	EVAL.
	A 18	B 4	C 7	D 4	E 2	F 1	G 4	H 3	I 1	J 1	K 1	L 2	M 1	N 1			
XY116	13	3	5	4	0	0	2	2	1	0	1	1	1	0	33	6	High average
XY025	10	2	6	5	0	0	2	2	1	0	1	1	1	0	31	6	High average
QP011	10	1	4	2	2	0	2	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	25	5	Average
QP012	8	1	5	3	2	0	2	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	25	5	Average
XY086	4	0	2	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	11	2	Poor
QP013	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	07	1	Very poor
QP014	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	08	1	Very poor

Table 5.1 consists of columns for learners, learner performance per RPT skill (4.4.1.3), total score per learner (TTL), stanine (ST) and evaluation (EVAL.) of each learner's score in relation to the test norms. The letters A to N in the second main column represent the various skills tested by the RPT as shown in Table 4.1. Under letters A to N are numbers that indicate the total number of items per skill. The top four learners in Table 5.1 were identified as HPL's, whereas the bottom three learners were identified as the LPL's. In Table 5.1 the following can be observed:

- reading proficiency is not a monolithic concept; it is multidimensional as shown by skills A-N;
- the learner's ability to recognise denotative meanings (skill A) can be regarded as an indicator of the learner's general language ability in ESL.

It was the researcher's view that prior to any further interaction with the participants, it was important to gain background knowledge about each one of them. In the following section each participant's background is briefly discussed.

5.2.2 BACKGROUND DATA ON THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

5.2.2.1 Participant XY116

This learner was a 16-year-old girl whose first language was Zulu. She came from a single-parent family. Only her mother gave her various kinds of support as her father passed away. After grade 12, she wished to train as Chartered Accountant or a fashion designer. However, the realisation of her aspirations depended on the availability of money to finance her tertiary education.

5.2.2.2 Participant XY025

Learner XY025 was a 16-year-old girl whose first language was Zulu. She came from a low socio-economic background. She was supported by her mother only as her parents divorced. She lived with her mother who worked in Newcastle. During the interview, this learner expressed doubt if her aspirations to become a Chartered Accountant would be realised in view of her family's limited financial means.

5.2.2.3 Participant QP011

Learner QP011 was a 17-year-old girl from a Zulu-speaking family. She came from a low socio-economic background. She stayed with her grandmother as her parents divorced. Her father was a motorcar salesman and the mother was a professional nurse. In spite of her parents' relatively higher level of education, they could not help her, as they did not live with her. Though not yet sure then, she wanted to train as an airhostess.

5.2.2.4 Participant QP012

Learner QP012 was a 24-year-old lady from a Zulu-speaking background. She lived with her elder brother as her parents passed away when she was still young. Her parents' death resulted in her temporarily leaving school to work so that she could be able to support her younger sisters. She later returned to school because she thought there was a need for her to have at least a Matriculation certificate. At the time of the interview, she was not sure if she would have money for a post-matriculation qualification.

5.2.2.5 Participant XY086

This learner was a 20-year-old girl whose first language was Zulu. She also came from a low socio-economic background. Her father passed away and her mother worked in Johannesburg as a domestic servant in order to earn a living for the family. This learner lived with three siblings in a house all by themselves. She pointed out that though she still wanted to further her education; she faced a bleak future because of her family's poor financial means.

5.2.2.6 Participant QP013

This was an 18-year-old boy whose first language was Zulu. He also came from a broken family, as his parents were divorced. He was supported by his father who was a policeman. He lived in his uncle's house with his grandmother, aunt and cousins. He mentioned that should he get any financial assistance, he would like to train at a technikon as a boilermaker.

5.2.2.7 Participant QP014

Learner QP014 was a 17-year-old girl from a Zulu-speaking family. As her father passed away her mother, who worked in Johannesburg as a domestic servant, supported her. Her wish was to train as a chemical engineer after completing grade 12.

5.2.3 OBSERVATION OF THE SCHOOL/CLASSROOM CONTEXTS

It was pointed out earlier (4.4.5.1) that the rationale for the general observation of the school/classroom contexts was the assumption that factors such as the school's teaching-learning culture, the learner-educator ratio, availability and use of educational resources, as well as teacher attitudes and skills can be used to predict the level of learners' scholastic performance in general, and their level of ESL proficiency, in particular.

5.2.3.1 Observation results: School XY

a) The school's teaching-learning culture

i) The principal and the management team

aa) Quality of the school policy

Although school XY did not have a school policy, it had a detailed learners' code of conduct. This code of conduct was worked out by the management team, teachers and learners represented by their learner representative council (LRC).

bb) The school's mission statement

Despite the orderly nature in which the school conducted the business of teaching and learning, there was no explicitly stated mission towards which every teacher and learner worked.

cc) Co-operation in managing the school

The whole management team had a common goal, that is, effective teaching and learning. At the start of each school day and after recess, all or some of the members of the management team were observed at different points of entry to the school encouraging learners to hasten to their classrooms in order to save time.

dd) Methods of maintaining the school's teaching-learning culture

All members of the management team were working in their official capacities, which enabled them to discharge their duties with authority and confidence. The principal and the deputy principal shared some managerial and administrative traits such as being principled, strict and fair to both teachers and learners.

In respect of teachers, the management acted immediately against any teacher whose actions were perceived to be incongruent with creating, improving and maintaining the teaching-learning culture of the school (see b. ii below). During the investigation, corporal punishment was still in moderate use in the school. The principal argued that, if the school completely abandoned corporal punishment, learner discipline and learners' scholastic achievement were at risk.

ii) Teachers

aa) Appearance

The teaching staff's way of dressing varied from casual to formal. The teachers dressed well enough to command the respect deserved by their profession and to be exemplary to learners under their charge. A significant relationship was also observed between the ages of teachers and their way of dress: the older (over 35 years) the teacher, the more formal the dress, and the younger (mostly younger than 35) the teacher, the more casual the dress.

bb) Discipline

The teacher discipline was also satisfactory as almost all teachers came to school on time, responded timeously to the changes of teaching periods indicated by the siren at the end of each 35 minutes. Only two teachers persistently arrived late. On investigating the matter, the researcher found that one of the two teachers experienced problems going to class to teach as she had misrepresented her field of specialisation when she was transferred to the school; the other was running a taxi business before and after school hours.

cc) Attitude towards work

Despite a number of good points about this school, a certain degree of negative attitude towards work was observed. At any given time, one or two classes were found unoccupied. At one time, the researcher found nine of the twenty-six classes without teachers. The absence of the teacher in a class could be explained in several ways: the teacher was reluctant to go to class to teach or it was a period for Guidance, which very few teachers bothered to teach.

In the deputy principal's opinion, supported by the views of head of department (HOD) for languages, there were teacher discipline problems in the school as most teachers were reluctant to:

- fully co-operate with the management team;
- adapt to the new changes in education, and
- be creative and take the initiative.

According to the deputy principal, teachers also rejected anything that had to do with subject management, always attributing their refusal to produce quality work to the big learner-educator ratio. On calculating, the researcher found that the learner-educator ratio in this school was 37:1

iii) Learners

aa) Appearance

Almost all learners in this school wore their school uniform in accordance with a learners' code of conduct. Any learner not wearing the school uniform was immediately dealt with by the deputy principal.

bb) Discipline

The discipline of learners, as defined by their level of co-operation with teachers and the management team, as well as their punctuality, was good. It was also observed that the learner discipline was a reflection of the good co-operation between the school management and the teaching staff in respect of the maintenance of learner discipline.

cc) Attitude towards school

Most learners manifested a positive attitude towards school. This attitude was evident in the low rate of truancy and absenteeism. In instances where a learner was found absent, the class teacher could furnish reasons for the absence according to the report provided by the learner, guardian or parent. However, there were instances when the researcher observed some learners literally running away from school in an attempt to dodge lessons for the day.

dd) Attitudes towards teachers

Learners in the school had a high respect for the teachers: if the learners saw the teacher coming to class, they immediately lowered their voices. As soon as the teacher entered the classroom, all learners stood up and greeted the teacher. The rate of subject-specific truancy was also minimal.

b) Teachers' attitudes and skills

Of the aspects dealt with in section 2.4.4, only the teacher's attitudes towards TESL, the mastery of the English language, mastery of TESL skills and the mastery of TESL approaches were observed. The role of INSET and the teacher's experience in TESL were not directly observed because, in the researcher's opinion, the teacher's attitudes towards TESL, the mastery of the English language, the mastery of TESL skills and the mastery of TESL would reflect the role of these.

i) The teacher's attitude towards TESL

The teacher's commitment to recommended TESL approaches was observed as a manifestation of his or her attitude towards TESL. In the observation made the teacher did not show a commitment to any specific method of teaching. She tended to emphasise getting high marks at the expense of developing ESL proficiency. Her inclination towards good English marks was shown by the four long tests that she had already conducted to ensure that learners got good practice to enable them to do well in the final examination. It was observed in general that the methods used were at odds with the aim of the grade 11 ESL syllabus, which is to develop the learners' communicative skills.

ii) The teacher's mastery of the English language

This factor was observed on the assumption that the teacher's mastery of the English language enables him or her to

- organise, guide, evaluate, argue, express emotions and maintain positive classroom relations;
- adjust one's language to the level of learners;
- interpret the nuances of the L2 group culture implicit in its literature, and
- play his or her multiple roles of language teacher, language analyst and language user (see 2.4.4.1)

It was observed that the ESL grade 11 teacher was a proficient speaker of English. Her confidence manifested itself in her intermittent explanations that she gave to ensure that the learners understood what she was teaching. At times she tended to give

more explanations than were necessary. This led to the learners gradually becoming passive in all the five lesson presentations that were observed.

iii) The teacher's mastery of the skills for TESL

The teacher's pre-active skills, learning management skills and interactive skills were observed as manifestations of her mastery of the skills for TESL. In the case of this teacher each presentation was based on a clearly designed lesson plan indicating the lesson aims, subject content as well as short explanations and questions to guide learners.

The skills for the management of learning were observed on the assumption that these would reflect her ability to devise and apply a work scheme, plan the ESL programme for the whole year and plan strategies for helping the learners learn best. While the teacher looked adept at asking questions and giving explanations, there was no attempt at making use of other teaching-learning strategies that might have enabled the learners to learn better. At times a certain degree of fragmentation was observed: each lesson started and ended as a complete entity in itself; there was no attempt to link it with the previous lesson and/or the learners' prior knowledge or experience.

The teacher's interactive skills were observed on the assumption that her ability to apply these skills was a manifestation of her ability to organise her class for effective learning, adapt her lesson presentation to the level of learners, make use of teaching aids and other materials to the benefit of the learners, motivate L2 learners by rewarding all achievements and to link the ESL lesson with the learners' day-to-day practical experiences. The teacher did not attempt to organise the class in any innovative manner. No other teaching aid was used except the chalkboard and textbooks. The latter were in short supply at times.

iv) The teacher's mastery of various instructional approaches to TESL

The teacher's choice of the modes of cognitive input (i.e. method) was observed as a reflection of her mastery of various instructional approaches to TESL. From her presentations, it could be inferred that her teaching was largely based on the synthetic approaches (teaching language structures as discrete items). Written exercises were

assigned to learners per grammatical units (e.g. passive voice). Her questions on the prescribed literary works were designed to elicit one-word answers. This type of teaching and questioning conformed to the multiple-choice questioning format used in the final examination question papers in the school. The teacher evidently did not know any of the principles of the communicative or task-based approaches.

c) Availability and use of educational resources

Of particular relevance to this empirical investigation was the availability of reading materials such as prescribed books, additional reading materials, as well as a library. This school did not have a library where learners could study or read.

Two books were prescribed for 1998 for grade 11 English, namely **Encounters** and **The Winners**. Whereas each learner had a copy of "Encounters", the copies of "The Winners" were so limited that two to three learners had to share a single copy.

5.2.3.2 Observation results: School QP

a) The school's teaching-learning culture

i) The principal and the management team

aa) Quality of the school policy

The school had no written policy. All the activities were run on the assumption that all the teachers were professionals who knew what they had been employed to do.

bb) The school's mission statement

There was a lack of a common vision, which in the researcher's opinion manifested itself in the school operating without a mission statement and school policy document. This was contrary to the provisions of the South African Schools' Act (SASA) (South Africa 1996c).

cc) Co-operation in managing the school

There was no observable collaboration between the principal, deputy principal and HOD's. The principal and the deputy principal had two contrasting management styles: whereas the deputy principal was a strict disciplinarian; the principal was soft and lax with both teachers and learners to the point where everything was negotiable.

dd) Methods of maintaining the teaching-learning culture

The principal, deputy principal and HOD's were all in acting capacities. Discipline of teachers manifested shortcomings. Only the deputy principal was observed coaxing the learners to hasten to class after the bell had rung. On other occasions, he locked the school gates as some means of punishing latecomers. His attempts were at times thwarted by the absence of teachers in the classrooms.

ii) Teachers

aa) Appearance

The majority of the teaching staff was decently dressed and could be regarded as exemplary to learners. However, the appearance of some teachers was unacceptable in the school context. For example, a few male teachers came to school in blue two-piece overalls commonly used by factory workers or garage mechanics as a protection gear against grease or oil. Others came to school wearing sneakers and/or denim jeans. In the researcher's opinion this kind of dress could not command respect for the teaching profession; neither did it contribute to instilling in learners any motivation and commitment to do their schoolwork.

bb) Discipline

One of the problems experienced by this school was teacher indiscipline. The teachers' lack of discipline manifested itself in some teachers failing to manage time properly by ignoring the siren used to mark the beginning and/or the end of teaching periods. They either just did not go to class or did not leave the class to give way for another teacher. Generally, there was no significant difference between the learners' and teachers' attitudes towards time management.

cc) Attitude towards work

A number of teachers were committed to their work. However, some teachers were clearly indifferent to their work. According to the head of department (HOD) for languages, no day in this school ever passed without a teacher or teachers being absent. He also pointed out that it was difficult to determine the teacher attendance rate because even those who were present did not sign the attendance register. For example one of the teachers had been marked absent for 38 days between January and

August 5 1998. Some teachers did not go to class to teach even if they were present at school. As a result, the learners became idle and resorted to such activities as playing in the corridors and making noise.

iii) Learners

aa) Appearance

Most learners were neat and always in their school uniform. There were a few learners who did not conform to the school uniform rules. Though the principal alleged that the wearing of the school uniform was part of the school's policy, nothing was done to discourage the negative tendency towards violating the provisions of the school policy.

bb) Discipline

In the researcher's view, the learner discipline in this school was not conducive to effective teaching and learning. Firstly, the learners were not disciplined enough to come to school on time. The first teaching period of the day (8:00-8:32), was practically unusable because latecomers kept trickling in or more than 50% of the class was locked out of the school gate (the practice used as a deterrent from late coming). Secondly, it was observed that if at any given time a class was without a teacher, learners streamed out of the classroom: some to bask in the sun or to play in the school corridors and others just for idle spectating. Teaching periods that occurred after prayers (09:15) and after lunch (12:40) were as unusable as the first ones of the day.

cc) Attitude towards school

The learners' attitude towards school was manifested in their rate of truancy and absenteeism. At recess time a significant number of learners were observed taking home their school bags, which was an indication that they would not come back to school for the rest of the day. The researcher asked some of the learners why they were leaving before the end of the school day. The following were some of the learners' views:

- some learners were not interested in schooling; they came to school only because their parents had paid school fees;

- some learners came to school just to enjoy the company of their peers or for lack of anything better to do outside the school system;
- other learners were not interested in all the subjects they were doing. This meant that as soon as the teaching period for the learner's favourite subject passed, the learner saw no reason to remain in school for that day;
- if the subject that was to be taught after recess was taught by a teacher who usually did not come to class or a teacher they did not respect, learners did not bother waiting for such a teacher; and
- the abolition of corporal punishment in the school made learners do as they pleased.

dd) Attitudes towards teachers

Learners in this school had varying degrees of respect for their teachers. Among reasons for going home before the end of a school day was the differential respect learners had for their teachers, as pointed out above (iii). For example, the ESL teacher for grade 11 was a class-teacher of grade 11B (the class originally selected for this investigation). She admitted that this class never took her seriously. This lack of seriousness affected the learners' performance. When their teacher asked for work assigned to them on the previous day, the learners were just indifferent.

b) Teachers' attitudes and skills

It must be pointed out at this point that the observation of the grade 11 ESL teacher in school QP was based on the same assumptions used to observe the ESL teacher in school XY. For this reason, these assumptions are not repeated below.

i) The teacher's attitude towards TESL

The teacher did not show any commitment to a specific method of teaching. She had given learners many language exercises to do but none of them had been marked. No feedback had been given to the learners from the beginning of the school year (January) up to the time of investigation (August). At the time of the investigation only one test had been written. This was the only test that served as the basis for determining the learners' mid-year performance (see ENG marks for QP011, QP013

& QP014 in Table 5.5). It was evident from her teaching that she did not understand the aims of the grade 11 ESL syllabus.

ii) The teacher's mastery of the English language

The grade 11 ESL teacher at school QP had a good command of English. In two of the five lesson presentations that were observed (she was absent on the other three days), at no time did the need arise for her to adjust her language as all learners seemed to understand what she was saying. However, their apparent understanding of what she was saying did not match their understanding of what she was teaching, as her lesson presentations did not focus on anything in particular (also see *iii* below). Though in her discussion with the researcher the teacher had indicated that she had a university qualification in English, her teaching was so suspect that the researcher sought some clarifications on the matter from the principal. The principal indicated that the only qualification for which the teacher ever submitted any documentary proof was her National Senior Certificate. This basically meant that she was unqualified.

iii) The teacher's mastery of the skills for TESL

The teacher did not keep a workbook or scheme of work on the basis of which the quality of her interactive skills could be determined. Her learning management skills were evidently poor. Her lessons had no focus. For example, at one time she introduced a lesson on the use of punctuation marks. She had allegedly assigned this task to learners many days ago. It was clear that learners had forgotten about this task. Some did not have their exercise books with them whereas others had not bothered to do it at all. In view of the learners' reluctance to co-operate, the teacher then decided that there should be a class debate on "Corporal punishment should be reinstated in schools". No learner was interested in engaging in this debate. Then the teacher started asking learners to collect donations to buy a present for the former principal of the school. The teaching period came to an end. Nothing had been learnt because nothing had been taught. The teacher lacked interactive skills, as well as learning management skills.

iv) The teacher's mastery of various instructional approaches to TESL

Because the teacher had no workbook, scheme book or file the approaches that influenced her teaching could only be inferred from her teaching and the type of tasks she assigned to learners. Her teaching was largely based on the synthetic approaches. In view of the fact that the teacher was unqualified, she evidently did not know anything about the recommended approaches to TESL such as the communicative and the task-based approaches.

c) Availability and use of educational resources

School QP had a small library with the size of two classrooms, where learners could study or read. The library was moderately stocked with reading material which learners could use. However, it was observed that the library was not used for the purpose for which it was established. The teacher-librarian resorted to using the library as a classroom. Consequently, she no longer went to various classrooms where she was supposed to go and teach; but learners from her subject classes alternated in coming to the library, not to read but to be taught. As soon as each period was over, another class came in. This went on every day. As a result, it was not possible for any other teacher to refer learners to the library or for learners to come to the library to read on their own. In some instances when the teacher-librarian was absent, the library remained locked for as long as she was away.

As in school XY, for grade 11 two books were prescribed for 1998, namely "Encounters" and "The Winners". A learner could afford to have a copy of "Encounters" to himself or herself. However, the school did not have sufficient copies of "The Winners". The copies of this book were so limited that three learners had to share a single copy. The shortage was indeed so pertinent that one of the Grade 11 ESL teachers did not even know that there was yet another book to be done. After completing the analysis of "Encounters", she thought she had completed the study of literature for 1998.

5.2.4 RESULTS OF DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

The aim of doing the document analysis was to look into such school documents as mark schedules and school policy documents in order to determine each learner's

general ability in all subjects, his/her level of proficiency in L1 and the extent to which the school was managed on sound educational principles (see 4.4.5).

5.2.4.1 Grade 11 mark schedules

The mark schedules that formed the basis of the learners' half-yearly scholastic reports were analysed. The focus was only on the learners who had been selected for participation in this empirical investigation. The information gathered from the mark schedule is reflected in Table 5.2 below.

Table 5.2 Results of mark schedule analysis

LEARNERS	A	B	C	D	E	F	P/F
XY116	52	64	42	65	46	48	P
XY025	55	66	75	97	82	60	P
QP011	70	71	37	74	48	47	P
QP012	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
XY086	41	17	26	26	35	35	F
QP013	72	55	40	55	12	55	F
QP014	92	57	19	32	13	13	F

The letters A to F in the top row represent subjects. In the place of subject names, letters of the alphabet were used because learners did different subjects. There are no marks for learner QP012 because at the time of the empirical investigation the schedule for that particular class at school QP was not ready yet. The subjects represented by A to F above are indicated per school in Table 5.3 below.

Table 5.3 School subjects taken by grade 11 learners

Table 5.2 A-F	SCHOOL XY	SCHOOL QP
A	Zulu	Zulu
B	English	English
C	Mathematics	Mathematics/Afrikaans
D	Accounting	Biology
E	Economics	Home Economics/History
F	Business Economics	Physical Science/Geography

The learner performance is reported in percentage. In the P/F column it is indicated whether the learner passed (P) or failed (F) the mid-year examinations or tests.

5.2.4.2 School policy document

The analysis of each school's policy documents was based on the assumption that these documents reflected the extent to which the school community (the teachers, the learners, the management and the governing council):

- strived for a common goal;
- based their school's teaching-learning practices on sound educational principles, and
- established and maintained a positive culture of teaching and learning.

Neither of the two schools had a mission statement and/or school policy document. In school XY only the learner's code of conduct was available. This document dealt extensively with aims, learners' behaviour, learners' school attendance, security, school property, school uniform, hair style, jewellery, contravention of rules and steps to be taken against offenders.

5.2.4.3 Admission register

At school XY 1231 learners had enrolled for the 1998 school year. The school had 33 educators. Based on the number of educators and the school enrolment the educator-learner ratio of the school was 1:37.

At school QP 899 learners had enrolled for the 1998 school year. The school had 28 educators. In the light of school enrolment and the number of educators, the educator-learner ratio of the school was 1:32.

5.2.5 THE PARTICIPANTS' LEVEL OF ESL PROFICIENCY

Before the participants' level of proficiency is discussed it is important to first present their performance in the WPT as shown in Table 5.4 below. Table 5.4 is divided into four main columns.

Table 5.4 Results of the WPT

LEARNER S	TASKS				TOTALS		EVALUATION
	1 (3)	2 (3)	3 (9)	4 (9)	(24)	Stanine	
XY116	2	2	5	6	15	7	Above average
XY025	2	2	6	4	14	6	High Average
QP011	1	2	5	4	12	5	Average
QP012	2	1	4	4	11	4	Low average
XY086	1	1	2	3	7	1	Very poor
QP013	1	1	1	2	5	1	Very poor
QP014	1	1	2	2	6	1	Very poor

The first column contains the numbers of participants. The second column is divided into four sub-columns containing the various tasks of the WPT. Number 3 under Tasks 1 and 2, indicates that these tasks were marked out of 3, whereas number 9 under Tasks 3 and 4, indicates that these tasks were each marked out of 9. The third column is divided into two sub-columns. The first one of the two sub-columns indicated that the WPT was marked out of 24, which was converted to a stanine. The last column indicated the evaluation of the participants' performance on the WPT in comparison to ESL test norms.

In order to determine the participants' level of proficiency in ESL, their performance in the RPT (Table 5.1), the WPT (Table 5.4), as well as responses to the SBI questions were taken into account. For the purpose of the discussion in this section the data in Table 5.1, 5.2, 5.4 have been summarised in Table 5.5. Therefore, the following discussion of the level of ESL proficiency of each learner is based on some of the data in Table 5.5 below as well as each participant's response to the SBI questions (see 4.4.4, Appendix B & Appendix C). In order to facilitate understanding of the participants' performance some additional information such as sex and age of the participants have been added in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5 Participants' age, sex, scholastic achievement and proficiency levels

Participant	Age	Sex	School achievement			Proficiency level	
			ENG (100)	ZULU (100)	MATHS (100)	RPT (9)	WPT (9)
XY116	16	F	64	52	42	6	7
XY025	16	F	66	55	75	6	6
QP011	17	F	71	70	[37]	5	5
QP012	24	F	-	-	-	5	4
XY086	20	F	17	41	26	2	1
QP013	18	M	55	72	40	1	1
QP014	17	F	57	92	19	1	1

Table 5.5 is divided into five main columns. The first column contains the participants' numbers and the second and third columns reflect the gender and age of each participant respectively. The fourth column is divided into three sub-columns reflecting participants' scholastic achievements in ESL (ENG), Zulu and Mathematics (MATHS). Only participant QP011 did not take Mathematics. This is shown in the table by means of parenthesis around her marks (She took Afrikaans in stead of Mathematics). Whereas in Table 5.2 all the grade 11 subjects taken by the participants are reflected, Table 5.5 reflects only the subjects that are relevant for the interpretation of the participants' performance in the RPT, WPT and SBI. The fifth column is divided into two sub-columns reflecting the learner's scores in RPT and WPT. Whereas the school marks are presented in percentage (100) the RPT and WPT score are presented in stanine (9). Table 5.5 serves as the basis for the following discussion on the participants' level of proficiency.

5.2.5.1 Participant XY116

This learner was identified as a HPL at school XY. In the RPT she scored a high average of 6 mostly in all the skills except recognising inferences related to tone (E), recognising correct use of punctuation (F), recognising correct use of pronouns (J) and recognising inferences related to atmosphere (N) (see Tables 4.1 and 5.1). Her performance in the RPT is underscored by her performance in the WPT, where she scored 7, which is above average.

The main weaknesses in her written work were inaccuracies in the use of spelling, inconsistencies in the use of tense, limited vocabulary, omissions, inappropriate use of verbs, as well as intermittent incorrect use of concord and plural forms. It could be concluded from her performance in the WPT that this participant had an above average ability to:

- give a detailed description and to develop the description in a detailed way;
- organise and express facts clearly and concisely and omitting insignificant details;
- respond clearly and correctly in a given format to information given or required, and
- express views and discuss issues on a given topic.

During the interview, this participant demonstrated that she could speak English fluently and with confidence. In general this participant had an acceptable level of ESL proficiency for a grade 11 pupil.

5.2.5.2 Participant XY025

This participant was also identified as a HPL in the group that wrote the RPT in her school. According to the test norms, she had a high average reading proficiency (6) obtained mostly in all the skills except recognising inferences related to tone (E), recognising correct use of punctuation (F), recognising correct use of pronouns (J) and recognising inferences related to atmosphere (N) (Tables 4.1 and 5.1). Her performance in the RPT correlates positively with her performance in the WPT, where she also scored a high average (6). In practical terms this means that this participant had a high average writing performance in respect of the skills listed in 5.2.5.1 for participant XY116. On the basis of her performance in the WPT, she can be described as a competent writer (Roux 1997:16), who is able to fully convey a message in English.

However, her writing was marred by intermittent incorrect use of prepositions, use of unsuitable words (such as “than” instead of “then”), inability to punctuate, inconsistent use of tenses, incorrect use of concord as well as an unsuitable conversational tone in the essay.

During the interview, she expressed herself calmly and confidently although underdeveloped vocabulary manifested itself repeatedly. In general, this participant was fluent and sure of her grammar in spoken discourse.

5.2.5.3 Participant QP011

At school QP this learner was identified as a HPL. According to the test norms, her reading performance was average (5). She obtained most of her marks in mostly all the skills except recognising the correct use of punctuation (F), recognising different types of discourse (J), identifying the source of material (K) and recognising inferences related to atmosphere (N) (Tables 4.1 and 5.1). Her writing performance was also average (5). This denotes that, besides having an average reading proficiency, this learner also had an average ability to execute the writing skills, as listed in 5.2.5.1.

In respect of her performance in the WPT, this learner could be described as a modest writer, i.e. although she was broadly capable of conveying the message, her written expression had spelling errors and inappropriately used phrases, register and letter formats. Her illegible handwriting, inability to punctuate properly, as well as the inability to distinguish between homophones combined to mar her written work.

In spite of all the weaknesses manifested in her script, during the interview she demonstrated clearly that she was capable of effectively conveying the message she had in mind. Her oral presentation was generally acceptable. It was observed that communication anxiety tended to militate against her fluency.

5.2.5.4 Participant QP012

This learner was identified as the second HPL at school QP. In the RPT she scored 5 which, according to test norms, means that she had an average reading proficiency. The skills that were relatively lacking were recognising correct use of punctuation (F), recognising correct use of pronouns (I), recognising different types of discourse (J), interpreting non-verbal conveyors of information (L) and recognising inferences related to atmosphere (N) (Tables 4.1 and 5.1).

According to the test norms, her performance of 4 in the WPT could be described as "low average". This means she had a low average ability to execute the writing skills referred to in 5.2.5.1. As a low average proficiency learner, she could also be described as a marginal writer, i.e. though she managed to convey short messages in English, her writing style still barely allowed for basic communication and it also lacked fluency.

The main weaknesses of her written expression were poor punctuation, inconsistent use of tenses, incorrect use of prepositions, long-winded sentences, inability to respond to task demands as well as the use of unacceptable letter formats.

It was observed during the interview that there was a significant difference between this learner's written work (as indicated by the WPT) and the quality of her oral presentation. During the interview, she was relaxed and confident when she responded to questions. She was generally a better speaker than a writer.

5.2.5.5 Participant XY086

On the basis of her performance in the RPT, this participant was identified as a LPL at school XY. Her score of 2 in the RPT was poor according to the test norm. She was generally poor in all the skills except making inferences related to the writer's intention (D) and interpreting non-verbal conveyors of information (L) (Table 4.1 and 5.1).

In the WPT she scored very poorly (1). This score implied that she could be described as an intermittent writer, i.e. she could produce a few English words and phrases, but could not convey any message clearly in English.

In her written presentations, the following weaknesses were identified: the inability to respond to the demands of the task, poor use of grammatical structures, poor punctuation, inability to handle basic plural forms (such the use of "womans" instead of "women", "polices" instead of "police"), inability to understand instructions, inappropriate use of register, poor spelling and incorrect use of subject concord in a sentence.

During the interview problems such as the following were identified: incoherent expressions, code switching, underdeveloped (or complete lack of) vocabulary and sheer guesswork due to failure to understand the question. All these problems made her expressions most incomprehensible.

5.2.5.6 Participant QP013

This participant was identified as a LPL in school QP. In RPT he performed very poorly managing to score only 1. He was generally poor in all the skills except recognising correct use of punctuation (F), recognising correct use of pronouns (I), identifying source material (K) and interpreting non-verbal conveyors of information (L) (Tables 4.1 and 5.1). In the WPT he managed to score only 1. Both scores mean that he was very poor both in reading and writing in ESL. Because he was unimaginative, his written work lacked originality and structural coherence.

In his written presentations, the following weaknesses were identified: the inability to respond to the demands of the task, use of unsuitable words, poor use of grammatical structures, poor punctuation, inability to understand instructions, inappropriate use of register, poor spelling and a lack of preparedness for the typical demands of the grade 11 curriculum.

During the interview, there were instances of complete breakdown in communication. As a consequence, the researcher resorted to filling in some of the words for the interviewee in order to keep the interview flowing.

5.2.5.7 Participant QP014

This participant scored 1 in the RPT and was identified as a LPL in her school. She was generally poor in all the skills except recognising correct use of tenses (H), identifying source of material (K) and interpreting non-verbal conveyors of information (L). According to the test norms, this performance was classified as very poor. In the WPT she also scored 1 which gave her performance the same classification.

Among other problems, the following were the most conspicuous in her writing: poor paragraphing, failure to understand instructions and respond to the demands of the task, use of unsuitable letter formats, poor spelling, lack of vocabulary, tendency to string together unrelated words and phrases, inconsistent use of tense structures, as well as the use of inappropriate words (such as "by" instead of "buy").

During the interview, she was nervous, anxious and lacked confidence to use English. Her responses to questions were characterised by intermittent communication breakdown and code-switching due to lack of vocabulary.

5.2.5.8 Conclusion

The analysis of the learners' level of ESL proficiency revealed that

- there is a significant correlation between the learners' performances in the RPT and the WPT;
- the learners' RPT skills correlate positively with the learners' level of ESL oral proficiency;
- irrespective of the learners' level of ESL proficiency, most learners performed poorly on such reading skills as recognising inferences related to tone (E), recognising the correct use of punctuation (F), recognising different types of discourse (J) and recognising inferences related to atmosphere (N) (see Table 4.1 and 5.1)

From their responses to the WPT it was observed that the most serious weaknesses of learners, though in varying degrees, were the

- failure to understand instructions, which led to poor responses to task demands;
- spelling errors;
- inappropriate use of tone and register;
- incorrect use of punctuation marks;
- incorrect use of verb tenses, and
- inappropriate use of letter formats

The joint analysis of the learners' school performance, as well as their performance in the RPT, WPT and SBI showed that some learners are generally not capable of handling the requirements of the grade 11 curriculum.

5.2.6 THE LLS'S USED BY THE PARTICIPANTS

To determine which LLS's were used by each learner to learn ESL, the results of the SILL and SBI were used. The data gathered by means of these instruments are discussed in conjunction with a **composite strategy use profile**. The composite strategy use profile is a graphical presentation of the SILL and SBI average scores of all learners per strategy group. This method of data presentation facilitated visual comparison of all learners on a common group of strategies at a time. It also enabled the researcher to focus on each learner's strengths and weaknesses in respect of LLS use (see Fig. 5.1 to 5.7 below). The data represented in each composite strategy use profile is derived from Table 5.6, which is a summary of Appendix C.

Table 5.6 Summary of results of the SILL and SBI

LEARNERS		A	B	C	D	E	F	GAVG	EVALUATION
XY116	SILL	3.3	4.1	2.3	4.8	4.0	3.8	3.8	Usually used
	SBI	2.8	3.6	2.3	4.3	2.2	3.5	3.3	Sometimes used
XY025	SILL	3.3	3.9	3.3	4.3	4.0	3.2	3.7	Usually used
	SBI	2.9	3.6	3.0	4.4	2.5	2.5	3.3	Sometimes used
QP011	SILL	2.3	3.9	4.0	3.8	3.8	2.7	3.4	Sometimes used
	SBI	2.2	3.9	3.0	4.0	2.5	2.5	3.2	Sometimes used
QP012	SILL	3.2	4.0	2.3	4.4	4.7	4.7	3.9	Usually used
	SBI	2.9	3.6	2.0	4.1	2.8	4.2	3.3	Sometimes used
XY086	SILL	3.3	3.9	2.2	3.3	3.0	2.8	3.3	Sometimes used
	SBI	2.2	2.9	1.2	2.7	2.3	2.8	2.4	Generally not used
QP013	SILL	2.9	2.7	2.0	4.3	3.2	2.8	3.0	Sometimes used
	SBI	2.0	2.9	1.0	3.9	2.3	3.0	2.6	Sometimes used
QP014	SILL	3.0	3.6	2.7	4.0	3.7	4.8	3.6	Usually used
	SBI	1.9	2.7	1.5	3.6	2.2	4.2	2.7	Sometimes used

Table 5.6 consists of columns for **learners**, six **LLS groupings** [memory strategies (A), cognitive strategies (B), compensation strategies (C), metacognitive strategies (D) affective strategies (E) and social strategies (F)], the **general average** (GAVG)

for strategy use as well as the **evaluation** of frequency with which each participant used the LLS's to learn ESL. For each participant, the SILL and the SBI averages for each strategy grouping are reflected. Appendix C gives an indication of the calculations made. For example, the sums of various strategy groupings for learner XY116 were added together to make a grand total of 191 which was then divided by the number of the SILL items (50) to yield an overall average of 3.8 for learner XY116. This average means that this learner **usually used** the LLS's to learn ESL. The same procedure was used for the interpretation of the frequency with which each LLS sub-group was used (see Table 5.7)

Table 5.7 Key to interpreting the SILL and SBI average scores

FREQUENCY	SILL/SBI AVERAGES	EVALUATION
HIGH	4.5 to 5.0	Always used
	3.5 to 4.4	Usually used
MEDIUM	2.5 to 3.4	Sometimes used
LOW	1.5 to 2.4	Generally not used
	1.0 to 1.4	Never or almost never used

(Oxford 1990:300)

To facilitate interpretation of strategy use, each item on the SILL was converted into the strategy that it represents. For example item 1: "I think of relationship between what I already know and new things I learn in English" represents the strategy of learning by **associating** (see in Table 3.6). In the following discussion, after a strategy is mentioned, a number in brackets is put next to it to indicate the number of the item that represents the strategy in the SILL. For example, **associating** is always followed by a 1 within brackets to indicate that associating is a strategy represented by item 1 on the SILL.

5.2.6.1. Memory strategies

The SILL items in Part A were converted into the following strategies: associating (1), placing words into context (2), sound image combination (3), using imagery (4), representing sound in the memory (5), elaborating (6), using physical responses (7), structured reviewing (8) and using mechanical techniques (9).

a) Participant XY116

The results of the SILL, as confirmed by this participant's responses to the interview questions, showed that in order to learn ESL this participant used physical responses (7), mechanical techniques (9), imagery (4), inference from context (2) as well as associating (1). She indicated that she did not generally review her work in a structured way (8); neither did she learn ESL by representing English sound in the memory (5). In this section she obtained average scores of 3.3 and 2.8 in the SILL and SBI respectively. These averages indicated that she sometimes used strategies for remembering effectively.

b) Participant XY025

In this strategy group this participant marked using mechanical techniques (9), imagery (4), structured reviewing (8), placing words into context (2) and associating (1) as strategies she usually used. Although she did not know the meaning of flashcard in item 6, she used contextual cues to determine what it meant. Whereas she was in doubt whether or not she ever used physical responses (7) and sound-image combinations (3) to learn ESL, she was definitely certain that she never learnt by representing English sounds in the memory (5) nor by elaborating (6). During the interview, it became clear that the negative response to item 5 was due to a lack of understanding of the word "rhyme." In this section she obtained the average scores of 3.3 and 2.9 on the SILL and SBI respectively. These average scores indicated that in order to learn ESL, this participant **sometimes** used strategies for remembering effectively.

c) Participant QP011

This participant indicated that she used only three strategies in this group, namely: structured reviewing (8), using imagery (4) and representing sound in the memory (5). Whereas placing words into context (2) and mechanical techniques (9) were indicated as generally not used, the use of physical responses (7), image-sound combination (3), elaborating (6) and associating (1) were certainly never used. Consequently, the average scores of 2.3 (SILL) and 2.2 (SBI) are an indication that this participant **generally did not use** the strategies for remembering effectively. During the

interview, she mentioned that she did not do anything in particular to ensure that she did not forget the new English words.

d) Participant QP012

The memory strategies which participant QP012 preferred to use to learn ESL included associating (1), mechanical techniques (9), image-sound combination (3), use of imagery (4) and structured reviewing (8). She was uncertain about the use of elaborating (6). Strategies that she generally did not use included the use of physical responses (7), representing sound in the memory (5) as well as placing words into context (2). Like some of the participants she did not understand the word "rhyme". In this section, she scored an average of 3.2 (SILL) which, on the basis of the SBI, decreased to 2.9. Nevertheless, both averages indicated that the participant **sometimes used** the strategies for remembering effectively.

e) Participant XY086

In learning English, this participant indicated that she usually used structured reviewing (8), mechanical techniques (9), imagery (4), as well as placing words into context (2). Her responses indicated that she was uncertain if she ever used physical responses (7), associating (1) and elaborating (6). Image-sound combination (3) and representing sound in the memory (5) were usually not used. She scored an average of 3.3 in the SILL and 2.2 in the SBI. Whereas the SILL average (3.3) indicated that this participant **sometimes used** these strategies, the SBI average (2.2) indicated that she **generally did not use** them in ESL learning.

f) Participant QP013

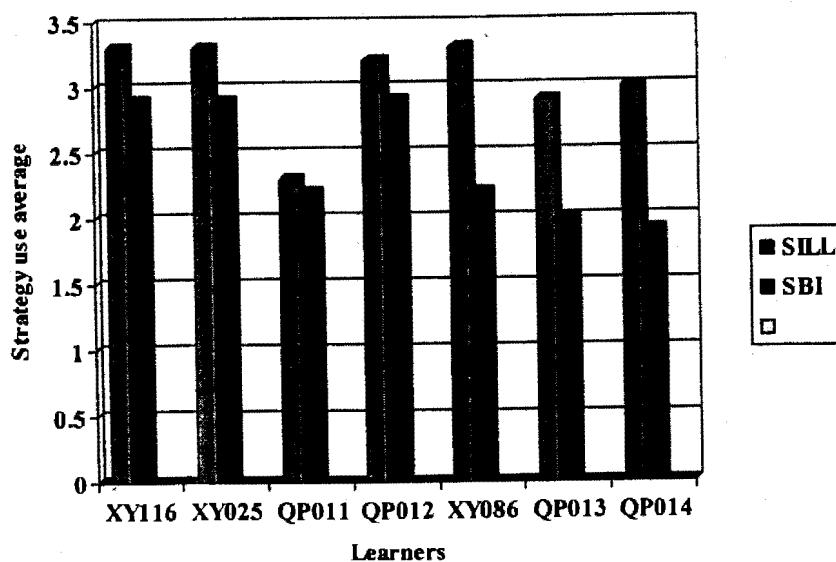
Strategies used by this participant in this section involved the use of image-sound combination (3), representing sound in the memory (5), placing words into context (2) and elaborating (6). He generally did not use imagery (4), physical responses (7), mechanical technique (9) and structured reviewing (8). This participant's responses were based more on guessing than on factual accuracy. The argument is supported by the fact that although the participant indicated that he used representing sound in the memory (5) and elaborating (6), he did not know the meanings of "rhyme" and "flashcard". The negative response to item 1 was due more to the participant's lack of

understanding of the item than the fact that he did not use it. During the interview, it was also evident that the lack of response to item 8 was due to the participant's lack of understanding the meaning of the word "review". Whereas the SILL average (2.9) indicates that this participant **sometimes used** these strategies, the SBI average (2.0) indicates that he **generally did not use** them in ESL learning.

g) Participant QP014

When participant QP014 responded to the SILL, she indicated that in learning English she preferred using imagery (4), placing words into context (2) and representing sound in the memory (5). She was uncertain about using image-sound combination (3), associating (1) and using mechanical techniques (9). In respect of elaborating (6), using physical responses (7) and structured reviewing (8), she indicated that she generally did not use them. This might be due to the fact that she did not know the meanings of "rhyme", "flashcard" and "review". In this section, she obtained the average scores of 3 (SILL) and 1.9 (SBI). Whereas the SILL average (3.0) indicates that this participant **sometimes used** the strategies for remembering effectively, the SBI average (1.9) indicates that she **generally did not use** them in ESL learning.

Fig. 5.1 Composite strategy use profile: Memory strategies



On the basis of the preceding discussion of the participants' use of memory strategies, the following patterns emerged. Participants XY116, XY025 and QP012's SILL and SBI average scores showed that these participants **sometimes** used memory strategies. Participant QP011's SILL and SBI average score showed that she **generally did not** use memory strategies. Whereas participants XY086, QP013, QP014's SILL average score indicate that these participants **sometimes** used memory strategies, their SBI average scores indicated that they **generally did not use** these strategies.

5.2.6.2 Cognitive strategies

This subgroup of the LLS's consists of repeating (10) naturalistic practising by imitating native speakers (11), formal practising with sounds (12), recombining (13), naturalistic practising through speaking (14), using resources for sending and receiving messages (15), naturalistic practising through writing (16), trying to get the idea quickly (17), analysing contrastively (18), reasoning deductively (19), analysing expressions (20), translating (21), formal practising through reading (22) and taking notes (23).

a) Participant XY116

The LLS's that this participant used were using resources for receiving and sending messages (15), translating (21), repeating (10), recombining (13), naturalistic practising by imitating native speakers (11) naturalistic practising through speaking (14) and writing (16), formal practising with sounds (12) and formal practising through reading (22), as well as analysing contrastively (18). She was not certain whether or not she ever scanned or skimmed through the text to get the idea quickly (17), learnt by taking notes (23) and reasoned deductively (19). One of the factors contributing to her uncertainty in respect of item 19 was the fact that she did not know the meaning of "pattern." The strategy that she never used was that of analysing expressions (20). The average scores of 4.1 (SILL) and 3.6 (SBI) indicate that this participant **usually used** the strategies for involving all her mental processes to learn English.

b) Participant XY025

The averages of 3.9 and 3.6 on the SILL and SBI respectively indicate that in order to learn ESL, this participant **usually attempted to use** all her mental processes to achieve this aim. The strategies that she always used in this section entailed the use of resources for receiving and sending messages (15), taking notes (23), naturalistic practising (11, 16), formal practising with sounds (12), analysing expressions (20), trying to scan or skim through text to get the idea quickly (17), translating (21), as well as repeating (10). The middle response of 3 in respect of recombining (13), reasoning deductively (19) and analysing contrastively, (18) was an indication that the participant was in doubt if she ever used these strategies at all. She pointed out that naturalistic practising through speaking (14), which involved practising English by talking to her peers, was a problem because her peers did not reciprocate as they thought she was trying to make herself appear better than them. She never used formal practising through reading (22).

c) Participant QP011

According to her responses to the SILL, the strategies this participant used to involve her mental processes in ESL learning entailed the use of resources for receiving and sending messages (15), trying to get the idea quickly (17), translating (21), reasoning deductively (19), naturalistic practising (11, 16), formal practising with sounds (12), formal practising with reading (22), as well as repeating (10). Strategies involving taking notes (23), recombining (13), naturalistic practising involving starting a conversation in English (14), analysing expressions (20) and analysing contrastively (18) were generally not used. In respect of item 14, the participant mentioned that she did not practice naturally because of the negative reaction from her peers. Also noteworthy was the fact that this participant's responses were negatively influenced by her limited vocabulary. For example, she did not know the meaning of "pattern" in item 19. Nevertheless, the averages of 3.9 in both SILL and SBI imply that this participant **usually used** this group of strategies.

d) Participant QP012

This participant mostly preferred using resources for receiving and sending messages such as the family TV set (15), skimming to get the idea quickly (17), taking notes

(23), repeating (10), recombining (13), naturalistic practising through writing (16), analysing contrastively (18), translating (21), reasoning deductively (19), as well as naturalistic practising through talking like native speakers (11). In response to the question based on item 14, she pointed out that she did not use this strategy because her peers were always playful and did not take learning seriously. The interview also revealed that she did do formal practising through reading (22) English novels and the local English newspaper "Sowetan." Another aspect that was revealed by means of the interview question was the fact that, although she indicated that she used the strategy of reasoning deductively to learn English, she did not know the meaning of the word "pattern". However, she generally did not learn ESL through formal practising with sound (12) and analysing expressions (20) and formal practising through reading (22). The average scores of 4 (SILL) and 3.6 (SBI) are an indication that this participant **usually used** these strategies.

e) Participant XY086

The cognitive strategies which this participant usually used were: repeating (10), naturalistic practising (11, 14, 16), formal practising with sounds (12) and reading (22), using resources for receiving and sending messages (15), trying to get the idea quickly (17), recombining (13) and analysing contrastively (18). Whereas she was not sure if she ever used reasoning deductively (19) and analysing expressions (20) in learning English, she was definitely sure that she generally did not use translating (21) and taking notes (23) for the purpose of learning English. For this group of strategies, she scored an average of 3.9. However, the interview questions revealed that her response to items 11, 16, 19 and 23 were probably inaccurate. The alterations made to her responses after the interview resulted in a change in her average score from 3.9 to 2.9. Whereas the SILL average (3.9) indicates that this participant **usually used** this group of strategies, the SBI average (2.2) indicates that she **sometimes used** them to involve all her mental processes learning ESL. It is important to note the fact that the participant's low proficiency had a negative impact on her understanding of the SILL items. For example, she did not know the meaning of the word "pattern" in item 19. During the interview, most of her responses were incomprehensible, evasive and incoherent (such as her response to the question based on item 16).

f) Participant QP013

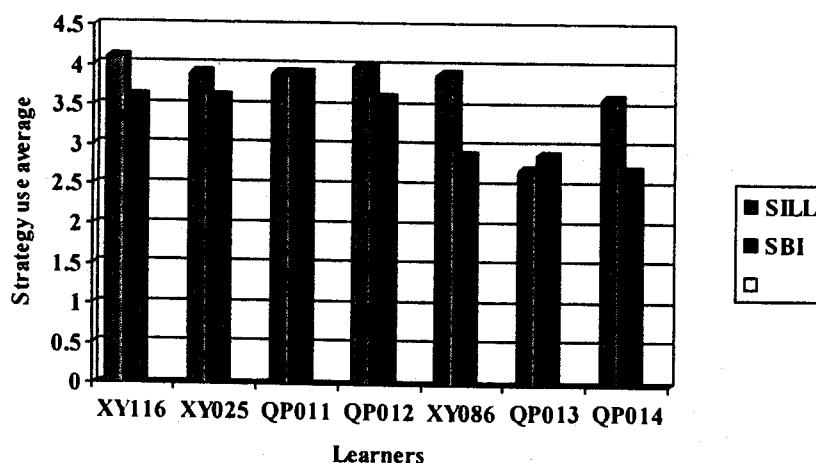
This participant preferred learning ESL by using resources for receiving and sending messages (15), recombining (13), analysing expressions (20), analysing contrastively (18) and formal practising through reading (22). He was not sure about using naturalistic practising through writing letters to his mother (16) and naturalistic practising through conversation (11) in English with friends. The strategies he generally did not use were translating (21), formal practising with sound (12), trying to get the idea quickly (17), repeating (10), reasoning deductively (19) and naturalistic practising (14) through conversation in English. It should be noted that although the participant indicated that he always used the strategies specified in items 13, 18 and 20, his level of proficiency in English could not allow him to do what was involved in executing those strategies. His average scores of 2.7 (SILL) and 2.9 (SBI) both indicate that he **sometimes used** the strategies to involve his mental processes in ESL learning.

g) Participant QP014

As a means of involving all her mental processes in learning English, this participant indicated that she used resources for receiving and sending messages (15), repeating (10), naturalistic practising through writing (16) and conversations in English (14), formal practising with sounds (12), skimming through text to get the idea quickly (17), naturalistic practising through trying to talk like native speakers (11) and analysing expressions (20). She was undecided about taking notes (23), recombining (13) as well as reasoning deductively (19).

Although she indicated that she learnt by analysing expressions, she could not provide an example of how to use this strategy. Learning by translating (21), formal practising through reading English materials (22) and analysing contrastively (18) were strategies that she did not use. She obtained average scores of 3.6 (SILL) and 2.7 (SBI). The SBI average score indicated that she sometimes used these strategies to involve her mental processes in ESL learning.

Fig. 5.2 Composite strategy use profile: Cognitive strategies



The above profile of the participants' responses on their use of cognitive strategies can be summarised as follows: The SILL and SBI average scores indicated that participants XY116, XY025, QP011 and QP012 **usually** used cognitive strategies. Only participant QP013's average scores on both the SILL and SBI showed that he **sometimes** used cognitive strategies. Whereas their SILL average scores indicated that participant XY086 and QP014 **usually** used cognitive strategies, their SBI average scores showed that only **sometimes** did they use these strategies.

5.2.6.3 Compensation strategies

The strategies that comprise this subgroup are using linguistic cues (24), using mime and gestures (25), coining new words (26), getting help (27), using paralinguistic cues (28) and using circumlocution (29).

a) Participant XY116

Using circumlocution (29) is the only compensation strategy that this participant used in learning ESL. She was uncertain about using paralinguistic cues (28) and using mime or gestures (25). During the interview she pointed out that it was safer to ask instead of guessing. In respect of using mime or gestures the uncertainty might have been caused by her lack of understanding the meaning of the word "gestures". During the interview she mentioned that using linguistic cues (24), i.e. inferring the meaning of words from context, was more preferable to getting help (27). In response to item

26 (on the extent to which she coined new words when learning to write or speak English) she indicated that she never used this strategy. Her averages of 2.3 (SILL) and 2.3 (SBI) indicate that this participant experienced problems in using strategies for compensating for missing knowledge. Both the SILL and SBI averages indicate that this participant **generally did not use** strategies for compensating for missing knowledge.

b) Participant XY025

In an attempt to compensate for the missing knowledge when learning to speak or write in English, this participant indicated that she usually used paralinguistic cues (28), circumlocution (29) as well as coining new words (26). Because the participant did not understand the word "gestures" in item 25, she resorted to using a middle response of 3. She also pointed out that she preferred using contextual cues to guessing (24) or getting help (27) from someone else. It can be inferred from her average score of 3.3 (SILL) and 3.0 (SBI) that the participant **sometimes** used the strategies for compensating for the missing knowledge.

c) Participant QP011

To compensate for the missing knowledge this participant preferred to use paralinguistic cues (28), mime or gestures (25), linguistic cues (24), as well as circumlocution (29). The response to item 25 might have been a product of guesswork since the participant did not know the meaning of the word "gestures." She was uncertain about getting help (27). She never used the strategy of coining new words (26) to learn ESL. For this strategy group, she scored an average of 4.0 on SILL and 3.0 on SBI. Whereas the SILL average indicate a higher frequency of using compensation strategies, the SBI average indicates that only **sometimes** did the participant use the compensation strategies.

d) Participant QP012

The average scores of 2.3 (SILL) and 2.0 (SBI) indicate that this participant **generally did not use** this group of strategies. The only compensation strategy that she used was circumlocution (29). The researcher found this choice plausible because of the participant's relatively higher level of proficiency. She mentioned that she avoided the

use of paralinguistic cues (28), mime or gestures (25) linguistic cues (24), as well as coining new words (26). She argued that instead of using these strategies she preferred using a dictionary or getting help (27) from someone else. Her negative response to item 25 was due partly to her reluctance to guess and partly to limited vocabulary, as she did not understand the word "gestures".

e) Participant XY086

The analysis of her responses to the SILL items showed that she did not use any of these strategies for ESL learning. She was not certain if she ever used circumlocution (29) and the coining of new words, (26) for purposes of learning English. However, she had no doubt about the fact that she generally did not use paralinguistic cues (28), mime or gestures (25), linguistic cues (24) as well as getting help (27). Her SBI average score of 1.2 is testimony to the fact that she **never used** these strategies for learning ESL.

f) Participant QP013

The average scores of 2.0 (SILL) indicate that the participant **generally did not use** the strategies for compensating for the missing knowledge, whereas the SBI average (1.0) indicates that he never used these strategies at all. Among other reasons for avoiding to use these strategies were the participant's belief that using mime, gestures (25) paralinguistic cues (28) and linguistic cues (24) was dangerous because it could lead to telling lies. His English vocabulary was limited. Consequently, he could not use circumlocution (29) and coining new words (26), as these strategies require a relatively higher level of language proficiency for the participant to be able to execute them.

g) Participant QP014

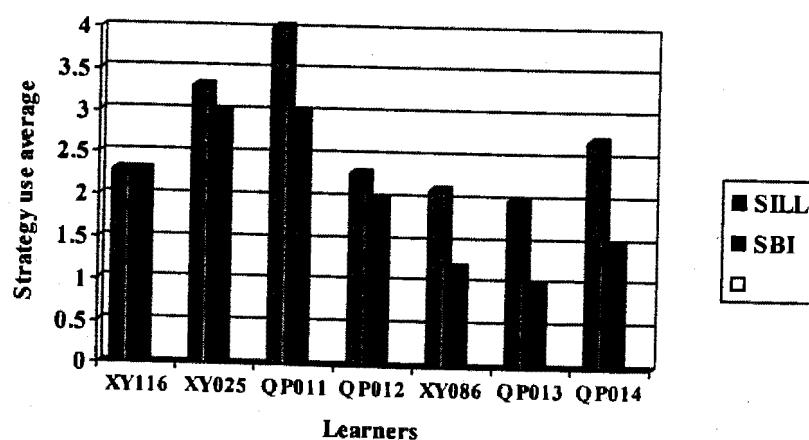
This group of strategies was certainly not the participant's favourite. She indicated that she used paralinguistic cues (28). In the light of her level of proficiency in English (as demonstrated by the poor quality of her responses to the SBI questions) the researcher regarded her mid-point response to item 29 as an attempt to play safe by being non-committal. Her opting for mid-point responses to items 24, 26, and 29 was due either to her lack of understanding some words or the fact that the ability to

execute strategies such as the coining of new words depended on the level of proficiency already acquired in English. She also said that, instead of guessing, she preferred using a dictionary or consulting someone else (27). Her average score of 2.7 (SILL) indicate that she **sometimes** used the strategies for compensating for missing knowledge, whereas her SBI average of 1.5 denotes that she **generally did not use** these strategies.

In sum, the discussion of the participants' responses on their use of compensation strategies revealed the following patterns: Participant XY025's average scores on both the SILL and SBI mean that she **sometimes** used the strategies for compensating for the missing knowledge. The average scores on both the SILL and SBI mean that participants XY116 and QP012 **generally did not use** the strategies for compensating for the missing knowledge.

Whereas participant QP011's SILL average score implies that she **usually** used compensation strategies, her SBI average score indicates that only **sometimes** did she use these strategies.

Fig. 5.3 Composite strategy use profile: Compensation strategies



The SILL average scores of participants XY086 and QP013 reflect that they generally did not use compensation strategies, but their SBI scores show that they almost never used these strategies. In the case of participant QP014, whereas her SILL average score reflects that she sometimes used compensation strategies, her SBI average score indicates that she generally did not use these strategies.

5.2.6.4 Metacognitive strategies

The LLS's that are classified under this subgroup are seeking practice opportunities for using English (30) self-monitoring (31), paying attention (32), finding out about language learning (33), organising (34), seeking practice opportunities for reading (35), identifying a purpose for the language task (36), seeking practice opportunities for speaking English (37) and self-evaluating (38).

a) Participant XY116

Her average scores on SILL and SBI are 4.8 and 4.3 respectively. This is an indication that this participant was always organised and keen to know her progress in learning ESL. The strategies which she used to achieve the above were self-monitoring (31), self-evaluating (38), seeking practice opportunities for using (30), reading in (35) and speaking English (37), paying attention (32), identifying a purpose for the language task (36), finding out about language learning (33), as well as organising (34), more especially for success in the examination. For her the aim of each language task was to enable her to learn to communicate in English.

b) Participant XY025

As a means of helping her to learn English, this participant indicated that she monitored herself (31), sought practice opportunities for using (30), reading in (35) and speaking English (37). She also paid attention (32), identified a purpose for each language task (36) and organised her work (34). Regarding item 34, she mentioned that in fact she did not have a study plan. All she always studied was Mathematics and Accounting. She studied English only when she was preparing to write an English test or examinations. She further maintained that her purpose of learning English was to be able to be proficient in English as the language of business and she would also like to be a professional writer. She did not generally find out about language learning

(33), as she had no one to talk to in this regard. Her mother could not assist her because of her low level of education. She was not sure how to evaluate her level of proficiency in English (38). Her average of 4.3 (SILL) and 4.4 (SBI) indicate that she **usually** organised and evaluated her ESL learning.

c) Participant QP011

The SILL and SBI results showed that this participant normally relied on metacognitive strategies in learning English. The strategies that she used in this group were self-evaluating (38) and self-monitoring (31), seeking practice opportunities for speaking English (37), paying attention (32), identifying a purpose for the language task (36) and finding out from her teacher about language learning (33). She further sought practice opportunities by reading English materials all by herself (35). She indicated that she generally did not seek practice opportunities involving looking for many ways of using English (30), neither did she do her work according to a specific study plan (34). Her average scores of 3.8 and 4.0 in SILL and SBI respectively indicate that she **usually** used strategies for evaluating and organising her work.

d) Participant QP012

The responses of this participant to the SILL indicate that she was organised and conscious of the need to measure her progress in English. She achieved this by monitoring (31) and evaluating herself (38). She also sought practice opportunities for using (30) and reading in English (35), paid attention (32), identified a purpose for the language task (36) and consciously tried to find out about language learning (33) from her boyfriend. She actually did not have a study plan/schedule (34). Neither did she seek any practice opportunities for speaking English (37) as she relied heavily on formal practising. There is no significant difference between her SILL (4.4) and SBI (4.1) average scores. Both scores indicate that the participant **usually** used the strategies for evaluating and organising her work.

e) Participant XY086

The main strategies which she usually used in this section involved finding out about language learning (33) from her brother, seeking practice opportunities (30, 35, 37), as well as paying attention (32). The middle response of 3 was used to respond to

items dealing with monitoring (31), seeking practice opportunities for speaking English (37) and organising (34). She generally did not evaluate herself (38); neither did she identify a purpose for language tasks (36). Her aim of learning English was based on instrumental motives: she learnt English in order to be able to understand other subjects for which English was used as a medium of instruction. Her average score of 3.3 (SILL) and 2.7 (SBI) indicate that she **sometimes** used the strategies for organising and evaluating learning.

f) Participant QP013

The strategies that this participant preferred to use in order to organise and evaluate his work were: self-monitoring (31), self-evaluating (38), paying attention (32), organising (34), identifying a purpose for the language task (36) and seeking practice opportunities for using English (30), and seeking practice opportunities for reading (35). He was not sure if he ever used the strategy of finding out about English language learning (33) and speaking English (37).

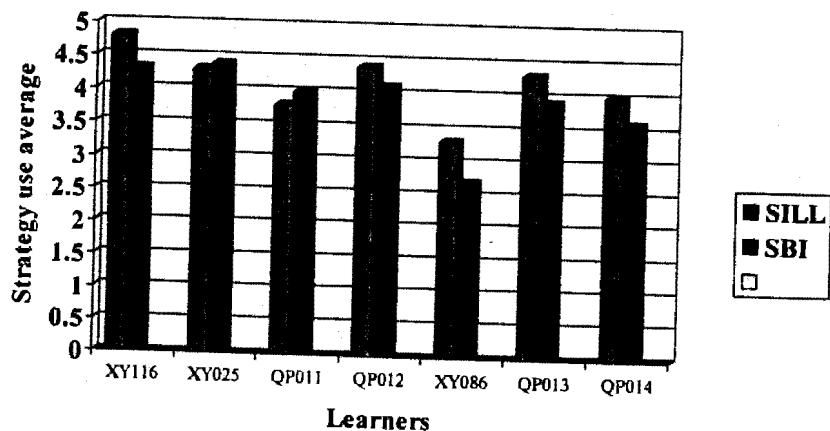
In his study plan (34), English took only three hours per week. His motive for learning English (36) was instrumental. In his opinion, English is an international language and anyone who did not know it was "nothing". In this way it was clear that to him the mastery of the English language was a means of acquiring a status. The average scores of 4.3 (SILL) and 3.9 (SBI) are testimony to the high frequency with which this participant used this group of strategies.

g) Participant QP014

To organise her work and evaluate her progress in English learning this participant relied on a variety of strategies. At school she sought practice opportunities involving conversing in English with her peers (37). She also learnt by paying attention (32), organising her work by means of a study schedule (34) and by identifying a purpose for the language task (36). Her learning activities also included self-evaluating (38) and self-monitoring (31), as well as finding out from her uncle about English language learning (33). The strategies that did not feature in her plan were seeking practice opportunities that involved reading (35) and self-monitoring (31). The

average scores of 4.0 (SILL) and 3.6 (SBI) showed that the participant **usually** used the strategies for organising and evaluating her work.

Fig. 5.4 Composite strategy use profile: Metacognitive strategies



In short, the following patterns have emerged from the discussion of the participants' responses on their use of metacognitive strategies. Whereas her SILL average score reflected that participant XY116 **always** used metacognitive strategies, her SBI average showed that she **usually** used these strategies. Their average scores on both SBI and SILL showed that participants XY025, QP011, QP012, QP013 and QP014 **usually** used metacognitive strategies. Only participant XY086's average scores on both the SILL and SBI indicated that she sometimes used metacognitive strategies.

5.2.6.5 Affective strategies

Comprising the affective strategies subgroup are the following strategies: using music and progressive relaxation (39), taking risks wisely (40) rewarding yourself (41), listening to your body (42), writing a language diary (43) and discussing your feelings with someone else (44).

a) Participant XY116

To manage her emotions emanating from learning ESL she indicated that she always took risks wisely (40), rewarded herself (41), kept a language learning diary (43), listened to her body (42) and discussed her feelings with her mother. However, the SBI revealed that the participant neither rewarded herself, nor kept any language learning diary. Due to these inconsistencies, the SILL average of 4.0 decreased to 2.2 for SBI. The former average is an indication that this participant **usually used** the strategies for managing her emotions, whereas the latter average denotes she **generally did not use** them.

b) Participant XY025

To manage her emotions relating to English learning, this participant indicated that she kept a language diary (43), took risks wisely (40), rewarded herself (41), listened to her body (42) and discussed her feelings with her mother (44). During the interview, it became obvious that the participant did not keep a language diary; neither did she reward herself. She was unsure if she ever used music and progressive relaxation (39) to manage her emotions. Because of the inconsistent responses, her average score of 4.0 (SILL) decreased to 2.5 (SBI). Whereas the SILL average score indicates that the participant **usually used** the strategies for managing her emotions, the SBI average denotes that she **sometimes** used them.

c) Participant QP011

There is a significant difference between this participant's SILL (3.8) and SBI (2.5). This difference is due to the adjustments made to her responses to the SILL on the basis of the evidence gained during the interview. For example, the responses to items 41 and 44 had to be changed because the participant mentioned that she did not reward herself and neither did she talk to anyone about her feelings (44). Yet, she had indicated the opposite when responding to the SILL items earlier. Other strategies she usually used were the use of music and progressive relaxation (39) and listening to her body (42). Taking risks wisely (40) and keeping a language diary (43) were not used. Nonetheless, her SILL average indicates that she **usually used** the strategies for managing emotions, whereas the SBI average indicates that only **sometimes** did she use them.

d) Participant QP012

The difference between the SILL (4.7) and SBI (2.8) is significant. This difference is the consequence of the discrepancy between this participant's responses to the SILL items and to the SBI questions. Her responses to the SILL show that she preferred taking risks wisely (40), rewarding herself (41), listening to her body (42), discussing her feelings with the English teacher or her boyfriend (44), writing a language diary (43) and using music and progressive relaxation (39). During the interview, it became clear that she did not reward herself (41), she did not understand the word "nervous" (42), nor did she keep a language learning diary (43). These discrepancies explain the difference between the SILL and SBI average scores. Whereas the SILL average means that this participant **always used** these strategies, the SBI average indicates that only **sometimes** did she use strategies in this group.

e) Participant XY086

It was again evident during the interview that this participant used middle responses where she did not understand the item or whenever she was in doubt and wanted to play safe. For example, she did not know the meaning of the word "reward." Neither did she know the meanings of "tense" and "nervous" in item 42. However, she did discuss her feelings with her brother who was doing grade 12 in another local senior secondary school. On the basis of the researcher's interaction with her, the researcher was certain that her positive response to item 40 was more a product of guesswork than a matter of fact. Although her average score of 3.0 (SILL) indicates that she **sometimes used** the strategies for managing her own emotions, her SBI average (2.3) shows that she **generally did not use** these strategies.

f) Participant QP013

The frequency with which this participant tried to manage his emotions emanating from his English learning activities is expressed by the SILL and SBI averages of 3.2 and 2.3 respectively. The participant indicated that he took risks wisely (40) and rewarded himself (41). During the interview, it was evident that he never discussed his feelings with anyone, neither did he use music and progressive relaxation (39). He also never kept a language learning diary (43). He had no idea what the words

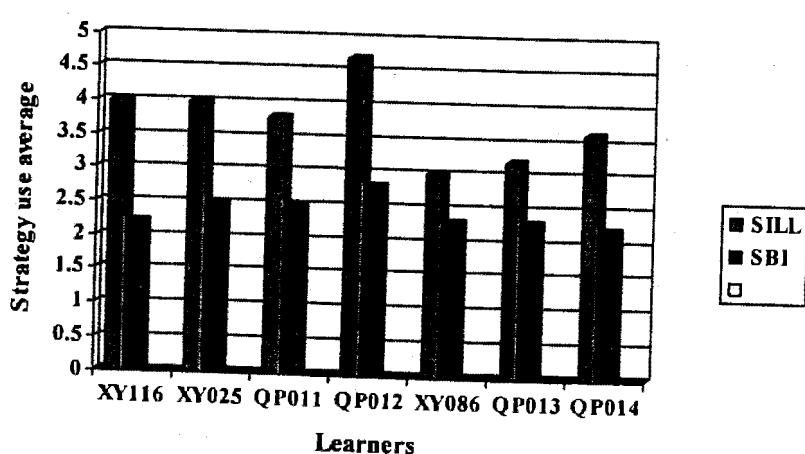
“tense” and “nervous” meant. Although his average score of 3.2 (SILL) indicate that he **sometimes** used the strategies for managing his own emotions, his SBI average (2.3) shows that he **generally did not use** these strategies.

g) Participant QP014

To manage her emotions emanating from ESL learning, this participant discussed her feelings with her friends or the teacher (44) and she took risks wisely (40). She gave a middle response to using music and progressive relaxation (39), rewarding herself (41), as well as listening to her body (42). The middle response was an indication that the participant was unsure and therefore wanted to be cautious. In the interview with her it was discovered that she did not know the meaning of “tense”, “nervous” and “reward.” Whereas the SILL average (3.7) indicates that she **usually used** affective strategies, the SBI average score (2.2) denotes that she **generally did not use** these strategies.

Patterns that emerged from the discussion of the participants’ responses to the SILL and SBI regarding their use of affective strategies can be summarised as follows: Although their average scores on the SILL show that participants XY025 and QP011 **usually used** affective strategies, their SBI averages indicate that they **sometimes** used these strategies.

Fig. 5.5 Composite strategy use profile: Affective strategies



Whereas their average scores on the SILL indicate that participant XY116 and QP014 **usually used** affective strategies, their average scores on the SBI actually imply that these participants **generally never used** affective strategies. In spite of their SILL average scores showing that participants XY086 and QP013 **sometimes** used affective strategies, their SBI average scores mean that these participants **generally did not use** these strategies. Participant QP012's SILL average indicates that she **always used** affective strategies, but her SBI average shows that only **sometimes** did she use these strategies.

5.2.6.6 Social strategies

Comprising the social strategies subgroup are asking for clarification (45), asking for correction (46), co-operating with peers (47), co-operating with proficient users of English (48), asking for clarification in English (49) and developing cultural understanding of the TL group (50).

a) Participant XY116

This group of LLS's was one of this participant's strongest instruments for learning English. This is evident in the SILL and SBI averages of 3.8 and 3.5 respectively. Both average scores indicate that she **usually used** this group of LLS's. She indicated that in order to learn English, she always co-operated with proficient users of the English language (48), asked for clarification (45), asked for clarification in English (49) and co-operated with her fellow participants (47). She never attempted developing any understanding (50) of the English culture. This was an indication that her learning ESL was instrumentally motivated, as shown above. Although she did not generally ask for correction (46), if someone did correct her, she repeated the correction.

b) Participant XY025

There is no significant difference between this participant's SILL (3.2) and the SBI (2.5) averages as they both mean that this participant **sometimes used** strategies for learning by co-operating with others. Such strategies involved asking for clarification (45), co-operating with proficient users of English (48), as well as asking for clarification in English (49). Generally not applicable to her were trying to develop

any understanding of the English culture (50), co-operating with peers (47) and asking for correction (46).

c) Participant QP011

She indicated that in order to improve the level of her ESL proficiency she relied on asking for correction (46) and asking for clarification (45). Due to their negative attitude towards the use of English, she did not co-operate with peers (47). She also mentioned that, though she was interested in learning English, she was certainly not interested in developing any understanding of the English people's culture (50). The only proficient user of English she co-operated with was her teacher. The average scores of 2.7 (SILL) and 2.5 (SBI) indicate that she **sometimes used** these strategies.

d) Participant QP012

According to her responses to both the SILL items and the SBI questions, one can conclude that this participant learnt English mostly through co-operative learning strategies. Her preferences were: co-operating with proficient users of English (48), asking for correction (46), asking for clarification in English (49), asking for clarification (45) from her teacher or boyfriend, developing cultural understanding (50) and co-operating with her peers (47). The reduction of the SILL average of 4.6 to the SBI average of 4.2 was brought about by the realisation that the participant did not

- co-operate with her peers effectively because they were always playful and indifferent to learning;
- work towards developing any understanding of the English native speakers' culture (50).

Nevertheless, the SBI average score still indicates that she **usually** employed these strategies to learn ESL.

e) Participant XY086

Regarding the strategies for learning in co-operation with others, she only used the strategies of asking for clarification (45) and asking for correction (46). She generally did not try to develop cultural understanding of the native speakers of English (50). Neither did she co-operate with proficient users of the target language (48) or her

peers (47). The average score of 2.8 in both the SILL and the SBI indicates that she **sometimes used** these strategies.

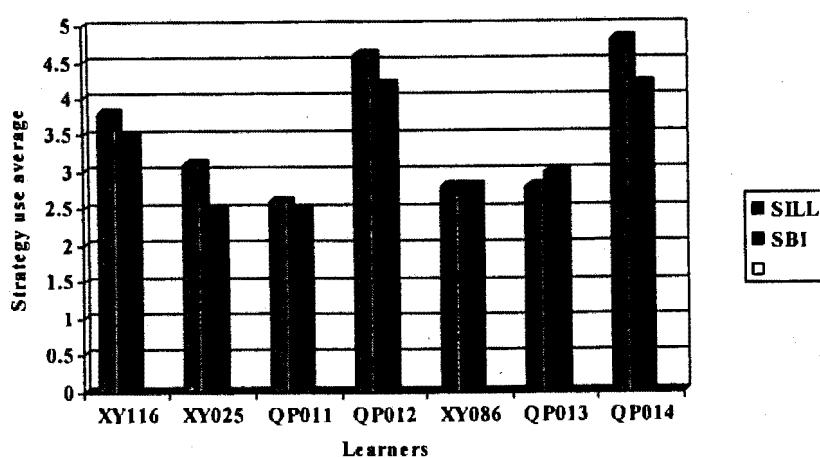
f) Participant QP013

The only two LLS's that he used in this group of LLS's were co-operating with proficient users of English (48) and asking for correction (46). In order to understand the culture of the native speakers of English (50), he usually visited his white friends in town. The strategies of co-operating with his peers (47) and asking for clarification in English (49) were not used. The frequency with which the participant used these strategies is expressed by the SILL and SBI average scores of 2.8 and 3.0 respectively, which both indicate that the participant **sometimes used** the strategies for learning English by co-operating with others.

g) Participant QP014

Of all the participants who participated in this study this participant was the only one whose SILL average (4.8) indicated that she **always used** the strategies for learning co-operatively with others. In spite of the fact that this average was later corrected to 4.2 by SBI, it still indicates a relatively high frequency at which the participant used social strategies. She indicated that she relied on co-operating with proficient users of English (48), asking for correction (46, 49), asking for clarification (45, 49) and co-operating with peers (47). According to the SBI there was no attempt on her part to develop any understanding of the English native speakers' culture (50).

Fig. 5.6 Composite strategy uses profile: Social strategies



The preceding discussion on the participants' responses to the SILL and SBI regarding their use of social strategies can be summarised as follows. Participant XY116's SILL and SBI average scores indicated that she **usually** used social strategies for learning English. Participants XY025, QP011, XY086, QP013's SILL and SBI average scores showed that these participants **sometimes** used the strategies for learning English in co-operation with others. Participants QP012 and QP014's SILL average scores indicated that they **always** used strategies for learning English in co-operation with others, but their SBI average scores denoted that they **usually** used these strategies.

In view of the above patterns regarding the participants' use of the LLS's, the following section focuses on how the participants' LLS use relates to their level of ESL proficiency.

5.3 THE PARTICIPANTS' ESL PROFICIENCY LEVELS AND LLS USE

The aim of this section is to analyse the results of the SBI, RPT and WPT to determine the extent to which LLS use related to the participants' level of ESL proficiency. At this stage it must be reiterated that the data is analysed in the light of question (c) in 5.1 and the following research sub-hypotheses (also see 4.3):

Sub-hypothesis A

The greater the learner's reported average use of the LLS's for **remembering effectively**, the higher the **level of ESL proficiency**.

Sub-hypothesis B

The greater the learner's reported average use of the LLS's for **involving all cognitive processes**, the higher the **level of ESL proficiency**.

Sub-hypothesis C

The greater the learner's reported average use of the LLS's for **compensating for the missing knowledge**, the higher the **level of ESL proficiency**.

Sub-hypothesis D

The greater the learner's reported average use of the LLS's for **organising and evaluating his/her ESL work**, the higher the **level of ESL proficiency**.

Sub-hypothesis E

The greater the learner's reported average use of the LLS's for **managing his/her emotions emanating from ESL learning**, the higher the level of ESL proficiency.

Sub-hypothesis F

The greater the learner's reported average use of the LLS's for **learning in co-operation with others**, the higher the level of ESL proficiency.

In order to facilitate the interpretation of the SBI results the **response dichotomisation technique** was used. This is a technique usually used for item analysis, performance tests and in factor analytic studies (Bester 1994:157). It involves the elimination of the mid-point (3) in a five-point Likert scale in such a way that a response is positive (1) or negative (0). The rationale for the use of this technique was that it eliminated the mid-point response that accommodated an element of doubt, thereby inflating the participants' SILL averages even if the mid-point response had no practical significance. It was also used to enable the researcher to analyse strategies one-by-one to determine which ones were mostly used and which ones were mostly avoided by the participants. This analysis would facilitate the discussion of factors which influenced the participants' LLS choice and use, as well as the development of ESL proficiency. In this investigation the elimination of the mid-point responses was facilitated by the findings of the SBI. It was found that the participants used 3 to respond to an item that they either did not understand or generally did not use. On the basis of the SBI average scores, all the participants' responses of 4 and 5 were converted into 1, whereas any response of 1, 2 or 3 were converted to 0. Even after dichotomisation, there was still a correlation between the participants' SBI average scores and their dichotomised response total (Tables 5.8 to 5.13).

5.3.1 MEMORY STRATEGIES

The hypothesis that was tested was that the greater the participant's reported average use of the LLS's for remembering effectively, the higher the level of ESL proficiency. This means that the participant who scores a higher SBI average is expected to perform better on the RPT and WPT. Participants who performed well on the measures of ESL proficiency are XY116, XY025, QP011 and QP012. On the specific

memory skill A of the RPT (see Table 5.1) these participants scored 13, 10, 10 and 8 respectively. In the light of the SBI averages (see Fig. 5.1), XY116 and XY025 performed as well as could be expected of them. On the basis of the SBI scores, participant QP012 was also expected to perform better than QP011.

There was generally a significant correlation between the performance of participants and their average use of the memory strategies. The dichotomised SBI scores (Table 5.8 & 5.5) showed that the greater the variety of memory strategies the participant used, the higher the score on the RPT's skill A. Another point that must be mentioned is that the more honest the participant is in reporting his/her strategy use, the more positive the correlation between his/her performance on ESL proficiency measures and his/her average use of memory strategies.

Table 5.8 Memory strategies: dichotomised responses

Item No.	XY116	XY025	QP011	QP012	XY086	QP013	QP014	
1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	3
2	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	5
3	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
4	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	6
5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
8	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
9	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	4
Totals	5	5	3	5	3	2	2	

According to Table 5.8 the memory strategy that was reportedly mostly used by participants was using imagery (4), whereas using image-sound combination (3) representing sound in the memory (5), and using physical responses (7) were reportedly the least used. Elaborating (6) was reportedly never used at all.

5.3.2 COGNITIVE STRATEGIES

The hypothesis that was put to the test regarding cognitive strategies was that the greater the participants' reported average use of LLS's for involving all their cognitive processes in learning English, the higher would be their performance on ESL proficiency measures. On the basis of this hypothesis, participants with higher SBI averages were expected to do well in both the RPT and WPT (Table 5.5). This hypothesis can be accepted on close inspection of Fig. 5.2 and Table 5.9.

Table 5.9 Cognitive strategies: dichotomised responses

Item No.	XY116	XY025	QP011	QP012	XY086	QP013	QP014	
10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
11	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	4
12	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	5
13	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	4
14	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	5
15	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	5
16	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	6
17	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	5
18	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	4
19	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
20	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
21	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	4
22	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	4
23	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
Totals	10	10	9	9	7	7	6	

Table 5.9 shows that of the seven participants, participant XY116, XY025, QP011, and QP012 used the widest variety of cognitive strategies. These participants' use of cognitive strategies correlate positively with their performance on RPT and WPT (Table 5.5). Furthermore, the oral proficiency of these participants, as determined by means of the SBI, correlates positively with their use of cognitive strategies. The difference between the HPL's and the LPL's is that the participants in the former group reported using a wider variety of cognitive strategies than the latter group.

According to Table 5.9 the cognitive strategies that were reported mostly used by participants were learning by repeating (10) and writing in English (16). The strategies that were the least used were reasoning deductively (19), analysing expressions (20) and learning by note-taking (23).

5.3.3 COMPENSATION STRATEGIES

Sub-hypothesis C implied that the ability to effectively use compensation strategies enables the participant to fill in the missing information when reading, writing and speaking. A better performance on the RPT and WPT depended on the participants' ability to employ the relevant compensation strategies, more especially in dealing with the RPT skills such as making general inferences based on the given text (C), interpreting non-verbal conveyors of information (L), making inferences based on paralinguistic features (M) and recognising inferences related to atmosphere (N).

Table 5.10, as well as Fig. 5.3, show that XY025, QP011 and XY116 were the best users of compensation strategies. This is shown by their higher scores on skills C, L and M of the RPT, which tested the participants' ability to infer from linguistic and paralinguistic cues (Table 5.1).

Table 5.10 Compensation strategies: dichotomised responses

Item No.	XY116	XY025	QP011	QP012	XY086	QP013	QP014	TTL
24	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
26	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
28	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	3
29	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	4
Total	2	3	3	1	0	0	1	

Participant QP012 who reported a low average use of compensation strategies but had a relatively high ESL proficiency (cf. Fig. 5.3 & Table 5.5) exemplified a negative relationship between ESL proficiency level and the reported average use of compensation strategies. A moderate relationship between ESL proficiency level and the reported average use of compensation strategies is evident in the performance of the three of the four HPL's (XY116, XY025, QP011) and the three LPL's (XY086, QP013, QP014). Whereas the three HPL's reported a moderate average use of compensation strategies, they also scored relatively higher scores in the RPT and WPT (Table 5.5). The three LPL's reported a low average use of compensation strategies and also performed poorly in the two ESL proficiency measures.

According to Table 5.10 the strategies that were reportedly moderately used were using circumlocution (29) and paralinguistic cues (28). Coining new words (26), getting help (27), using linguistic cues (24) and mime and gestures (25) were reportedly the least used or never used at all.

5.3.4 METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES

Regarding the use of metacognitive strategies it was hypothesised that the more organised the participant's learning activities, the higher would be the level of ESL proficiency. Secondly, it was hypothesised that the higher the frequency of participant's self-assessment, the better the quality of his/her ESL proficiency.

According to the dichotomised responses shown in Table 5.11 and Fig 5.4, there is no significant difference between the SBI scores of most participants.

Table 5.11 Metacognitive strategies: dichotomised responses

Item No.	XY116	XY025	QP011	QP012	XY086	QP013	QP014	TTL
30	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	5
31	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	5
32	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
33	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	5
34	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	3
35	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	6
36	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	6
37	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	4
38	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	6
Totals	8	8	7	7	4	7	6	

This means that their average frequencies of metacognitive strategy use were more or less the same. However, this similarity did not translate into equal levels of ESL proficiency. Only participant XY086 had a relatively low SBI average score in this section, which correlates well with her poor performances in school achievement, RPT and WPT (Table 5.5)

In respect of the first hypothesis stated in the previous paragraph, only XY116, QP013 and QP014 organised their learning (34) according to schedule or plan (see Table 5.11). On the basis of XY116's high performance in the RPT and WPT (Table 5.5), it could be inferred that of the three participants, she was the only one who organised (34) her learning activities plan effectively. This means that the success with which a strategy was used was far more important than just the use. Table 5.11 also shows that six participants reported that they usually evaluated their learning progress (38). On the basis of their performance in the RPT and WPT (Table 5.5), it could also be inferred that only XY116, XY025, QP011 and QP012 used the results of these evaluations in a constructive way.

Whereas paying attention (32), seeking practice opportunities for reading (35), identifying a purpose for the language task (36) and self-evaluation (38) were reportedly mostly used, all other metacognitive strategies were moderately used.

5.3.5 AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

Regarding the use of affective strategies, the hypothesis that was tested was that the greater the participant's reported average use of the strategies for managing his or her emotions emanating from ESL learning, the higher the level of ESL proficiency. According to Table 5.12 and Fig. 5.5, there is no significant difference in the averages for affective strategy use between HPL's and LPL's. The slight positive correlation between the participants' SBI dichotomised scores for affective strategies (Table 5.12) and their performance on the RPT and WPT (Table 5.5) is practically insignificant. Accordingly it can be stated that no significant empirical research evidence was found to support the hypothesis stated above.

Table 5.12 Affective strategies: dichotomised responses

Item No.	XY116	XY025	QP011	QP012	XY086	QP013	QP014	TTL
39	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
40	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	5
41	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
42	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	3
43	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
44	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	5
Totals	2	3	2	3	2	2	2	

However, the role of affective strategies in learning L2 cannot be overemphasised. The fact that this group of participants reported an infrequent use of some of them should not detract attention from the role of the participant's ability to manage his or her emotions in learning L2. The fact that some of the affective strategies were not used can be explained by other factors discussed below rather than to conclude that they are unimportant.

According to Table 5.12 the strategies that were moderately used were taking risks wisely (40), listening to your body (42) and discussing your feelings with someone else (44). Using music and progressive relaxation (39) and rewarding oneself (41) were reportedly the least used. Writing a language diary (43), as a means of learning English was never used at all.

5.3.6 SOCIAL STRATEGIES

The main issue to take into account in the discussion of the participants' use of social strategies is the quality of feedback they receive after a strategy has been used. For example according to Table 5.13 most participants (except QP013) asked for clarification (45).

Table 5.13 Social strategies: dichotomised responses

Item No.	XY116	XY025	QP011	QP012	XY086	QP013	QP014	TTL
45	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	6
46	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	5
47	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	3
48	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	5
49	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	3
50	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Totals	4	2	2	5	2	3	5	

If the clarification they received was good, this could add value to their learning. This value should manifest itself in increased improvement of ESL proficiency. It can be seen that XY116, QP012 and QP014 were the highest users of social strategies, whereas XY025, QP011 and XY086 seldom used them.

The manner in which the HPL's are mixed up with LPL's in respect of the average use of social strategies, does not support the hypothesis that the greater the participant's average use of the strategies for learning in co-operation with others, the higher the level of ESL proficiency.

The social strategy mostly used by participants was asking for clarification (45). The least used social strategy was trying to develop an understanding of the English native speakers' culture (50). All the other strategies in this group were moderately used.

5.3.7 SUMMARY

In the foregoing analysis of the relationship between the LLS use and the level of ESL proficiency the following aspects in respect thereof were found:

- a) There was a significant relationship between the reported average use of direct strategies (memory, cognitive and compensation strategies) and the participants' level of ESL proficiency.

- b) The reported average use of the indirect strategies (metacognitive, affective and social strategies) did not relate in any significant way with the participants' ESL proficiency.
- c) Some strategies were reportedly used by most participants irrespective of the participants' ESL proficiency level (e.g. learning by repeating), whereas other strategies were mostly avoided by participants in the same way (e.g. elaborating).

In view of these trends, the following section focuses on the contextual and learner factors that influenced the LLS choice and use vis-à-vis the development of ESL proficiency of the participants. The following analysis is based on the participants' responses to the SILL and SBI, as well as their performance in the RPT and WPT.

5.4 CONTEXTUAL AND LEARNER FACTORS IN LLS USE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ESL PROFICIENCY

The contextual and learner factors have been summarised by means of a taxonomy of contextual (Table 2.1) and learner factors (Table 3.7) respectively. These taxonomies show that the development of ESL proficiency is influenced by a multiplicity of contextual and learner factors. The factors in the two taxonomies have been used as a focus for the empirical investigation of this study in order to gain insights into factors that influence the development of ESL proficiency of senior secondary school learners. In specific terms, the aim of the empirical research was to determine the extent to which the factors listed in the taxonomies affected the development of ESL proficiency of senior secondary school learners in the South African context.

Accordingly, the following section focuses on the results of the empirical investigation. It highlights and analyses only those contextual and learner factors that have been found by means of the empirical investigation to influence the development of ESL proficiency of the learners who participated in this investigation. This serves as a rationale for not focusing the following analysis on all the factors, as listed in the two taxonomies.

In section 1.6 the following question was posed as part of the statement of the research problem: How do contextual and learner factors influence the learners' use of

LLS's to learn ESL? In section 1.7 a research hypothesis was stated as a tentative answer to this question. The hypothesis was that the more supportive the contextual and learner factors to strategy use, the higher the level of ESL proficiency. The following analysis of data is done in the light of the above research question and hypothesis:

To facilitate the understanding of the following section, it must be pointed out that all the following interpretations in respect of LLS use are based on the SBI results. But where necessary references to the SILL are made. The rationale for this is that, whereas the SILL results contained some implausible, ambiguous and unclear responses, the SBI results are more authentic because ambiguities and inconsistencies were eliminated as far as possible. In short, the SBI results are used because they are an improved version of the SILL results.

5.4.1 CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

5.4.1.1 Societal context factors

a) Social enclosure

One of the socio-cultural factors that impacted negatively on the use of LLS was social enclosure (see 2.2.1.2. a & 2.2.4.2 i). Although at the time of the investigation the process of lowering the level of social enclosure among the various races was already in progress, the participants who participated in this study had already lost the opportunity of sharing resources such as schools, churches, as well as recreation facilities with their native English-speaking counterparts. Of the seven participants four did look for people they could talk to in English. However, their admission to have used this strategy does not mean that they actually found the people to talk to in English.

In a socially enclosed environment, it was difficult for these participants to acquire ESL proficiency to the degree of realising the non-linguistic outcomes of SLA (see 2.2.3.2). The inability to realise non-linguistic outcomes of SLA was manifest in the participants' responses to the item dealing with developing an understanding of the culture of the native speakers of English, as discussed below.

b) Social cohesiveness

Besides social enclosure, the use of some strategies was negatively influenced by social cohesiveness (2.2.1.2.a) of the participants' community. In the township where the participants in this sample lived the whole community was almost exclusively Zulu-speaking. As a consequence, despite the fact that all seven participants indicated that they learned English by paying attention when someone was speaking it, it could be argued that this paying attention was limited to the school, mostly in the ESL classroom. If it did happen outside the school, it happened at such a low frequency that it could not significantly contribute to the development of the participant's ESL proficiency.

c) Social integration strategy

The responses of six of the seven participants indicated that they did not attempt to develop their understanding of the native speakers of English (SILL item 50). In the light of the social enclosure and social cohesiveness of the participants' cultural group discussed above, it can be argued that there were no native speakers in the neighbourhood from whom most of these participants could learn the culture of the native speakers of English. Even the participant who reported the use of the strategy, used it at some cost, as he had to pay for transport to go to the suburbs where the native speakers of English lived.

The reluctance to use the strategy of trying to develop their understanding of the culture of native speakers of English could be interpreted as an indication that most of these participants were

- instrumentally motivated due to the utility value of English and, therefore, had no interest in the English culture;
- learning English by using adaptation strategies, which meant that while they learned English, they still wanted to retain their own culture (see 2.2.1.2a).

The tendency to learn the L2 in this way is discussed in Giles and Byrnes' model, more especially proposition (o) (see 2.2.4.2).

d) Socio-cultural beliefs

The results of this investigation show the extent to which the societal context influenced the way the participants in this sample chose and used the LLS's. For example, due to

the social pressure from their peers, participants XY116, QP011 and QP012 pointed out that they did not use the strategy of practising to speak English after school because the attitude of their peers was negative towards naturalistic practising involving speaking English. Peers, as well as the community in general, did not expect anyone (except strangers) to use any other language in the neighbourhood except Zulu (see 2.2.2.2) Any attempt to use English tended to be misconstrued as a flamboyant display of being better or cleverer than other community members. Participants' such as XY116, QP011 and QP012 were actually victims of this attitude.

5.4.1.2 Home/family context factors

a) The family's socio-economic status

Among the factors which influenced the participant's choice and use of the LLS's was the SES of the participant's family (2.3.1). All seven participants felt that, even if they passed Grade 12, they had no hope of going to train for tertiary qualifications, due to their parents' limited incomes. Such economic circumstances could hardly motivate these participants to excel (see 5.2.2.).

None of these participants reported having gone to a cinema to see an English language movie (SILL item 15). During the interview they indicated that they could afford neither the transport costs to the cinema nor the entrance fee. The participants' negative response to questions on the extent to which they kept language learning diaries (41) and rewarded themselves for doing well in English (43) could be explained in economic terms. Children from families that were struggling to survive, could hardly afford giving themselves a reward for doing well in English; neither could they afford buying a language learning diary. The family's SES also affected the participant's use of strategies such as naturalistic practising through reading (22) as the families had no money to spare for buying additional reading materials. This supports the research finding (2.3.1) that the parents in a low SES family lack basic items such as books and magazines that can serve to stimulate children intellectually. It has been found that in South Africa children from low SES families tend to be characterised by, inter alia, poor academic achievement, poor language skills, as well the inability to use higher-order cognitive strategies (see 2.3.1).

b) The learner's family configuration

Another factor that influenced the participant's choice and use of the LLS's was the participant's family configuration (2.3.2). The family configuration hypothesis (2.3.2) posits that there is a positive correlation between the configuration of the participant's family and his or her scholastic performance. Generally, the performance of these participants in the RPT and WPT varied from poor to average (Table 5.5). The common factor among these participants was the type of family configuration. QP013, XY025, QP011 had divorced parents, whereas QP014, XY086 and XY116 lost their fathers through death. QP012 lost both parents when she was still young. Research shows (2.3.2) that the children who live with single parents scored relatively lower on achievement measures.

c) Parental involvement

Some of the participants' responses to the SILL and SBI show that their choices and use of strategies depended on the extent to which the family could be involved. For example, XY116 discussed her feelings with her mother (43) but did not have anyone to find out about language learning (33) as the mother could not assume such a role because of the level of her education. QP012 discussed her feelings with her boyfriend from whom she also found out about language learning. XY086 discussed her feelings with her brother who also taught her about language learning. QP014 found out about language learning from her uncle but did not have anyone to discuss her feeling with. Neither QP011 nor QP013 reported ever discussing their feelings with anyone because they did not have anyone in their families to discuss them with. The performance of these participants can therefore be explained by, inter alia, limited or no parental involvement (see 2.3.4)

5.4.1.3 School/classroom context factors

a) The teaching-learning culture of the learning contexts

The average to poor performance of the participants in the RPT and WPT can be ascribed to, inter alia the poor teaching-learning culture of the two schools (see 5.2.3).

i) The principal and the management team

In both school XY and school QP the teaching and learning activities were run on the assumption that all the teachers were professionals who new what they had been

employed to do. In neither of these schools was there a written **mission statement**; nor was there a written **school policy**. The difference between the two schools was that, whereas the management of school XY was apparently able to cope with problems arising from the lack of a school policy, the management of school QP was unable to cope.

The effects of a **lack of co-operation between the principal and the management team** was evidenced mostly in school QP where the principal and the deputy principal apparently subscribed to different notions of school management. It was observed that, whereas the deputy principal was a strict disciplinarian; the principal was soft and lax in dealing with both teachers and learners who were obviously violating the principles of school management.

It must be pointed out that the **nature of the appointment** of the members of the management team apparently explained the difference in how the management dealt with teachers and learners who, for example, arrived late at school. In school XY all the members of the management team were operating in their official capacities, whereas in school QP all members were operating in their temporary acting capacities. This might partly explain the principal's soft stance in dealing with culprits.

ii) Teachers

The performance of participants in the empirical investigation can be attributed, inter alia, to **teacher indiscipline**. It was earlier mentioned that in school XY two teachers persistently arrived late, whereas in school QP the teachers' lack of discipline manifested itself in some teachers failing to manage time properly by ignoring the siren used to mark the beginning and/or the end of teaching periods. In other instances the teachers in the latter school just did not go to class or did not leave the class to give way for another teacher.

Another factor that seemed to impact significantly on the performance of the participants was the **teachers' attitudes to work**. A certain degree of negative attitude towards work was observed. In school XY at any given time, one or two

classes were found unoccupied. At one time, the researcher found nine of the twenty-six classes without teachers. It was pointed out that in this school the teachers generally did not want to fully co-operate with the management team, adapt to the new changes in education and to be creative and to take the initiative. It was mentioned that they also rejected anything that had to do with subject management. The teachers' negative attitude to work was also observed at school QP. This was manifest in teachers' rate of absenteeism and their refusal to sign the attendance register.

iii) Learners

The **discipline of learners**, as defined by their level of co-operation with teachers and the management team, as well as their punctuality, was one of the factors that impacted negatively on the school's teaching-learning culture, more especially in school QP. In the researcher's view, the learner discipline in this school was not conducive to effective teaching and learning. The learner's indifference to time and lack of self-discipline to stay in class and do some independent study in the absence of a teacher were manifestations of poor learner discipline.

Though in school XY there were few instances that could be construed as manifestations of the learners' **negative attitude towards school**, in school QP these instances were in abundance. It was mentioned earlier that in school XY the researcher observed some learners literally running away from school in an attempt to dodge lessons for the day. But this was observed only once. In school QP the learners' negative attitude towards school was manifested in their high rate of truancy and absenteeism. At recess time a significant number of learners just left for home and never returned to school for the day. Learners attributed their action to a number of factors such as learner's lack of interest in schooling, teachers' lack of commitment to their professional duties and the abolition of corporal punishment.

In school QP learners had varying **degrees of respect** for their teachers. Among reasons for going home before the end of a school day was the differential respect learners had for their teachers. In other instances learners did not bother executing the

instruction given by some teachers. This treatment of teachers with contempt negatively affected the teacher-pupil relations in the classroom.

It is evident from the analysis of the results of observation, that the teaching-learning culture of the schools from which the participants were selected was not conducive to effective teaching and learning in general, and to the use of the LLS to learn English in particular. This can be deduced from

- the two schools operating without school policies or mission statements;
- evident lack of co-operation among the members of the management team (school QP);
- the nature of appointment of the members of the management team;
- teacher indiscipline;
- teachers' negative attitude towards their professional duties;
- learner indiscipline;
- learners' negative attitude towards school, and
- learner's negative and disdainful attitude towards teachers.

b) The availability and use of educational resources

In the context of this study, the most important educational resources for this investigation were those that promoted the development of ESL proficiency, such as libraries, English books, newspapers and magazines. The advantages of these resources for the participants have been documented in literature (see 2.4.2). However, participants in this study were not exposed to enjoying these advantages. It was found that school XY did not have a library. In school QP the library was available but mismanaged. In both schools it was found that participants had to share the use of one copy of one of the prescribed books. In both schools participants were not expected by the school to do any additional reading, as reading was limited to the prescribed works only. This situation manifested itself in the way participants responded to SBI items that involved the strategies of practising through reading (22) and seeking opportunities for naturalistic practising through reading (35). Whereas four participants (XY116, XY086, QP011 and QP013) reported the use of the strategy of naturalistic practising through reading (22), six of the seven participants (XY116, XY025, XY086, QP011, QP012, and QP013) reported the use of the strategy of seeking practice opportunities for reading in English

(35). On the basis of the participants' responses to these items, a high performance on the reading proficiency measure was to be expected of them. Their average to poor performance on the RPT (see Table 5.5), characterised among other things by low graphic literacy, limited ESL vocabulary and the inability to distinguish between the tones of various texts, did not support their claim that they were experienced readers. The discrepancy between their claims and actual levels of their ESL proficiency can be explained by the fact that neither the school nor the home contexts provided the participants with additional reading materials to foster the development of ESL proficiency. It is also important to note that it became evident during the investigation that it was one thing for participants to report the use of a strategy, but another to use it successfully. The successful use of the strategies was influenced by a number of factors, amongst which was the shortage of resources in the schools investigated.

c) Teacher attitudes and skills

In both school XY and school QP the ESL teachers tended to show a great deal of commitment to written work. The emphasis on the development of the writing skills only, militated against the use of such strategies as naturalistic practising through speaking (11) and through reading (22). The fact that the lessons of these teachers were teacher-centred (i.e. teachers did all the talking) did not allow learners to practise the pronunciation (12) of English words.

The participants' average to poor performance could also be attributed to the teachers' attitude towards TESL. For example, in school QP it was found that ESL teaching was not conducive to the use of the strategy of identifying a purpose for each language learning task (36). This conclusion was drawn on the basis of the lack of focus and aim in the teacher's lesson presentation, as discussed earlier (5.2.3.2 b). In this school it was also found that the teacher had assigned learners several language exercises and essays to practise the writing of ESL grammar and essays. After learners had written these tasks no feedback was given to them on the basis of which they could improve their grammatical competence, as well as essay writing skills. In the light of the teacher's attitude towards TESL, the school QP participants' performance in the RPT and WPT (Table 5.5) is hardly surprising.

The influence of the teacher's mastery of the English language on the participants' choice and use of LLS's was evidenced in this study by some participants' reliance on their teachers. For example, QP011 used her teacher to find out about language learning (33). QP012 and QP014 indicated that they discussed their feelings with their teacher (44). QP011 co-operated with her teacher because she regarded her teacher as a proficient speaker of English (48). When she had an ESL-related problem, QP012 asked her teacher for clarification (45). The ESL teacher's multiple roles as discussed in 2.4.4.2 is evident from the roles for which the participants relied on their teachers.

The evidence of both teachers' poor mastery of various approaches to TESL was manifest in their inability to use strategies that would promote both the development of ESL proficiency and self-directed learning. For example both teachers could not assign tasks to learners to

- summarise (23) what they had been taught to determine the level of their understanding;
- read (22) on subjects of their choice and come back to share the stories they had read with the class;
- write notes (16) on any lesson taught in English and explain the lesson to the class during the English lesson, and
- skim or scan (17) a comprehension test passage or a passage in the prescribed literary work to briefly explain the gist of the passage to other learners.

The use of these strategies could have been consonant with the principle of the task-based and the communicative approaches.

It can be remarked that the teaching-learning culture of the two schools, the availability and use of educational resources and the teachers' skills and attitudes were generally not conducive to high scholastic performance and the development of ESL proficiency.

5.4.2 LEARNER FACTORS

5.4.2.1 Independent learner factors

a) Age

A close scrutiny of memory strategies revealed that some of the strategies are more suitable for elementary grade participants than for participants in the senior secondary

school phase. Strategies such as representing sound in the memory (5), elaborating (6) and using physical responses (7) may be effective for SLA, but the fact that participants avoided using them (Table 5.8) can also be explained by the participants' age. For elementary school participants the use of these strategies would be part of their play, i.e. they would not be aware that they were learning a language. However, it is inappropriate to expect of a senior secondary school learner to learn English by, for example, acting out words or using flashcards. In fact, the influence of age in the use of these strategies (representing sound in the memory (5), elaborating (6) and using physical responses (7)) confirms Rosansky's meta-awareness hypothesis discussed in 3.2.1.1.

b) First language

In 3.2.1.2 and 3.3.1 it was mentioned that L1 grammar, phonology and semantics exert a significant influence on the process of SLA. In this investigation the influence of L1 (more especially the influence of L1 morphology, i.e. word structure) was evident in the participants' reported use of the LLS's. For example, item 18 ("I look for words in my own language that are similar to the new English words) is based on the assumption that there are possible morphological similarities between some L1 (Zulu) and L2 (English) words. However, such morphological similarities do not exist between these two languages. Consequently, the responses of most participants to item 18 were inaccurate as they mostly referred to syntactical rather morphological similarities.

c) Language aptitude

Another factor that manifested its influence on the use of the LLS's was language aptitude. For example, the participants' effective execution of the associating strategy (SILL item 1) depended on the participants' associative memory, which is an aspect of language aptitude (see 3.2.1.3). Only XY116, XY025 and QP012 reported having used this strategy (Table 5.8). This correlates positively with their performance in the two ESL performance measures (Tables 5.1 & 5.4). The effective execution of the strategy of reasoning deductively (item 19) depended on the participants' inductive language learning ability which refers to the participant's ability to make connections between stimuli and responses (see 3.2.1.3). Only QP011 reported having used the deductive reasoning strategy (Table 5.9). The participants' performances in the WPT tasks (Table

5.4) also indicate the varying degrees to which they lacked grammatical sensitivity, which is another aspect of language aptitude.

d) Intelligence

A comparison of Tables 5.1 and 5.4 on the one hand, and Table 5.2 on the other, show that there is a significant relationship between the participants' performance on the standardised measures (RPT & WPT) and the school marks of some subjects. The differences in participants' scores were a manifestation of their different intellectual abilities. Table 5.1 show that XY116, XY025, QP011 and QP012 did well in the RPT's skill A, which tested the participants' ability to memorise language information. Memory is an aspect of intelligence (3.2.1.4). The effective use of the memory strategies translated into better performance in the ESL proficiency measures. The correlation between intellectual ability and ESL proficiency has also been reported in literature (3.2.1.4). It must be pointed out again that in this investigation only a relationship between intellectual ability and language proficiency was confirmed. It must be reiterated that the relationship is interactive: whereas high intellectual ability facilitates the development of ESL proficiency through the effective use of a wider variety of LLS's, ESL proficiency reinforces the participant's intellectual ability (see 3.2.1.4).

e) Personality

Some personality factors also contributed to the way participants chose and used the LLS's. It can be argued that the avoidance of the strategy of getting help from someone else (27) by XY116, XY025 and QP011 could be explained by their sense of self-efficacy (3.2.1.5). Because they were proficient participants, they had developed a sense of independence and believed that they had the capacity to cope with the ESL demands in the classroom. This is an indication that personality (or some aspect thereof) play a significant role in influencing the development of ESL proficiency.

e) Cognitive style

The avoidance by QP013 to use strategies such as guessing (24) and using paralinguistic cues (28) is associated with a field independent style of cognitive processing (see 3.2.1.6). He argued that he did not want to guess because he did not want to lie. The search for accuracy when learning a language is typical of a FI learner (3.2.1.6). Taking

into account his level of proficiency, it can be mentioned that his cautious approach to L2 learning tended to impede the development of ESL proficiency. This serves as evidence to support the notion that the learner's cognitive style affects his/her use of the LLS's to improve his or her English language proficiency.

5.4.2.2 Dependent learner factors

a) Motivation

When the participants were asked to indicate aims for wanting to learn English, the following responses were obtained:

- Participants XY116, QP011, QP012, QP014 learnt English in order to be able to use it for communication.
- Participant XY025 wanted to master English as a language of business and to be able to use it as a professional writer.
- Participant XY086 learnt English in order to be able to understand the subjects that are taught through the medium of English.
- QP013 learnt English in order to acquire a status associated with the mastery of English as an international language.

It is evident from their aims that these participants' motives for learning ESL were instrumental (see 3.2.2.1). However, no evidence was found to support Lukmani and Vila Bareto's findings (3.2.2.1 b) that instrumental motives were related with high performance in ESL, because in this study not all participants who reported instrumental motives scored high marks in English. For example, XY116 and XY025 performed much better than XY086 and QP013 on the RPT and WPT (see Tables 5.1 & 5.4), yet they all reported learning English for utilitarian purposes.

b) Group dynamics

Another factor that influenced the participants' choice and use of the LLS's was communication apprehension (3.2.2.2.b). XY086 mentioned that she always felt afraid of speaking English when talking to a stranger. XY025 felt anxious about using English in class because her classmates said she thought she was better than they were. QP011 felt anxious to speak English whenever she spoke to a person that she regarded as a highly proficient speaker of English. QP014's anxiety was triggered off by talking to the class during a class debate. When she was asked by the teacher to present an impromptu

speech to the class, XY116 felt anxious. These reports by the participants are testimony to the fact that their learning of English was affected by communication apprehension. This type of anxiety manifests itself in the participant's shyness in the L2 class. It can also manifest itself in the participant's tendency to avoid taking any risks, where risk-taking involves the learner's attempt to make use of the L2 when, for example, answering the teacher's questions or participating in class debates. It was also mentioned that an L2 learner with a dented self-confidence tends to expect to be negatively evaluated by his audience: teachers, classmates as well as peers outside the classroom or the school (cf. 3.2.2.2). Evidence to support these findings was found in respect of QP011, XY086, QP013 and QP014 during the interview.

c) Learner attitudes

In 3.2.2.3 the influence of learner attitudes on SLA was highlighted. Studies reviewed showed that the learner's attitudes towards L2 cultural group, L2 teacher and the L2 learning materials were some of the factors that determine the learner's success in L2 learning. In this investigation the influence of learner attitudes was evident in the participants' reported use of the LLS's. For example, participants XY116, XY025, QP011, QP012, QP086 and QP014 reported that they did not attempt to learn English through understanding the culture of the native speakers of English (50). During the interview with these participants, it became evident that their avoidance of this strategy was due more to indifferent attitudes than negative attitudes towards the English culture. As it has already been indicated earlier (5.4.1.1), socio-cultural factors also contributed to this indifferent attitude towards the L2 cultural group.

Furthermore, some participants' attitudes towards their English teacher were manifested by the extent to which they relied on their teacher for LLS use. Of the seven participants, three expressly indicated that they relied on their teacher for the use of some LLS's. For example, participant QP012 sought clarification from her teacher (45). Participant QP012 and QP014 discussed their feelings with their teacher (44). Participant QP co-operated with her teacher as a proficient speaker of English (48). This indicates that some participants had confidence in and positive attitudes towards their teachers. Their positive attitudes towards their teacher helped them in using some of the LLS's to learn English.

On the basis of the results of this investigation, empirical evidence was found to support the notion that the use of the LLS's is influenced by the learner's attitudes towards the L2 cultural group and the L2 teacher. However, no evidence was found to support the hypothesis that the learner's use of the LLS's is influenced by his/her attitude towards the L2 learning material.

5.4.3 PRACTICAL PROBLEMS CONCERNING THE USE OF THE SILL

The foregoing sections (5.4.1 & 5.4.2) dealt with how contextual and learner factors influenced the participants' reported use of the LLS's. However, some of the factors that influenced the way the participants responded to the SILL were neither contextual nor learner factors. These were practical problems related with SILL itself. In the following section, these problems are discussed. They include the participants' level of ESL proficiency, level of honesty and the ambiguity of some SILL items.

5.4.3.1 The participants' level of ESL proficiency

The analysis of the participants' responses show that they avoided strategies such as representing sound in the memory (5), elaborating (6), using physical responses (7), structured reviewing (8), reasoning deductively (19), as well as using mime and gestures (25). During the interview, it was revealed that the participants did not understand the crucial concepts on the basis of which they could respond to the SILL question on the extent to which they used strategies of representing sound in the memory (5), elaboration (6), image-sound combination (3) and structured reviewing (8) when they learnt English.

Besides the limited vocabulary, some of the participants did not possess the skills required to execute strategies such as coining new words (26) and circumlocution (29) (Table 5.10). It was also found that the more proficient participants used a relatively wider range of memory and cognitive strategies than the less proficient participants (see 5.3.1 & 5.3.2). This supports Dreyer's findings (3.2.2.4) that the more proficient the learner, the wider the variety of strategies used or the lesser the proficiency of the learner, the more limited his or her repertoire of LLS's.

5.4.3.2 Participants' level of honesty

The participants' level of honesty when responding to the SILL affected the accuracy with which the correlation between strategy use and ESL proficiency could be determined (5.3). Evident of the participants' lack of honesty was the discrepancy between their SILL and SBI responses (see Fig. 5.1 to 5.6). The participants tended to respond to the SILL items cautiously by using the mid-point response of 3 in a five-point Likert scale. During the interview it was revealed that the participants tended to respond in this way to those strategies they doubted, did not understand or never used at all. The mid-point response tended to inflate the participants' averages even though the high average score had no practical significance.

5.4.3.3 Item ambiguity

It was also found that the ambiguity or lack of clarity of some SILL items influenced the participants' choice of the LLS. The following are cases in point:

"I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand (20).

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

I notice it if I am tense and nervous when I am studying or using English (42)"

Analysing expressions (20) is defined as determining the meaning of the new expression by breaking it down to parts and using the meanings of the various parts of the expression to understand the whole expression (Table 3.6). It must be mentioned that an expression is a lexical unit, not necessarily one word. What then made item 20 ambiguous was its reference to the analysis of words in stead of expressions. Because of this ambiguity, some participants indicated that they never used such a strategy, whereas others were not sure.

In the researcher opinion, item 30 is imprecise and superfluous if it is used in addition to items such as "*I pay attention when someone is speaking English (32)*", "*I look for opportunities to read in English as much as possible (35)*" and "*I look for people I can talk to in English (37)*". Item 30 is imprecise because it does not focus on any specific skill, as do items 32 (listening), 35 (reading) and 37 (speaking). When the participant gave a positive or a negative response to item 30, it was not clear which way of using English he or she was responding to.

The ambiguity of item 42 (*I notice it if I am tense and nervous when I am studying or using English*) stems from its double-barrelled nature. In this item it was not clear whether the participant was responding to being tense, nervous or both. The phrase "using English" also made this item ambiguous, as there are many ways of using English. One participant can be tense when speaking but not when writing. Consequently, it was difficult to accurately determine the meanings of the participants' responses to this item.

5.5 SUMMARY

The aim of this chapter was to present and analyse the results of the empirical investigation. This analysis took into account the statement of the problem and the research hypothesis for this investigation. In the empirical investigation it was found that

- there was a positive relationship between direct strategies (memory, cognitive and compensation strategies) and the level of ESL proficiency.
- the wider the variety of direct strategies used, the more proficient the participant was in ESL;
- the accuracy of the information reported by the participant on the SILL should be treated with caution until it is clarified by means of an interview;
- apart from metacognitive strategies, no meaningful relationship was found between indirect strategies (affective and social strategies) and the level of ESL proficiency. In respect of metacognitive strategies only a moderately meaningful relationship was found.

The results of the empirical investigation regarding LLS choice and use partly supported the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between the senior secondary school learners' level of ESL proficiency and their use OF LLS's.

The findings of this study show that the contextual and learner factors indeed significantly influence the development of ESL proficiency. The contextual factors that exerted a significant influence in the *societal context category* include social enclosure, social cohesiveness, social integration strategies and socio-cultural beliefs. In the *home/family context category*, the family's SES, the family configuration, and parental involvement were accentuated by the empirical investigation. Regarding the

school/classroom category the influences of the school's teaching-learning culture, the availability and use of educational resources, as well as the teacher's skills and attitudes were also emphasised by the empirical investigation. This provided substantial empirical evidence to support the hypothesis that the more supportive the contextual and learner factors are to the learner's use of LLS's, the higher the level of ESL proficiency. In respect of learner factors the empirical investigation confirmed the influence of such independent learner factors as age, language aptitude, intelligence, personality and field independent style of cognitive processing. The influence of dependent learner factors such as motivation, group dynamics and learner attitudes were highlighted by the empirical investigation. The result of the empirical investigation provided more support for the hypothesis that the more supportive the contextual and learner factors to LLS use, the higher the level of ESL proficiency.

It is crucial to reiterate the fact that the learner's choice and use of the LLS's was used as a means of determining how the above contextual and learner factors influenced the development of ESL proficiency.

At the end of this chapter practical problems concerning the use of the SILL as a research instrument were indicated. These include the participants' level of proficiency, participants' level of honesty, as well as item ambiguity.

Whereas this chapter was solely devoted to the analysis of the data, the next chapter focuses on presenting a summary of the whole study, as well as conclusions and recommendations in the light of the findings of the study.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The main concern that motivated the researcher to undertake this study was the senior secondary school learners' lack of proficiency in English and its effects on their attempts to realise their potential. Consequently, the study focused on the senior secondary school learners' development of ESL proficiency. The importance of ESL proficiency stemmed from a number of factors, namely

- English being a medium of teaching and learning in most South African secondary schools and higher education institutions;
- English being a language used in most human resources development initiatives; and
- The value of additive multi-lingualism for South Africa (see 1.3).

In view of the senior secondary school learners' unsatisfactory English proficiency, this study was undertaken to investigate the influence of contextual and learner factors on the development of ESL proficiency of senior secondary school learners. The investigation was based on the assumption that the research results can lead to the improved understanding of the extent and the causes of poor English proficiency. In specific terms, the research aimed at

- analysing and discussing the research findings on contextual aspects relating to the development of ESL proficiency;
- identifying and analysing the research findings on learner factors which promote the development of ESL proficiency of learners in the senior secondary phase;
- empirically determining the relationship between the development of ESL proficiency of the senior secondary school learners and their use of the LLS's;
- empirically determining how contextual and learner factors influence the relationship between LLS use and the development of ESL proficiency, and
- recommending guidelines on how learner self-direction in learning ESL can be promoted at senior secondary school level.

In the following sections the findings of this study are summarised. On the basis of these findings, conclusions are drawn and recommendations are made.

6.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

To investigate the problem of the study (1.6), two methods of research were used, namely literature review and empirical investigation. Accordingly, this section is divided into two subsections: in the first subsection the findings from the literature review are summarised and the findings of the empirical investigation are summarised in the second subsection.

6.2.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: LITERATURE REVIEW

The major findings from the review of literature were summarised by means of taxonomies, namely the taxonomy of contextual factors in SLA (Table 2.1) and the taxonomy of learner factors in SLA (Table 3.7). It was argued that a taxonomy such as given in Table 2.1 is invaluable for South Africa, because it can be used as a basis for the design of education policy and provision (1.10). The findings represented by each of these taxonomies are summarised below.

6.2.1.1 Contextual factors in the development of ESL proficiency.

In section 1.6 the following question was posed as part of the research problem: *Which contextual factors influence the development of proficiency in a second language?* To answer this question, a review of literature was done and the findings thereof are summarised below (also see Table 2.1)

Findings from literature (chapter 2) showed that the contextual factors that influenced the development of proficiency in a second language could be classified into three categories, namely: societal context, home/family context and school/classroom context.

a) Societal context factors

Regarding the *societal context* it was found that factors such as status (2.2.1.2 a, 2.2.3), institutional support (2.2.1.2 a), as well as socio-cultural factors (2.2.1.2 b, 2.2.4.2) have a significant influence in the development of proficiency in a second language.

Status was defined as the position and role of the TL group as perceived by other language groups. It was found that status comprises the TL group's social dominance,

economic dominance, political dominance and technological dominance. These factors were found to play a significant role in making the language of the group that enjoys such a status more attractive to learn because of its economic and technological incentives.

Institutional support was defined as the degree to which the TL group is represented in mass media, religion, education, government, industry, culture and fashion. It was found that the higher the representation a group has in these institutions, the more frequent is the use of its language in these institutions. Consequently, other language groups tend to learn the language which has high institutional support due to, inter alia, vocational and career opportunities in mass media, religion, education, government, industry, culture and fashion.

Socio-cultural factors that were found to significantly influence the development of ESL proficiency were the ethnolinguistic group's degrees of social enclosure, social cohesiveness, the language used as a dimension of ingroup identification, social integration strategies, socio-cultural norms, beliefs and values, as well as the total number of people who belong to that particular group. It was found that the lower the degrees of *social cohesiveness* and *social enclosure* of one group, the easier it is for such a group to learn another language. It was also found that if the learner's language group does not use its own language as a salient *dimension of ingroup identification*, it may learn the L2 and allow itself to be *assimilated* into the TL group or resort to *adaptation* by learning the L2 while keeping its own culture. However, if the learner's group uses its own language as a salient dimension of ingroup identification, it may try to *preserve* its own language. Another finding regarding contextual factors was that if in a particular social milieu bilingualism is a valued cultural norm, it is easy for L2 learners to acquire the L2. However, if the community regards acquiring L2 as cultural betrayal, members of such a community are reluctant to learn another language. Moreover, the belief held in the community about the L2 being a tool for social and economic advancement was found to be influential by either facilitating or inhibiting the development of ESL proficiency.

In respect of *affective factors* it was found that language shock, culture shock and ego-permeability exerted an influence on the rate at which the ESL proficiency developed.

b) Home/family context factors

In respect of the *home/family context*, it was found that the development of proficiency in a second language is dependent on the *family's socio-economic status* (SES) (2.3.1), the learner's family configuration (2.3.2), parents' educational aspirations for their children (2.3.3), parental involvement (2.3.4), as well as the family's value system (2.3.5).

It was found that the family's SES influences the development of ESL proficiency in so far as it affects the parent's ability to provide items that facilitate learning such as books, magazines, radios, TV, TV games, computers and computer games (2.3.1).

It also found that the *learner's family configuration* influenced the learner's scholastic attainments by, in some cases, affecting the implementation of their aptitudes and intellectual abilities (2.3.2).

The *parents' educational aspirations* were defined in terms of the level of educational attainments a parent desires for his or her child. It was found that high parental aspirations are, *inter alia*, a critical underlying factor for the formation of the learner's own perceptions and aspirations (2.3.3).

Parental involvement was defined as, *inter alia*, the parents' support and encouragement of their children to strive for excellence in their school work, as well as the reinforcement of improved performance and excellence on the basis of the children's potentials. It was found that these actions by parents significantly influenced the learner's general academic performance and the development of ESL proficiency (also see 2.3.4).

The family's value system was found to contribute to the learner's good scholastic performance. An educationally supportive value system is one that sets a great store

by achievement of academic excellence through deferral of immediate gratification in pursuit of long-term goals. It is also the one that emphasises personal effort, self-discipline and productive use of time. It accentuates individual responsibility, hard work, persistence and the importance of education (2.3.5).

c) School/classroom context factors

With regard to the *school-classroom/context*, it was found that the development of proficiency in a second language could be accounted for by several factors, namely: the school's teaching-learning culture (2.4.1), availability and use of educational media and other resources (2.4.2), the learner-educator ratios (2.4.3), as well as the teacher's skills and attitudes (2.4.4).

Regarding the *teaching-learning culture of the school*, it was found that the scholastic performance of learners is heavily influenced by the

- way the principal and the management run the school;
- amount of effort exerted by learners in their school work;
- contribution made by learners to the management of the school through their LRC;
- degree of co-operation among teachers, the management team and learners;
- level of teacher's dedication to their professional duties, and
- support that the school gets from the school governing body and the community at large (see 2.4.1).

Another finding from literature was that one of the factors influencing learner performance was the *availability and use of educational resources* such as, inter alia, the teaching media, textbooks, well-equipped laboratories, libraries, electricity and classrooms. It was found that the availability and effective use of educational media facilitate the development of reading skills, recall of information, explanation of new concepts, consolidation of concepts and presentation of a meaningful picture of an abstract situation. As a source of appropriately graded materials and exercises for various school grades, and as a means of developing learners' imagination, as well as broadening their knowledge, the textbook was also found to be one of the most important educational resources (2.4.2).

The *learner-educator ratio* was found to heavily influence the quality of teaching. It was found that a big class hampers the teacher's application of the principle of individualisation. Faced with a big class, the teacher cannot pay attention to individual learners to identify their learning difficulties, neither can the learners progress at their optimum individual learning pace (2.4.3) as the teacher is not in a position to properly assess their individual progress.

Regarding the *teacher's skills and attitudes*, the factors that were found influential in the development of ESL proficiency were the teacher's mastery of the English language (2.4.4.1), the teacher's attitudes to TESL (2.4.4.2), the teachers' mastery of TESL skills (2.4.4.3), the teacher's mastery various TESL approaches (2.4.4.4), the effects of the teacher's experience in TESL (2.4.4.5) and the role of INSET for ESL teachers (2.4.4.6).

These findings provided evidence to support the notion that in order to succeed, the teaching and learning of L2 should also take into account the factors in the contexts of learning, be it a school, the home or the broader societal context.

6.2.1.2 Learner factors in the development of ESL proficiency

The second question that was posed in section 1.6, was: *Which learner factors are relevant specifically for the development of ESL proficiency of senior secondary school learners?* To provide an answer to this question literature was reviewed and the findings thereof were summarised by means of a taxonomy of learner factors in SLA (Table 3.7).

It was argued that a taxonomy of learner factors would be helpful to teachers and educational policy-makers when assessing learner performance. On the basis of the results of the assessment of learner performance in school, needs for improvement in the education system and for assistance to learners can be determined (1.10).

According to the findings from literature (chapter 3) the development of proficiency in ESL was influenced by two groups of learner factors, namely: independent and dependent learner factors. Independent learner factors were defined as those learner factors that are not influenced by the context from which the learner comes and/or in which SLA takes place. Dependent factors were defined as those learner factors that are

completely or partly subject to the influence of the context from which the learner comes or in which SLA takes place. It was also pointed out that this group of factors is also subject to the influences of independent factors. It is important to acknowledge that the following classification is not watertight. It was also argued that the categorisation was done in order to present a logical and meaningful classification of learner factors in terms of the focus of this study (see 3.2).

a) Independent learner factors

The results of the literature review show that the *independent learner factors* that account for the development of ESL proficiency were the learner's age (3.2.1.1), first language (3.2.1.2), language aptitude (3.2.1.3) intelligence (3.2.1.4), personality (3.2.1.5), as well as cognitive style (3.2.1.6).

Concerning *age*, it was found that this factor affect the rate of L2 learning in respect of grammar, pronunciation and accent (3.2.1.1). In respect of *L1 proficiency* it was found that L1 grammar, phonology, semantics (and sometimes morphology) serve as the basis for the development of L2 proficiency (3.2.1.2).

As far as *language aptitude* is concerned, it was found that the abilities that constitute language aptitude (phonemic coding, associative memory, grammatical sensitivity and inductive language learning) contribute to the acquisition of the L2 CALP, but contribute very little to the development of BICS (3.2.1.3).

Intelligence also contributes to the development of CALP. It was also found that the relationship between intelligence and language proficiency is interactive: low intelligence retards the rate at which linguistic skills are acquired and linguistic deficiencies, on the other hand, retard intellectual growth (3.2.1.4).

Personality was presented as a composite factor made up of sub-factors such as sociability, empathy, extroversion, talkativeness, responsiveness, gregariousness, assertiveness, social competence, popularity and self-efficacy. It was found that these sub-factors individually or jointly exert an influence on how learners learn the L2 (3.2.1.5).

Field dependence and field independence were analysed as constituents of *cognitive style*. Of the two types of cognitive processing, field independence was found to be the most influential on the development of L2 proficiency, more especially if the learners' exposure to the L2 is limited to the classroom (3.2.1.6).

b) Dependent learner factors

Regarding the *dependent learner factors*, it was found that motivation (3.2.2.1) group dynamics (entailing L2 confidence and L2 anxiety) (3.2.2.2), learner attitudes (3.2.2.3), as well as LLS's (3.2.2.4) were the most influential in the development of ESL proficiency.

It was found that all learners come to school with a certain level of *motivation* to learn. In respect of language learning, this motivation derives from instrumental and/or integrative motives. It was also found that the more success the learner gains in L2 learning, the more motivated he/she becomes to learn it further (3.2.2.1).

Another factor that was found influential in the development of ESL proficiency is *group dynamics* (including the learner's L2 confidence and L2 learning anxiety). The negative effect of group dynamics on L2 learning is that if the learner has a low L2 confidence, he gradually develops a negative attitude towards L2 and L2 use. Negative attitudes lead to low motivation to learn the L2 any further (3.2.2.2).

Learner attitudes (consisting of the learner's opinion about the utility value of the L2 and his/her attitudes towards the L2 cultural group, L2 teacher, as well as the L2 learning materials) also influence the L2 learning success (3.2.2.3).

In respect of *the LLS's*, it was found that they are important for the development of the

- L2 skills including speaking, listening, reading and writing, and
- the learner's skills for planning, organising and management of his or her own learning.

It was also found that strategies used for L2 learning are transferable to learning other subjects. In this way training learners in LLS use can equip them with the skills for self-directed learning which are requisite for success in any other learning area or field.

These findings served as substantial evidence to support the proposition that the design of ESL learning programmes has a potential for success if the designers take into account the personal characteristics that each learner brings into the teaching-learning context. The findings from the literature review (chapters 2 & 3) also provided a background on which the research hypotheses for the empirical investigation were based (4.3).

6.2.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

In the light of the insights gained from the findings of the review of literature, the following two hypotheses were stated (1.7) so that, together with the statement of the problem, particularly questions (c) and (d) in section 1.6, they could serve as guides for the empirical investigation:

- *There is a significant correlation between the senior secondary school learners' LLS use and their level of ESL proficiency.*
- *The more supportive the contextual and learner factors to LLS use, the higher the level of ESL proficiency.*

6.2.2.1 Findings: The relationship between LLS use and ESL proficiency.

a) Direct strategies

In 3.2.2.4 direct strategies were defined as the LLS's that involve the mental processing of the TL, albeit in different ways and for different purposes. This subcategory of the LLS's entails memory strategies, cognitive strategies and compensation strategies. In respect of the use of memory and cognitive strategies, empirical evidence was found to support sub-hypotheses A and B (4.3) in both qualitative and quantitative terms. In qualitative terms, it was found that there was a significantly meaningful relationship between the learners' use of memory (5.3.1) and cognitive strategies (5.3.2) and their level of ESL proficiency. In quantitative terms, it was found that the greater the variety of memory and cognitive strategies used, the higher the level of ESL proficiency. Evidence in support of sub-hypothesis C was also

found, as demonstrated by a significant relationship between the use of compensation strategies (5.3.3) and the level of ESL proficiency.

A general conclusion that was drawn from these findings was that there was a significant relationship between the learners' use of direct strategies and the level of their ESL proficiency.

b) Indirect strategies

Indirect strategies were defined as strategies that underpin the process of language learning (3.2.2.4). It was mentioned that this subcategory consists of metacognitive, affective and social strategies. Regarding the learner's use of metacognitive (5.3.4), affective (5.3.5) and social (5.3.6) strategies, no empirical evidence was found to support the sub-hypothesis D, E and F (4.3). Apart from lack of evidence to support these sub-hypotheses, it was found that

- both the reported use of the LLS's and the success with which the LLS's used were important in the interpretation of results and the learner's level of ESL proficiency;
- the use of strategies did not operate alone to influence the development of ESL proficiency, there were intervening variables (such as, for example, the learner's awareness or knowledge of the strategies), which determined whether the LLS was used or not;
- successful use of social strategies depended on the quality of feedback learners received when they used these strategies; and
- learners were not used to planning and organising their school work in order to learn effectively.

In view of these findings regarding the nature of the relationship between the learners' level of ESL proficiency and their use of the LLS's, it can be concluded that the first research hypothesis (4.3 & 6.2.2) was supported only in part.

In the analysis of data in 5.3 it was found that learners preferred using some LLS's and avoided others. In the following section the factors that accounted for such LLS preference and/or avoidance are summarised (also see 5.4).

6.2.2.2 Contextual and learner factors in LLS choice and use

It was hypothesised that the more supportive the contextual and learner factors were to LLS use, the higher would be the level of ESL proficiency (4.3). The following evidence was found to support this hypothesis:

a) Societal context factors

It was found that a variety of factors influenced the learners' choice and use of the LLS's. Regarding the *societal context* it was found that social enclosure (5.4.1.1 a) social cohesiveness (5.4.1.1 b), social integration strategies (5.4.1.1 c), as well as socio-cultural beliefs (5.4.1.1 d) were the most influential factors in the way learners chose and used the LLS's.

- It was also found that due to the *socio-cultural beliefs* in the social milieu, some participants were reluctant to use the strategy of practising to speak English after school because the attitude of their peers was negative towards naturalistic practising involving speaking English. Peers, as well as the community in general, did not expect anyone (except strangers) to use any other language in the neighbourhood except Zulu. There was a tendency in the social milieu to construe any attempt to use English as a flamboyant display of being better or cleverer than other community members.
- *Social cohesiveness* was also found to negatively influence the use of some LLS's. Because the social context was largely monolingual (only Zulu was spoken) participants did not have a chance of learning English by paying attention to someone speaking English outside the classroom.
- *Social enclosure* was found to impact negatively on the use of the LLS's. This is basically due to the fact that the participants who participated in this study lived in a community that was initially for Blacks only. As a result participants were unable to use strategies of looking for people they could talk to in English. There was no naturalistic exposure to L2.

b) Home/family context factors

Regarding the *home/family context*, the family's SES, the family configuration (5.4.1.2 a) and the lack of parental involvement (5.4.1.2 b) were the most influential factors in the choice and use of the LLS's.

- The family's SES influenced the LLS by preventing the participants from going to the cinema to see English movies. Some could not reward themselves for doing well in English; neither could they afford to keep language learning diaries. Their families could not afford buying them additional reading materials.

- Other factors that were found to be influential in the participants' choice and use of the LLS's was the participant's family configuration (2.3.2) and parental involvement. None of the participants had both parents. They lost one of the two parents either through death or divorce. Because of the absence of parents, it was also found that some learners did not have anyone with whom to discuss their feelings while others did not have anyone at home to ask about language learning. In other instances some participants stayed all by themselves because the parent was working far away from home. This meant that, due to lack of parental involvement, the participants did not use these strategies for learning English.

c) School/classroom context

- Regarding the *school classroom context*, it was found that some aspects of the teaching-learning culture were not conducive to learning. The level of commitment to teaching and learning by the teachers (5.4.1.3 a & c) and learners were not supportive to learners who wanted to take responsibility for their own learning by making use of the LLS's. The shortage and misuse of some of the educational resources (5.4.1.3 b) contributed significantly to the average to low proficiency levels of learners in the sample for this investigation (see Table 5.1). The shortage of resources militated against the learners' use of the strategies with a view to improving their level of proficiency.

d) Learner factors

- It was also found that a wide variety of learner factors affected the learners' use of the LLS's. Among the independent learner factors, it was found that the learners' age (5.4.2.1 a), language aptitude (5.4.2.1 b), intelligence (5.4.2.1c), personality (5.4.2.1 d) and field independence (5.4.2.1 e) were the most influential.

- The dependent learner factors that were found to have influenced LLS choice, as well as the development of ESL proficiency, are motivation (5.4.2.2 a) and communication apprehension (5.4.2.2 b).

e) Practical problems concerning the use of the SILL

- Practical problems concerning the use of the SILL were highlighted. These included the participants' level of proficiency (5.4.2.2 c), the participants' level of honesty (5.4.2.2 d) in responding to the SILL and the ambiguity of some SILL items (5.4.2.2e).

The findings of this study have shown that the development of ESL proficiency is influenced by a number of both contextual and learner factors. In spite of the negative influence of these factors, the learner's ability to deal with his or her adverse contextual and personal (as a learner) conditions with the support of the teacher can be used as a solution to the problem of low ESL proficiency at senior secondary school level.

6.3 CONCLUSIONS

To guide and focus this investigation the following question was posed: *What is the influence of contextual and learner factors on the development of ESL proficiency of senior secondary school learners?* This question was further refined into four specific questions, namely:

- a) *Which contextual factors influence the development of proficiency in L2?*
- b) *Which learner factors are relevant specifically for the development of ESL proficiency of senior secondary school learners?*
- c) *Which language learning strategies promote the development of ESL proficiency of senior secondary school learners?*
- d) *How do contextual and learner factors influence learners' language learning strategy use aimed at improving ESL proficiency?*

In the light of the findings from both the review of literature and the empirical investigation of this study, the following conclusions can be made to answer the questions posed above (also see 1.6).

With regard to the findings from the literature review, it can be concluded that the development of ESL proficiency is influenced by the broader societal context, the home family context and the school/classroom context.

- Regarding the societal context, the status of the TL group and institutional support enjoyed by the TL determine the extent to which the TL is attractive to L2 learners. In the broader societal context, socio-cultural factors such as integration strategies, social cohesiveness, social enclosure are further determinants of the successful development of L2 proficiency.
- With regard to the school-classroom context, the learners' general scholastic performance, as well as the development of ESL proficiency is influenced by the school's teaching-learning culture, to which the principal and the management team, teachers, learners and parents contribute significantly.
- In school the learners' performance is also influenced by the availability and use of educational resources, the learner-educator ratio, as well as the teacher's skills and attitudes (including the teacher's attitude towards TESL, mastery of English, mastery of TESL skills, as well as mastery of TESL approaches).
- In respect of the home/family context, the development of ESL proficiency and general scholastic performance of the learner is influenced by the family's SES, learner's family configuration, parents' educational aspirations for their children, parental involvement, as well as the family value system.
- In the light of the literature review on learner factors, it can be concluded that the development of ESL proficiency is influenced by such independent learner factors as the learner's age, LI, language aptitude, intelligence, personality and cognitive style.
- The dependent learner factors that influence the development of ESL proficiency include motivation, group dynamics, learner attitude and LLS.

These conclusions were drawn in respect of question (a) and (b) above.

Question (c) and (d) were used in conjunction with the following hypotheses to guide the empirical investigation:

Hypothesis 1

There is a significant relationship between the senior secondary school learners' level of ESL proficiency and their use of LLS's.

Hypothesis 2

The more supportive the contextual and learner factors to strategy use, the higher the level of ESL proficiency.

On the basis of the empirical evidence found, the following conclusions can be made in respect of the question (c) and hypothesis 1:

- There is a significant relationship between the learner's use of direct strategies (memory, cognitive and compensation strategies) and his or her level of ESL proficiency. The use of indirect strategies (metacognitive, affective and social strategies) did not relate in any significant way with the participants' ESL proficiency because the use of these strategies depended largely on the influence of other factors shown below.

Regarding question (d) and hypothesis 2, the following conclusions can be made:

- The LLS's can be used as a means of studying the influence of contextual and learner factors on the development of ESL proficiency.
- In the societal context, social enclosure social cohesiveness, social integration strategies and the socio-cultural attitudes play an important role in influencing how the learners use the LLS to learn ESL.
- At home, the family's SES, learner's family configuration and parental involvement exert a significant influence on the learner's use of the LLS to develop ESL proficiency.
- At school, the teaching-learning culture of the school, teacher attitudes and skills and the availability and use of educational resources influence the way learners use the LLS's with a view to learning ESL.

- In respect of the independent learner factors, the learner's age, first language, language aptitude, personality and cognitive style are the most influential factors in the use of the LLS's to learn ESL.
- The dependent learner factors that influence the use of LLS are motivation and group dynamics (more especially communication apprehension) as well as learner attitudes.

On the basis of these conclusions, the following recommendations can be made. The recommendations are meant to serve as guidelines whereby the performance of learners can be enhanced and the development of ESL proficiency promoted.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.4.1 SOCIETAL CONTEXT AND HOME/FAMILY FACTORS

1. The understanding of factors that affect the development of the learners' proficiency in ESL would not be complete without taking cognisance of the role of the societal context and home family factors. The study of these factors is valuable, as it can serve to broaden the insights of teachers, researchers and other practitioners involved in L2 teaching and learning. This insight is also valuable for education policy-making and provision. The national and provincial education departments have to take these factors into account before they introduce new curricular innovations in schools.
2. It is important to appreciate the fact that the school and the teacher are not in a position to change the negative social and home circumstances of learners. However, equipped with the knowledge of the role of these factors in the development of proficiency and with extra effort, dedication and commitment to their profession, teachers are in a position to render guidance to learners to enable them to transcend their societal and family limitations. There is ample evidence in literature that this can be done (see 2.4.1).

6.4.2 SCHOOL/CLASSROOM CONTEXT FACTORS

6.4.2.1 The school's teaching-learning culture

3. Research (2.4.1) has revealed a number of activities that principals, teachers and learners should embark upon to support the teaching-learning activities in their

school. It is, therefore, recommended that, in order to establish and maintain a culture of teaching and learning in their schools, the principal and the management team have to:

- make high quality teaching the school's primary priority;
- see to it that time is meaningfully used;
- create positive relationships between parents, teachers, learners and the community by means of occasions such as parents days or prize-giving days;
- develop a clear vision for the school which the school leadership, teachers and learners should jointly strive to achieve;
- instil a sense of high expectations in teachers and learners to be reflected in the good final examination results of each grade at the end of the school year, and
- strive to create and maintain general order and discipline as evidenced in teachers' and learners' respect and meaningful use of time.

4. It is important that the education departments should institute programmes for training the:

- new principals in the skills required for their new professional responsibilities.
- long-serving principals in the new methods and strategies for managing schools such as democratic school governance and participatory management.
- district officials, LRC members, principals and members of school governing bodies (SGB's) in their new roles and responsibilities in terms of South African Schools Act (SASA).

5. In respect of the teaching staff, it is recommended that the teachers have to support the school leadership by:

- developing and upholding the school policy in co-operation with the management team and the learners' representative council (LRC);
- executing their professional/academic duties with dedication;
- acting as professionals at all times;

- acting as role models to learners at all times, and
 - creating positive educator-learner relationships in the interest of learning.
6. Regarding learners, it is important that teachers and the school leadership co-operate with the LRC's in order to work out strategies for developing learner self-discipline, willingness to accept authority and discipline, learning motivation, learning morale, positive attitudes and dedication to school work. These strategies should take into account the provisions of SASA.
7. In the classroom learner-centred methods must be used, taking into account that learners do not master these approaches overnight. Learners have to get used to discussing, investigating and asking questions as early as the elementary grades, so that by the time they reach the senior grades, they have already mastered some of the strategies that capacitate learners to take charge of their own learning.

These recommendations regarding the roles of principals, management teams, teachers and learners are very pertinent, taking into account the poor teaching-learning culture that was found in schools (5.2.3).

6.4.2.2 Availability and use of educational media and resources

8. The advantages of the effective use of educational resources were discussed in 2.4.2. In this regard, the following is recommended for schools:
- The school should appoint a professional librarian to manage the library/resource centre properly.
 - Where a professional librarian cannot be appointed (due to, for example, financial constraints), one of the teachers should be retrained (re-skilled) to manage the library efficiently in the interest of education.
 - A school librarian should be made aware of the vision and mission of the school and be made accountable to the school principal.
9. In view of the shortage of books, it is recommended that the Departments of Education do not change prescribed books if there is no money to buy new ones.

The outcomes of language learning, as listed in 1.5.1, can be achieved using any properly graded book or material repeatedly over a long time. All the school leadership, in co-operation with subject teachers, has to do is to ensure that all books issued to learners at the beginning of the school year should be returned and properly recorded. It is important for the school to emphasise to learners that returning school books in good order is the learners' contribution to ensuring that other learners also get the opportunity of being educated.

10. With regard to the shortage of libraries, the following is recommended: Schools can share the available resource centres according to a particular plan agreed to among the schools using those facilities. This does not imply that the government should shirk its responsibility of providing educational facilities: it is meant to cater for realities where such assistance is not forthcoming from the government. Another recourse the schools have is to look for donors and sponsors to invest in education by providing for example, books, magazines, laboratories and libraries.

6.4.2.3 The learner-educator ratio

Findings from literature (2.4.3) show that small learner-educator ratios contribute to the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom. In LLS training terms, a small class enables the teacher to pay attention to individual learners to determine which LLS will best suit the learner's characteristics. Other education researchers (2.4.3) have argued that in South Africa small class sizes are a precondition for the success of outcomes-based education, particularly Curriculum 2005.

11. On the basis of the research findings cited above there is evidently no educational justification for big classes, as they compromise the provision of quality education. However, as big classes are a reality in South Africa (due to financial constraints), education departments, in conjunction with research institutes and non-governmental organisations (NGO's), can run workshops aimed at equipping the teachers with the strategies and methodologies that will enable them to cope with the phenomenon of big classes.

6.4.2.4 Teachers' skills and attitudes

12. A detailed account of the teacher's skills requisite for enabling learners to acquire ESL was presented in 2.4.2. These skills are indispensable for successful ESL teaching. It is recommended that the Departments of Education should conduct an ESL teachers' skills audit. On the basis of the results of the audit, the departments should conduct pre-service education and training (PRESET) and INSET (also via distance education) programmes aimed at equipping ESL teachers with various aspects of TESL such as skills, language mastery and TESL approaches.
13. During the empirical investigation it was found that there is a need for teachers to play multiple roles in school, such as for example being a teacher, father/mother substitute, advisor and a confidant to the learner, more especially to learners who do not have parents (5.4.1.3 c). This enables the learner to confide to the teacher about his/her social, family and/or personal circumstances that might be a hindrance to learning. The teacher can tell the learners of the times at which he/she will be available to listen to their problems and give advice. He/she can also make himself/herself available to learners to come to him/her as soon as they have a point to discuss.

6.4.3 LEARNER FACTORS

The independent learner factors that the teacher should take into account when planning an ESL lesson are age, first language, language aptitude, intelligence, personality and cognitive style.

14. To determine these learner factors, the teacher has to make use of the school records. It is therefore incumbent on the school management to see to it that they keep records of each learner's personal information and scholastic performance. These records should serve as resources the teacher can use to learn more about each learner's background, personal characteristics, weaknesses and strengths. All training programmes (see 6.3.2) should start by ascertaining these learner factors.
15. If the records mentioned above are not available, the school should begin to compile them with the help of a registered psychologists employed by the

Department of Education at district office level. The following tests are recommended for use:

- HSPQ for personality testing
 - Group Embedded Figures Test (GEFT) for cognitive style testing
 - General Scholastic Aptitude Test (GSAT) for intelligence and language aptitude testing.
16. It is important that after the teacher has obtained the results of these tests on each learner, he or she should conduct an interview with each learner in the light of the test results. The aim of the interview is to add a qualitative dimension that has a potential of clarifying certain tendencies in the quantitative data.
17. In order to motivate learners the teacher can make use of the interview session to first determine the learner's educational aspirations and the reason for learning English. On the basis of the interview, it is necessary that the teacher should make the learner see the relevance of proficiency in English in the learner's overall plan, i.e. in economic, social and cultural terms.

6.4.4 STRATEGY TRAINING MODEL

This investigation found that the placement of learners in the same grade does not necessarily mean that they have the same levels of English proficiency and the same abilities to cope with the requirements of the curriculum of that grade (cf. 5.2.5). It was also found that in some schools there is a tendency among learners to start streaming out of the classroom as soon as they see that there is no teacher to lead learning activities in the classroom. It is important to recommend means whereby this teacher dependency can gradually be eliminated. It was also found that though the participants in this investigation reported the choice and use of some LLS's, in some instances the reported LLS use did not match the participant's performance in the ESL proficiency measure.

It can therefore be argued, in the light of these findings that it is imperative to recommend guidelines whereby learners can be trained to

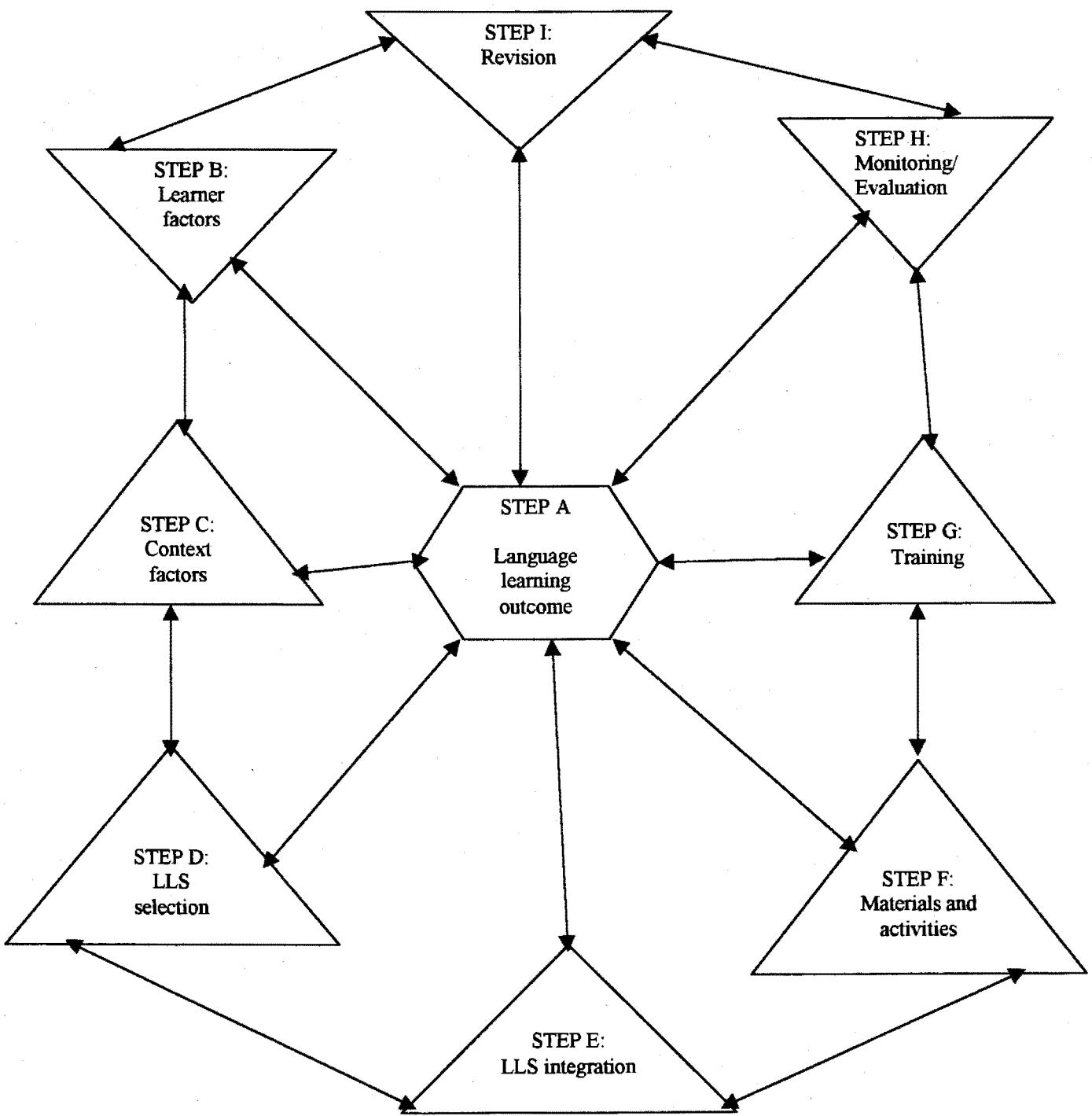
- successfully use the LLS to improve their ESL proficiency, and

- independently direct their own learning to enable themselves to cope with the requirements of their curriculum.

The aim of this section, therefore, is to explain a model that can be used to promote ESL proficiency and learner self-direction. The discussion is based on the findings of this study as briefly indicated above (also see 5.2.5). The model is called "A contextualised learner-centred model for LLS training"(see fig. 6.1). This model is an adaptation of Oxford's (1990:209) model. The adaptation involved making use of some of her subheadings. Some were revised and new ones added so that the model completely reflects the findings of this study. The model is **contextualised** and **learner-centred** because it takes into account the influences of contextual and learner factors on LLS training. The model has been designed to serve as a guide to teachers on how to train learners in LLS use in order to develop and improve their proficiency in ESL and to become independent self-directed learners. The recommendations in this model are based on the findings of this study, and also take cognisance of the South African teaching-learning paradigm, i.e. OBE, by emphasising learner-centredness and self-directed learning (see 1.4).

The model consists of nine cells (Step A-I), each representing a step in LLS training. The central cell is linked to all the cells to indicate that all the steps in LLS training should have a common focus. Cells are also linked by means of bi-directional arrows to indicate interdependence and mutual interaction among the steps. Recommendations on each step in the model are discussed below.

Fig. 6.1 A contextualised learner-centred model for LLS training



6.4.4.1 Step A: Language learning outcome

It is recommended that the teacher take into account the fact that LLS training is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. The ultimate end in LLS training is to enable

the learner to attain the language learning outcome (LLO). It is, therefore, incumbent on the teacher to first select the specific outcome to be achieved. A list of language learning specific outcomes is provided at the end of section 1.5.1. These outcomes represent the ultimate level of proficiency that each learner must strive to attain.

6.4.4.2 Step B: Learner factors

This study has shown that the learners' ability to use of a variety of memory, cognitive and compensation strategies to master ESL proficiency is influenced by such independent learner factors as age, language aptitude, intelligence, personality, as well as cognitive style (see 5.4.2). Another poignant finding of this study is that, by the time learners reach senior secondary school grades, these learner factors are no longer susceptible to external influences. As a consequence, an extra effort is necessary on the part of the teacher to give extra training to those learners who experience a negative influence of the independent factors on LLS training and the ultimate mastery of the LLO.

Besides the independent learner factors, there are also dependent learner factors. The implication of these factors is that at the outset the teacher has to determine the level of motivation, type of learner attitudes, initial level of ESL self-confidence or anxiety, as well as ESL proficiency. The teacher has to understand that there is no learner who, by grades 10, 11 or 12, is totally ignorant regarding the outcome to be achieved. For this reason, before the learner is subjected to training, his/her level of proficiency has to be determined. Because of individual learner differences, the teachers should expect a differential in the rate at which the learners master the LLS's and attain the LLO.

6.4.4.3 Step C: Contextual factors

This study has also highlighted the negative effects of societal, home/family and school/classroom context factors (5.4.1) on the use of the LLS's. On the basis of these findings, it is recommended that, before recommending a set of LLS's, the teacher must first determine which LLS will or will not work in the light of the influences of contextual factors on the learner. For example, to attain the fourth LLO (i.e. *the ability to access, process and use information from a variety of sources and situations*), the

teacher might want his/her learners to use such cognitive strategies as getting the idea quickly, taking notes, highlighting and summarising. However, the teacher has to determine beforehand the extent of a favourable context in terms of the availability of resources such as journals, magazines, manuals, books, newspapers and the internet, which facilitate the attainment of the LLO in focus. These resources must be kept in a well managed and a properly functioning resource centre. To take into account the contextual factors can also be a means of assisting learners to understand the relevance of learning a specific LLS and mastering ESL to their daily lives and experiences.

6.4.4.4 Step D: LLS selection

According to this model, the selection of the LLS's in which the learner is to be trained is determined and influenced by the LLO, learner factors and contextual factors. It is recommended that the teacher, on the basis of his or her knowledge and experience in TESL, should make the learner aware of a variety of LLS's that can be used to achieve an LLO. The LLS ultimately selected must be the learner's choice. The effective use of the LLS by the learner is the joint responsibility of the teacher and the learner.

6.4.4.5 Step E: LLS integration

In this model LLS integration implies that a chosen LLO cannot be achieved through training learners on a single set of LLS's. The LLO's are best achieved through the integration of all the six groups of LLS's, namely memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social strategies. The rationale for LLS integration is that, in order to attain any set LLO's, the learner must be able to

- internalise and recall information;
- manipulate the ESL code to suit his/her use;
- make up for his or her inadequacies of language comprehension and production in ESL;
- effectively plan, organise and manage his/her own learning to achieve better learning results;
- manage the positive and the negative emotions resulting from learning successes and failures inherent in any learning acts, and

- learn from and in co-operation with others.

LLS integration further implies that LLS training should be integrated with the ESL lesson. The lesson should be focused on attaining the LLO by means of a selection of the LLS's so that theory and practice are merged into a unified whole.

6.4.4.6 Step F: Materials and activities

According to this model, it is recommended that properly graded materials that take into account the learners' contexts and their individual differences should be used. If resources such as English books are not available, old newspapers and magazines can be used. The teacher can also use the principle of **language across the curriculum**, whereby the materials for LLS training and teaching ESL skills are derived from other subjects such as for example, Business Economics, History, Biology, Physical Science, etc. The teacher must always bear in mind that the aims of LLS training are to increase ESL proficiency, enable learners to plan and manage their own learning and to build a nation of lifelong learners. On this account, it is imperative that the teacher designs the learning programme/activities in such a way that he/she remains a guide and a facilitator of learning. His/her involvement should be gradually withdrawn in order to allow learners to engage in self-directed learning activities. The extent of the teacher's involvement will be determined by learner factors mentioned above.

6.4.4.7 Step G: Training

In this step the teacher has to decide whether the process of training is to be formal or informal. **Formal LLS training** refers to the training that takes place to some extent in school but largely in the classroom. **Informal LLS training** relies on learners having to practise LLS in the societal and home/family context. However, there is evidence to suggest that in some areas of South Africa some societal and home/family context factors (5.4.1.1) militate against informal practising of LLS. For this reason, it is recommended that formal LLS training is used, more especially in areas characterised by high social enclosure, social cohesiveness, negative socio-cultural attitudes towards bilingualism, poor socio-economic circumstances and lack of educational resources. Under the circumstances listed above, a formal LLS training

approach is advisable, since with his or her skills and expertise, the teacher can determine what will be successful or not.

6.4.4.8 Step H: Monitoring and evaluation

This step emphasises the value of continuous assessment and feedback (see 1.4.2.4) to learners who are being trained. During the course of training, the teacher has to continuously assess the

- suitability of the LLS for the attainment of the LLO;
- learner's success in mastering the LLS's, and
- extent to which the mastery of the LLS improves ESL proficiency and self-directed learning skills.

For the successful application of the model, it is crucial that this monitoring and evaluation is formative and continuous, as the mastery of a language skill requires many hours of practice in speaking, reading, writing and listening.

This assessment has to be done taking into account the contextual and learner factors. It is also important to set realistic time frames, taking cognisance of these factors to enable the teacher to be patient and avoid the temptation of hastily resorting to a new LLS training programme without giving learners enough time. During the assessment of learner performance on LLS training and attainment of the LLO, variability in learning results should be expected and feedback and assistance be given to learners accordingly.

6.4.4.9 Step I: Revision

The revision of the LLS training programme results from the evaluation done in step H above. Revision can affect one or all the components of the model (A-I). For example, the inaccurate assessment of the learner's initial level of ESL proficiency can lead to inaccurate selection of LLS's in which the learner is to be trained. It was found in this study that the effective use of some LLS's (e.g. circumlocution) depended on the level of proficiency that the learner had already attained before the use of the strategies. Equally significant is the accurate judgement of the ability of the context to support the LLS training programme.

6.4.4.10 Summary

The model presented above should not be understood as linear. The recommendations are presented in a linear fashion to facilitate understanding and for the sake of convenience. It must also be noted that this model is not limited to learning ESL only; it can also be adapted for learning other subjects. This is testimony to the fact the LLS's are adaptable to all learning activities. ESL instruction, as well as the LLS training model, has to take into account critical and developmental outcomes of education and training in South Africa (Table 1.1).

6.5 POSSIBILITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

One of the findings of this study is that some learners were totally unequipped to successfully tackle the curriculum of the senior secondary school grades (see 5.2.5.6, 5.2.5.7 and Table 5.2). Further research can be conducted in this regard to investigate the causes of such lack of preparedness and how learners like these ones get promoted to higher grades without being able to satisfy the requirements of the lower ones. Among others, a further investigation can also look into how such a lack of preparedness impacts on performance on the grade 12 final examinations. Such research has a potential to contribute significantly in finding ways of improving learners' general average performance.

In order to gain deeper insight into the role of contextual and learner factors in the learners' development of ESL proficiency, this study was undertaken making use of seven learners. The insight gained from this study can be used as a basis for a large-scale study from which it will be possible to generalise about the whole South African context.

The SILL is evidently a useful instrument. However, in future research there is a need to adapt it in such a way that it

- a) is sensitive to the learner's age and level of cognitive development, and
- b) reflects conditions prevalent in and presuppositions relevant to the South African context.

Further improvement of the SILL can be achieved by subjecting it to rigorous item analysis in order to eliminate ambiguous items, as well as the items that are not relevant for a specific language group to which the SILL is applied. For example, whereas item 18 concerning analysing contrastively may be relevant and useful for Afrikaans-speaking learners learning English, it is not relevant to the Zulu-speaking learners who want to acquire ESL proficiency.

Another finding of this study was the evident lack of writing practice by learners shown by their poor performance on the WPT (see 5.2.5). Accordingly, further research can concentrate on investigating the amount and quality of work assigned to learners to practice ESL skills in and out of the classroom, as well as the quality and frequency of feedback learners receive from the teachers. The aim of this research would be to investigate how these classroom factors impact on the development of ESL proficiency.

In spite of the differences between the two schools that participated in this investigation in terms of their grade 12 learners' average performances in the final examinations, no significant difference was found between the average RPT performance of learners from the two schools. The potential for further research on cases similar to this one lies in investigating the cause of this incongruity between the average performance of learners who are internally examined and those who are externally examined. Findings from such a research project have a potential of contributing to the equalisation of standards so that the learners are given equal attention in all grades.

6.6 CLOSING REMARKS

Due to the senior secondary school learners' limited English proficiency, this study was undertaken to investigate the influence of contextual and learner factors on the development of ESL proficiency. The study focused on the influence of LLS on the development of ESL proficiency. The rationale for focusing the empirical study on LLS use was based on the evidence from literature that learners' choice and use of LLS reflected the influence of contextual and learner factors (see 4.2).

The findings of this study showed that the development of ESL proficiency is a product of a combined influence of contextual and learner factors. These factors were summarised by means of taxonomies in tables 2.1 and 3.7. The empirical investigation found evidence of how some contextual and learner factors intervened between the learners' use of the LLS and their development of ESL proficiency.

Taking cognisance of the recommendations made in this study in respect of contextual and learner factors, it can be argued that, if learners are trained using the model in 6.4.4, they can, by the end of their senior secondary school education, achieve adequate proficiency in English which is characterised by the learner's ability to

- make and negotiate meaning and understanding;*
 - show critical awareness of language usage;*
 - respond to aesthetic, affective, cultural and social values,*
 - access, process and use information from a variety of sources and situations;*
 - understand, know and apply language structures and conventions in context;*
 - use language for learning, and*
 - use appropriate communication strategies for specific purposes and situations*
- (South Africa 1997c:24)

Equipped with this level of English proficiency, learners could be ready to enter higher education and training, compete in the labour market, as well as to participate in the global village.

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APPENDIX A:

STRATEGY INVENTORY FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING (SILL)

Version for Speakers of Other Languages

Learning English

Version 7.0 (ESL/EFL)

(c) Oxford, 1989

DIRECTIONS

- a) This form of the STRATEGY INVENTORY FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING (SILL) is for students of English as a second or foreign language.
- b) You will find statements about learning English.
- c) Please read each statement.
- d) On the separate Worksheet, write the response (1, 2, 3, 4 or 5) that tells HOW TRUE OF YOU THE STATEMENT IS

RESPONSES

- a) The numbers 1 to 5 represent the following responses:

1. **Never true of me**
2. **Usually not true of me**
3. **Somewhat true of me**
4. **Usually true of me**
5. **Always true of me**

MEANING OF RESPONSES

The responses shown above have the following meanings for you as the English language learner:

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

ANSWERING

- a) Answer in terms of how well the statement describes you.
- b) Do not answer how you think you should be, or what other people do.
- c) There are no right or wrong answers to these statements.
- d) Put your answers on the separate Worksheet provided.
- e) Please make no marks on the items.
- f) Work as quickly as you can without being careless.
- g) This usually take about 20-30 minutes to complete.
- h) If you have any questions, let me know immediately.

EXAMPLE

1. **Never true of me**
2. **Usually not true of me**
3. **Somewhat true of me**
4. **Usually true of me**
5. **Always true of me**

Read the item, and choose a response (1 through 5 as above), and write it in the space provided on the answer sheet next to each item number.

Example

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

Answer:

PART A	
1.	4

In this example

- Part A, refers to the first section of the SILL
- 1. Refers to the item number in the SILL
- 4 refers to the response the learner may choose out of (1, 2, 3, 4 or 5)

STRATEGY INVENTORY FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING

Version 7.0 (ESL/EFL)

(c) R. Oxford, 1989

1. **Never true of me**
2. **Usually not true of me**
3. **Somewhat true of me**
4. **Usually true of me**
5. **Always true of me**

Part A

1. I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.
2. I use new English words in a sentence so that I can remember them.
3. I connect the sound of the new English word with the picture or image of the word so that I can remember the word.
4. I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of the situation in which the word might be used.
5. I use rhyme to remember new English words.
6. I use flashcards to remember new English word.
7. I physically act out new English words.
8. I review English lessons often
9. I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.

Part B

10. I say or write new English words several times.
11. I try to talk like native English speakers.
12. I practise the sounds of English.
13. I use the English words I know in different ways.
14. I start conversations in English.
15. I watch English language TV shows or movies.
16. I write notes, messages, letters and reports in English.
17. I skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.
18. I look for words in my own language that are similar to the new English words.
19. I try to find patterns in English.
20. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.
21. I try to translate word for word.
22. I read for pleasure in English.
23. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.

1. **Never true of me**
2. **Usually not true of me**
3. **Somewhat true of me**
4. **Usually true of me**
5. **Always true of me**

Part C

24. To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.
25. When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures
26. I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.
27. I read English without looking up every new word.
28. I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.
29. If I cannot think of a word in English, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.

Part D

30. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.
31. I notice my English language mistakes and make use of that information to help me do better.
32. I pay attention when someone is speaking English.
33. I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.
34. I plan my schedule so that I will have enough time to study English.
35. I look for opportunities to read in English as much as possible.
36. I have a clear goal for improving my English skills.
37. I look for people I can talk to in English.
38. I think about my progress in English learning.

Part E.

39. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English
40. I encourage myself to use English even if I am afraid of making mistakes.
41. I give myself a reward whenever I do well in English.
42. I notice it if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.
43. I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.
44. I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.

Part F.

45. If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.
46. I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.
47. I practise English with other students.
48. I ask for help from English speakers.
49. I ask questions in English.
50. I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.

**Worksheet for Answering the
Strategy Inventory for Language Learning
Version 7.0 (ESL/EFL)
(c) R. Oxford, 1989**

Learner's name: _____

Date: _____

Age: _____

Sex: _____

Home language: _____

INSTRUCTIONS

1. The blanks are numbered for each item on the SILL.
2. Write your response to each item (that is, write 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5) in each of the blanks.

SILL WORSHEET

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

APPENDIX B:
SPECIMEN OF THE SILL-BASED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
QP012

PART A

1. How do you ensure that you do not forget the meanings of new English words (2)?
2. Give the meanings of (or explain) the following words
 - a) rhyme (5)
 - b) flashcard (6)
 - c) review (8)

PART B

3. How do you ensure the correct pronunciation of unfamiliar English words (12)?
4. What does the phrase *native speaker* mean to you (11)?
5. Do you ever start a conversation in English (14)?
 - a) With whom or why not?
6. Do you watch English movies on TV or at the cinema (15)?
 - a) Explain
7. For what purpose do you write letters and notes in English (16)?
 - a) To friends
 - b) Class work
 - c) To teachers
 - d) To parents
8. What is the meaning of the word *pattern* (19)?
9. Is there a reason why you do not read for pleasure in English (22)?

PART C

10. Why do you avoid guessing at the meanings of unfamiliar English words (24)?
11. What do you understand by the word *gestures* (25)?
13. How do you discover the meaning of the new English words you encounter as you read (27)?

14. Why can't you or do you not guess what a person is about to say in English (28)?

PART D

15. How does the knowledge of the mistakes you make when you practise using English help you (31)?

16. Who advises you on how to be a better learner of English (33)?

17. How do you accommodate studying English in your overall study plan (34)?

18. How much time (in hours or minutes) do you spend on learning English per day (35)?

18. What do you want to achieve by learning English (36)?

19. How are you going to learn to speak English if you do not look for people to speak to (37)?

PART E

20. Do you ever feel afraid of using English (39)?
Under what circumstances?

21. What sort of reward do you give yourself for each success you achieve in learning English (41)?

22. Explain what you understand by the words **tense** and **nervous** as used in item 42

23. What is (are) the advantage(s) of the language learning diary that you keep (43)?

24. To whom do you talk about how you feel when you learn English (44)?

PART F

25. What do you understand by the phrase **English speakers** (46)?

26. How do your fellow students react when you practise speaking English with them (47)?

27. Who do you ask for help if you encounter a problem in learning English (49)?

28. How do you learn the culture of English speakers (50)?

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES TO THE SILL AND SBI

PART	ITEM	XY116	K	SILL	SBI	XY025	K	SILL	SBI	QP011	K	SILL	QP012	K	SILL	SBI	XY086	K	SILL	SBI	QP013	K	SILL	SBI	QP014	K	SILL	SBI	
A	1		4	4	4	4		1	1	5		5	5		3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	1		
	2		4	4	4	4		2	1	1	1	1	4		4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5		
	3		3	1	3	1		1	1	4		4	4		4	4	2	2	5	5	5	3	1	1	1	1			
	4		4	4	5	5		4	4	4		4	4		4	4	2	2	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5			
	5		1	1	1	1		4	4	2		1	2		1	2	1	5	1	4	1	2	1	1	1	1			
	6		3	1	1	1		1	1	3		1	3		1	3	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
	7		5	5	3	1		1	1	2		2	3		1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
	8		2	1	5	5		5	5	4		4	4		4	4	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
	9		4	4	4	4		2	2	4		4	4		5	5	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	3	1	1			
		3.3333	2.8	3.3333	2.9	2.3333	2.2	3.2222	2.9	3.3333	2.2	2.8889	2	3	1.9														
B	10		5	5	4	4		4	4	5		5	5		5	5	1	4	5	5									
	11		4	4	5	5		5	5	4		4	5		1	3	1	4	1	5									
	12		5	5	5	5		5	5	2		1	5		5	5	2	2	5	5									
	13		5	5	3	1		2	2	5		5	4		4	5	5	3	1	1									
	14		5	5	2	4		2	2	3		1	5		5	5	1	4	5	5									
	15		5	5	5	5		5	5	5		5	4		2	5	1	5	5	5									
	16		5	5	5	5		5	5	5		5	5		5	1	3	4	5	5									
	17		3	1	4	4		5	5	5		5	4		4	1	1	1	4	4									
	18		4	4	3	1		2	2	5		5	4		4	4	5	5	1	1									
	19		3	1	3	1		5	5	4		1	3		1	1	1	1	3	1									
	20		1	1	5	5		2	2	2		2	3		1	5	5	4	2	2									
	21		5	5	4	4		5	5	4		4	2		2	2	2	2	2	2									
	22		4	4	1	1		5	5	2		2	4		4	4	4	4	1	1									
	23		3	1	5	5		2	2	5		5	2		1	0	1	1	3	1									
		4.0714	3.6	3.8571	3.6	3.8571	3.9	4	3.6	3.9286	2.9	2.7143	2.9	2.9	3.5714	2.7													
C	24		1	5	1	1		5	5	1		1	1		1	1	1	1	3	1									
	25		3	1	3	1		5	1	3		1	2		1	2	1	2	2	1									
	26		1	1	4	4		1	1	2		2	3		1	1	1	3	1										
	27		1	1	2	2		3	1	1		2	1		3	1	1	1	1										
	28		3	1	5	5		5	5	2		2	2		2	2	4	1	4	4									
	29		5	5	5	5		5	5	5		5	3		1	1	1	1	3	1									
		2.3333	2.3	3.3333	3	4	3	2.3333	2	2.1667	1.2	2	2	1	2.6667	1.5													
D	30		5	5	4	4		2	2	5		5	4		4	4	4	4	2	2									
	31		5	5	5	5		4	4	5		5	3		1	5	5	3	1	5									
	32		5	5	5	5		5	5	5		5	4		4	5	5	5	5	5									
	33		5	1	5	5		4	4	5		5	5		5	3	1	4	4										
	34		4	4	4	1		2	1	4		1	3		1	5	5	4	5	5									
	35		4	4	5	5		2	5	5		5	4		4	4	4	4	3	1									
	36		5	5	5	5		5	5	5		5	2		2	5	5	5	5	5									
	37		5	5	3	5		5	5	1		1	3		1	3	1	5	5	5									
		4.7778	4.3	4.3333	4.4	3.7778	4	4.4444	4.1	3.3333	2.7	4.3333	3.9	4	3.6														
E	39		3	1	3	1		5	5	4		4	4		4	1	2	2	3	1									
	40		5	1	4	4		2	2	5		5	5		5	5	4	4	3	1									
	41		5	1	4	1		5	1	5		1	3		1	4	4	3	1	3									
	42		4	4	4	4		5	5	5		1	2		1	3	1	3	1	3									
	43		4	1	5	1		1	1	4		1	2		2	1	1	1	4	1									
	44		3	5	4	4		5	1	5		5	2		4	4	1	5	5	5									
		4	2.2	4	2.5	3.8333	2.5	4.6667	2.8	3	2.3	3.1667	2.3	3.6667	2.2														
F	45		5	5	5	5		5	5	5		5	5		5	3	1	5	5										
	46		2	2	2	2		5	5	5		5	4		4	4	4	5	5										
	47		4	4	2	2		1	4	4		2	2		2	2	2	4	4	4									
	48		5	5	4	4		1	1	5		5	2		2	5	5	5	5	5									
	49		4	4	4	1		2	2	5		5	2		2	1	1	1	5	5									
		3	1	2	1	1		1	4	1	2	2	2		2	2	5	5	5	5									
		3.833	3.5	3.167	2.5	2.667	2.5	4.6667	4.2	2.833	2.8	2.833	3	4.833	4.2														
	TOTAL	191	163	186	164	172	158	195	167	163	122	151	131	180	134														
	GAVG	3.8	3.3	3.7	3.3	3.4	3.2	3.9	3.3	3.3	2.4	3	2.6	3.6	2.7														