

Chapter 4

Empirical investigation

1 Introduction

The empirical investigation relates to the secondary aims stated in Chapter 1 [§2]:

- to determine the English L2 proficiency of two groups of L2 learners of English in South Africa (L1 speakers of Afrikaans and Southern Sotho respectively) as representatives of the broader L2 community in South Africa,
- to describe their cultural identities,
- to determine if aspects of cultural identity are related to the English L2 proficiency of the subjects (Pearson Product Moment correlations), and
- to determine if aspects of cultural identity contribute to variance in the English L2 proficiency (stepwise multiple regression analysis) of the subjects.

Based on the analysis of acquisition planning for English as a L2 [Chapter 2] and the findings from this empirical investigation, the final outcome of this study is to draft a proposal to improve acquisition planning⁴⁷ for English as a L2 in multilingual South Africa [Chapter 6].

2 Subjects

The scope of this study does not permit a survey of more than two different L1 populations who learned English as a L2 in South Africa. Afrikaans and Southern Sotho are selected because they are two prominent L1s in the Free State and Gauteng regions where this study was conducted and they represent a large group of English L2 learners in South Africa. The following three tables (cf. Tables 4.1, 4.2, 4.3) provide information about the number of Afrikaans and Southern Sotho users in South Africa, the Free State and Gauteng. From these tables it is clear that Afrikaans and Southern Sotho are prominent L1s in the region where the study was conducted.

⁴⁷ "Improvement of acquisition planning" refers to improvements on the unintentional acquisition planning efforts for English as a L2 that formed part of language in education policies in the past (Schuring, 1992: 252) and improvement of the current, deliberate, acquisition planning context for English as a L2 in South Africa, of which the Langtag (1996) process is one example.

Table 4.1: Distribution of L1s in South Africa⁴⁸

Language	Estimated percentage of population using language as L1	Approximate number of speakers (millions)
Zulu	21,96%	8,8
Xhosa	17,3%	6,8
* Afrikaans	15,3%	6,0
Northern Sotho	9,64%	3,8
English	9,01%	3,6
Tswana	8,59%	3,4
* Southern Sotho	6,73%	2,7
Tsonga	4,35%	1,8
Swati	2,57%	1,0
Venda	2,22%	0,9
Ndebele	1,55%	0,6

(Ridge, 1996: 16)

Table 4.2: Distribution of L1s in Free State

Language	Estimated percentage of population using language as L1	Approximate number of speakers (millions)
* Southern Sotho	62,1%	1,64
* Afrikaans	14,5%	0,38
Xhosa	9,4%	0,25
Tswana	6,5%	0,17
Zulu	4,8%	0,13
English	1,3%	0,03
Tsonga	0,5%	0,01
Ndebele	0,2%	0,005
Northern Sotho	0,2%	0,005
Swati	0,1%	0,003
Venda	0,1%	0,003

(SSA, 2000:15)

Table 4.3: Distribution of L1s in Gauteng

Language	Estimated percentage of population using language as L1	Approximate number of speakers (millions)
Zulu	21,5%	1,58
* Afrikaans	16,7%	1,23
* Southern Sotho	13,1%	0,96
English	13,0%	0,96
Northern Sotho	9,5%	0,70
Tswana	7,9%	0,58
Xhosa	7,5%	0,55
Tsonga	5,3%	0,39
Ndebele	1,6%	0,12
Venda	1,4%	0,10
Swati	1,3%	0,10

(SSA, 2000:15)

⁴⁸ The asterisks in Tables 4.1 – 4.3 identify the two L1s used in this study. Percentages do not add up to 100%, because languages other than the 11 official languages are not included.

Afrikaans learners of English are selected, because Titlestad (1998) argues that their educational situation is different from other learners in South Africa. According to Titlestad (1998: 34), Afrikaans learners of English as a L2 benefit from attending well-managed schools, being taught in their L1 (one could assume that they acquire academic language proficiency in the L1) and being taught English by relatively good role models of South African English. Other scholars agree with Titlestad that Afrikaans learners of English as a L2 are advantaged in South Africa and that owing to the history of South Africa, the situation in black schools is very different. Heugh (1995b: 43) states that Afrikaans learners do not have to cope with the same educational obstacles (for example, using a L2 as language of teaching and learning) as speakers of an African L1. Furthermore, King and Van den Berg (1992: 27) state "Language teachers in the most complex linguistic contexts ... those in Africa schools, are ... those who have the fewest resources and support networks to fall back on". Lemmer's (1993) contention is that black teachers are not competent speakers of South African English and their learners, therefore, are at a disadvantage. Heugh (1995c: 84) also refers to this issue. De Klerk (1995c: 61) argues that Afrikaans learners of English as a L2 have been exposed to forms of additive bilingualism while speakers of African languages have been exposed to subtractive forms of bilingual education.

Apart from these largely socio-economic differences between Afrikaans and Southern Sotho learners of English, Afrikaans and Southern Sotho speakers represent two of the main L1 populations that learn English as a L2 in South Africa. Except for very small European immigrant populations and Afrikaans learners of English as a L2, all the other learners are speakers of Southern Bantu languages. These languages are very similar from a linguistic point of view, and the English spoken by these learners, termed Black South African English (BSAE), is largely the same irrespective of the individual L1s (cf. Buthelezi, 1995; Gough, 1996; and the collection of papers in Wissing, 2000). These speakers share the same socio-political history as well. Given the linguistic and social (near-) identity, it seems reasonable to accept that the Southern Sotho learners represent the BSAE-speakers (cf. discussion at §4.2.2, Chapter 1). Despite these arguments, no attempt will be made to generalise results for Southern Sotho respondents to that of speakers of BSAE with a different African

language as L1. Southern Sotho learners of English as a L2 are regarded to represent one group of BSAE speakers other than the white⁴⁹ Afrikaans respondents that also participated in the study.

A stratified random sample (variables that are controlled for are: L1, age, gender and linguistic and educational context) of the following number of subjects was planned:

- 80⁵⁰ Afrikaans speakers of English as a L2 from a dominant Afrikaans context (learners in grades 11 and 12 at High School A);
- 80 Afrikaans speakers of English as a L2 from a more multilingual educational context (learners in grades 11 and 12 at High School B);
- 80 Southern Sotho speakers of English as a L2 in a multilingual context where English is used for formal functions, for example, as medium of instruction (first year students at the Technikon).

Twenty-three L1 speakers of Southern Sotho in grades 11 and 12 attended High School B in 1999. All these learners were invited to participate in the empirical investigation. The random sampling aimed at inviting a similar number (80) of English L2 learners from two different educational (high school and tertiary level) and three different language policy contexts (Afrikaans monolingual, Afrikaans/English dual medium and English monolingual) to participate in the study. Future research could be improved by inviting more Southern Sotho respondents from different educational and language policy contexts to participate in the study.

The respondents can be further categorised into three groups based on the level of education and the language policy context within which they learn. **Group 1** consists of first year students who use Southern Sotho as L1, randomly selected from the Technikon. At the end of 1998 (when these respondents participated in the empirical investigation) there were 2709 Southern Sotho L1 first year students on the

⁴⁹ Readers are reminded that findings for Afrikaans respondents only relate to the experiences of white Afrikaans speakers, because no coloured Afrikaans speakers participated in the study.

⁵⁰ To improve feasibility of the project, it was decided that about 80 randomly selected respondents from each context should participate in the project. The fairly large number of cultural identity items (230) involved in the project (cf. Appendix A: Cultural identity questionnaire) necessitated that a relatively small number of respondents participate.

Vanderbijlpark campus of the Technikon. The researcher did not have direct access to students at the Technikon. It was anticipated from the start that a fairly big number of respondents had to be randomly selected, because participation in the project was not part of the formal teaching programme of these students. Participation in the project did not result in extra credits and respondents were not paid. One could, therefore, expect that a large number of the randomly selected respondents would not report to participate in the project. Three hundred respondents were, therefore, randomly selected with the hope that close to 80 respondents would report to participate in the project. In the end 69 of the randomly selected respondents from the Technikon participated in the project.⁵¹

The language policy (cf. Appendix B) at the Technikon can be referred to as an "English baseline" policy. English is the only official language for administration, teaching and examination. The policy makes provision for a more multilingual approach and for language support for staff and students. However, staff or students exercise none of these options at this stage; partly, because students and staff have not been trained in the implications of multilingualism for the teaching and learning situation, and because no "address" for language support has been created. The establishment of a language committee has to date (June 2000) not been considered. Table 4.4 presents a distribution of L1s at the Technikon in 1998.

⁵¹ One might argue that owing to the circumstances discussed, the Southern Sotho respondents from the Technikon could be regarded as volunteers, although they were randomly selected. Possible biases, typical of volunteer participants, need to be kept in mind when results are discussed (Gay, 1987: 116).

Table 4.4: Distribution of L1s of Technikon students in 1998 (Vanderbijlpark campus⁵²)

L1	Number of students who use language as L1
* Afrikaans	2054 (14%)
Afrikaans/English	52
English	1169
French	3
Gujerati	5
Hindi	2
Ndebele	11
Northern Sotho	1499
* Southern Sotho	2709 (19%)
Swazi	255
Tsonga	769
Tswana	2054
Venda	692
Xhosa	691
Zulu	2119
Other African language	300
Other European language	54
Unknown	89
TOTAL	14 527

Respondents from **group 2** were randomly selected from the population of grade 11 and 12 learners from High School A in Vanderbijlpark. It is obviously much easier to ensure participation of selected respondents in a high school context, because one can depend on the support of the principal and teachers. Eighty respondents were randomly selected from this population and 76 participated in the study. On the day of the testing, some of the selected learners were absent for various reasons (for example, other commitments more important to the school or illness). All the selected respondents use Afrikaans as L1. The respondents participated in the study in 1999.

The language policy of this school is typical of a school in a dominant L1 context. Afrikaans is used as the language of administration, teaching, learning and examination. In 1999 there were 928 learners enrolled at High School A. More than 99% of these learners use Afrikaans as L1. The remaining learners at this school use Afrikaans and another European language as L1 and one learner uses an African language as L1. The school offers no formal support for learners with other L1s.

⁵² Other campuses of the Technikon are located in Kempton Park, Klerksdorp, Secunda and Upington.

The Afrikaans respondents from **group 3** were randomly selected from the grade 11 and 12 learners from High School B. Seventy-three of the eighty Afrikaans L1 respondents selected participated in the project. On the day of testing, some learners were absent owing to similar reasons mentioned for group 2. In total, there were 23 Southern Sotho L1 speakers in grades 11 and 12 in High School B when the empirical investigation was conducted. All these learners were invited to also participate. On the day of testing, 17 of these Sotho learners were present and participated in the project.

This school has a parallel Afrikaans/English medium language policy. This implies that learners can select Afrikaans or English as medium of instruction for all their subjects (language subjects excluded). Partly owing to this language policy, there are more different L1s among the learners at this school than at High School A. In 1999, 967 learners were enrolled at High School B. About three-quarters of the learners in High School B use Afrikaans or English as a L1. Roughly, an equal number of learners use Afrikaans and English as a L1. The remaining quarter of the learners use Portuguese, Southern Sotho, other African languages, and other European languages as L1. Southern Sotho and Portuguese are the most prominent languages for these learners.

A summary of the biographical detail for all participating respondents is presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Biographical data for all participating respondents⁵³

L1	Educational level		Gender		Age	Languages used	Qualifications of parents	
	First year	Grades 11 & 12	Female	Male	Average age	Average no. of languages used	Father grade 12 or lower qualification	Mother grade 12 or lower qualification
Afrikaans	-	149 ⁵⁴	69	75	17	2	27%	45%
Southern Sotho	69	17	38	48	21	5	77%	67%

⁵³ Totals vary due to missing answers for some questions. For example, counts for female and male Afrikaans respondents do not equal the total number of participating Afrikaans respondents (149), due to missing responses.

⁵⁴ Seventy-six of these respondents attended High School A and 73 respondents attended High School B.

From this data it is clear that the Southern Sotho respondents are more multilingual (they use an average of 5 languages) than the Afrikaans respondents. It is also clear that the majority of parents of Afrikaans respondents obtained post-matric⁵⁵ qualifications and that the majority of the Southern Sotho parents did not obtain post-matric qualifications. The history of racial discrimination in South Africa is highlighted if one considers the peculiar overlap between race and post-matric qualifications of the parents of respondents (also mentioned by Robb, 1995: 16).

3 Variables

The dependent variable in this study is English L2 proficiency. The independent variables are aspects of cultural identity as operationalised in Chapter 3. They include: self-ascription of cultural identity, characteristics of cultural identity, attitudes towards phenotypes of culture, identification with groups in South Africa, socio-cultural values, ethnicity, racial identity, language use and preference, and ethnolinguistic vitality.

4 Instrumentation

This study aims to fit into the framework of the sociology of language. Levels of English L2 proficiency of Afrikaans (149) and Southern Sotho (86) respondents from two different educational and three different educational language policy contexts are related to a variety of aspects of cultural identity. In order to achieve this aim, particularly the measure instrument for cultural identity needs to be broad in scope.

4.1 English L2 proficiency test

The "Proficiency test English second language advanced level" (Van der Schyff, 1991) is often used at the Technikon as part of a battery of tests to assist in admissions and other testing procedures. This standardised test forms part of a series of language proficiency tests developed by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in response to requests from various sectors of the South African society for tests that can establish the general language development of a testee (Chamberlain & Van der Schyff, 1991: 15). The purpose of the test is "to determine the general proficiency

⁵⁵ Matric is a synonym for grade 12.

level of English Second Language testees within the range of senior secondary proficiency levels (i.e. Standards 8, 9 and 10)" (Chamberlain & Van der Schyff, 1991: 15). The overt aim of this test is to test the general English L2 proficiency of testees. It aims to test knowledge and skills of a defined field of experience or subject matter not attached to a specific syllabus. The test compilers state that: "It was attempted to make the test widely applicable by avoiding specific scholastic learning content" (Chamberlain & Van der Schyff, 1991: 16). The operational definition of "advanced level" is standards 8, 9 and 10 (or, in terms of current terminology, grades 10, 11 and 12) (Chamberlain & Van der Schyff, 1991: 15).

This test is conducted in the multiple-choice mode and, therefore, relies on respondents' ability to read English as a L2 and select the most appropriate answer from four options. The test duration is 40 minutes and the test provides a raw score out of 40 for each respondent. The raw scores can be converted into stanines where 1 depicts very poor advanced level English L2 proficiency and 9 very good advanced level English L2 proficiency. The table of test specifications (Chamberlain & Van der Schyff, 1991: 16-17) indicates which knowledge and skills are regarded as related to "general English second language proficiency" in this test (cf. Table 4.6).

Table 4.6: English L2 proficiency test specifications

	Skill being tested	No. of items ⁵⁶
1	Recognising paraphrased meaning of common idioms	2
2	Making general inferences based on the given text	8
3	Making inferences related to <i>diction</i> – writer's choice of words in the context	1
4	Making inferences related to writer's <i>intention</i>	3
5	Making inferences related to <i>setting or atmosphere</i>	1
6	Selecting appropriate language for audience / situation / circumstance	2
7	Accurately communicating summary of intended meaning: headlines, recognised redundancy	2
8	Accurately conveying expanded meaning of summarised text	2
9	Editing: being consistent about time, i.e. recognising incorrect use of tenses	3
10	Combining of simple sentences to form complex sentences	1
11	Meaningful paragraphing -- selecting best opening or concluding sentence or arranging sentences meaningfully	2
12	Selecting precise word to describe something in context	1
13	Selecting words / phrases used deliberately to express or stir emotions	1
14	Recognising correct idiomatic and functional use of verbs	3
15	Recognising correct idiomatic and functional use of conjunctions	1
16	Prefixes and suffixes	1
17	Punctuation	2
18	Word order	2
19	Changing actives to passives	1
20	Changing statements to questions	1
	TOTAL	40

(Chamberlain & Van der Schyff, 1991: 16-17)

The "Proficiency test English second language advanced level" (Van der Schyff, 1991) is used for the following reasons. First of all, the test claims to be a measure of general English L2 proficiency. Secondly, the test uses the reading mode (a component of literacy-related (academic) language proficiency). According to many researchers, reading is one of the most important literacy-related (academic) language skills required in educational contexts and it has been identified as one of the problems experienced by learners who have to learn by means of a L2 (Agar, 1990: 447, 450; Machet, 1991: 93; Saunders, 1991; Scholtz, 1991: 34, 57; Carey, 1993: 29; Jiya, 1993: 80, 82; Luckett, 1993: 51-52; Starfield, 1994: 177, 178; Barkhuizen, 1995: 114). Thirdly, the test is available for use to the researcher at no cost and lastly, the test is very time-effective.

⁵⁶ Item numbers in the test are left out to ensure that future testees who might read this thesis do not gain any advantage.

4.2 Cultural identity questionnaire

Before one discusses the cultural identity questionnaire used in this study, it is important to remind readers that cultural identity is **not** defined from an anthropological perspective in this study. No attempt is made to describe Afrikaans and Southern Sotho youth cultures by, for example, discussing their socialising patterns or the role of music in their lives. Cultural identity is regarded as an **umbrella** term for values, lifestyle, ethnicity, racial identity, attitudes towards groups, language usage and ethnolinguistic vitality.

The multidimensional nature of the complex construct cultural identity implies that several aspects of cultural identity and attitudes towards aspects of cultural identity must be measured separately. This approach is similar to that of Bornman (1995) who conducted a social-psychological study of ethnicity during times of transformation. Like the questionnaire used by Bornman (1995:218-255), the questionnaires used in this study for Afrikaans and Southern Sotho respondents are identical except for the racial identity attitude scales (sections D). The cultural identity measure instrument used in this project consists of the following sections, each measuring an aspect of the complex construct, cultural identity:

Table 4.7: Summary of sections of cultural identity questionnaire

Section	Description of aspect of cultural identity / attitude measured	No. of items
A	Biographical data, declarations and definitions of cultural identity by respondent (adapted from Bornman, 1995: 372-375)	49
B	Selected questions from HSRC Values Scale (Langley, 1992)	35
C	Dimensions of ethnic identification (Bornman 1995: 384-387 & Phinney, 1992)	20
D	Black and White racial identity attitude scales (Helms, 1993) – 2 separate scales for Black and White racial identity – 50 items each	50
E	Attitudes towards own and other groups (Bornman, 1995: 377 - 379)	30
F	Language usage and preference (own questions)	19
G	Ethnolinguistic vitality and advice to South Africans about learning languages (adapted from Bornman, 1995: 387-890)	27
	TOTAL NUMBER OF ITEMS	230

(Appendix A)

A detailed description of each section of the cultural identity questionnaire follows. Detail about the type of scale and reliability coefficients (where available) is included.

4.2.1 Biographical data

This section includes questions about three different areas: biographical and demographic detail; declarations of cultural identity and relative importance of aspects of cultural identity for the chosen cultural identity; and a question about respondents' self-perception of English proficiency.

The ordinary biographical data questions comprise 10 items (questions 1 – 10). Questions 11 and 12 include a declaration and description of characteristics of respondents' cultural identity (2 open-ended items). According to Bornman (1995: 223), it is important to afford respondents an opportunity to give their own description of their cultural identity without the researcher providing preconceived categories. These open-ended questions give respondents the opportunity to use their own words. However, open-ended questions can also be dangerous, because it might happen that respondents do not think through their responses carefully, but rather state the first idea that comes into their minds. According to Bornman (1995: 226-227), it is important to follow-up this open-ended question with a list of closed categories that respondents have to react to. This provides an opportunity for respondents to think about alternatives that did not enter their minds when they answered the open-ended questions. Questions 14 and 15 give respondents the opportunity to select the **one** group they identify with most (respondents select one group out of a possible 24 items), and to indicate how much they identify with **each** of the eleven groups mentioned (11 items).

Question 13 is concerned with the relative importance of 21 different phenotypes of cultural identity as declared by respondents at question 11. Finally, respondents had to rate their own English proficiency on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means very poor and 5 very successful. They had to rate their proficiency in terms of the following skills: speaking, writing, reading and understanding English (4 items). This section is adapted from Bornman (1995: 372 - 375), and the researcher added some questions that related to the specific aims of the study (for example, question 16).

4.2.2 Values Scale

Values are seen as an integral part of cultural identity by many researchers [cf. Chapter 2]. Section B includes 35 questions taken from the HSRC's "Values Scale" (Langley, 1992). This Values Scale has 20 variables and five test items are included for each variable. For the purposes of the study, all seven variables that relate to socio-cultural aspects were selected and respondents had to indicate how important each statement is for the cultural identity that they declared at questions 11 and 12 of section A. One of these variables is specifically aimed at determining "cultural identity" (value 9) which is defined as: "The extent to which a person wishes, wants or needs ... to have the freedom to conduct himself in public life according to the habits of his/her group"⁵⁷ (Langley *et al.*, 1992: 7). The other variables included in the questionnaire for this study are those measuring: "The extent to which a person wishes, wants or needs ... [to exercise]

- authority (value 6⁵⁸),
- autonomy (value 7),
- an own lifestyle (value 12),
- social interaction (value 18),
- social relationships (value 19), and
- spirituality (value 20) (Langley *et al.*, 1992: 7-8).

These variables⁵⁹ are selected, because they relate to similar variables identified as part of the operational definition of cultural identity for the purposes of this study [cf. Chapter 3].

The "Values Scale" was administered to a representative sample of more than 5 000 learners from different high schools in South Africa, from different L1 backgrounds, between May and August 1988. The results of the study revealed that the "VS [values

⁵⁷ One example of an operational definition of cultural identity different to the one conceptualised in this study.

⁵⁸ These numbers refer to the number for values in the original Values Scale.

⁵⁹ Although permission to use these selected items from the "Values Scale" was obtained from the HSRC, permission was not received to print these items in the final thesis. This is understandable, because wide distribution of these items will deem the scale useless for future testing purposes.

scale] had acceptable psychometric characteristics for learners from the different education departments and the major language groups in South Africa" (Langley *et al.*, 1992: 10). The reliability coefficients for the different language groups are given in Table 4.8:

Table 4.8: Reliability coefficients for the Values Scale

Value	Total sample (n = 5350)	English (n=1843)	Afrikaans (n=1712)	African languages (n =1795)
Authority	0,79	0,84	0,81	0,72
Autonomy	0,80	0,83	0,82	0,70
Cultural identity	0,81	0,79	0,89	0,72
Own life style	0,78	0,80	0,78	0,73
Social interaction	0,79	0,83	0,80	0,75
Social relations	0,82	0,80	0,81	0,74
Spirituality	0,78	0,80	0,82	0,68

(Langley *et al.*, 1992: 13)

An analysis of Table 4.8 indicates that an alpha of >0,70 can be accepted as proving that the scales are reliable. It is also clear that reliability coefficients for Afrikaans speakers are higher than those for speakers of African languages. The reliability coefficients achieved in this study are reported in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Reliability coefficients for items from the Values Scale included in this study⁶⁰

Value	Total sample (\bar{n} = 228) ⁶¹	Afrikaans (\bar{n} = 146)	Southern Sotho (\bar{n} = 82)
Authority	0,71	0,79	0,49
Autonomy	0,70	0,73	0,66
Cultural identity	0,66	0,72	0,57
Own life style	0,70	0,73	0,65
Social interaction	0,65	0,70	0,53
Social relations	0,67	0,63	0,57
Spirituality	0,62	0,73	0,51

It is clear that reliability coefficients for Afrikaans speakers are again higher than those achieved by speakers of an African language (in this case – Southern Sotho). Six of the seven reliability coefficients for Afrikaans speakers are >0,70 and this is an indication that these scales can be summated and interpreted with confidence. None

⁶⁰ Only respondents who answered at least 3 out of the 5 questions pertaining to each scale were considered in the calculations of alpha.

⁶¹ Due to exclusion of respondents who did not answer at least 3 out of 5 questions of respective scales, the average number of respondents are reported (\bar{n}).

of the reliability coefficients for Southern Sotho speakers are $>0,70$. The alpha scores for the scales autonomy and own lifestyle approach is slightly lower than $0,70$ and could be summated and interpreted. One must, however, keep in mind that the overall reliability coefficients achieved for Southern Sotho speakers do not permit summation and interpretation with confidence. Great care must be taken when these scores are interpreted.

4.2.3 Ethnicity

This Likert scale (20 items) evaluates the importance of aspects of ethnicity for respondents (Bornman, 1995: 384 - 387). Bornman (1995: 227) used this scale to test affective, cognitive and cultural dimensions of ethnic identification. The scale consists of eight items from the "Scale of Social Identity" developed by Bornman (1988) and twelve items from the "Multigroup Measure of Ethnic Identity" developed by Phinney (1992). The first eight items of the scale is based on Henri Tajfel's (1978; 1981 in Bornman, 1995: 228) social identity theory. It is mainly concerned with the affective dimensions of identification with the in-group. Bornman (1988) found Kuder Richardson-20 reliability coefficients of $0,82$ for a sample of white people for this part of the scale.

According to Bornman (1995: 229), most ethnic identity scales focus on aspects of content of different ethnic groups, for example, language, religion or specific political affiliation. It is often difficult to compare data from different ethnic groups with these ethnic identity scales. Phinney's (1992) "Multigroup measure of ethnic identity" attempts to solve this problem. It is an ethnic identity scale designed specifically for use in culturally diverse (or intercultural) research projects. Cronbach Alpha coefficients of $0,81$ and $0,90$ were achieved for a group of 417 high school learners and 136 graduate students (Bornman, 1995: 229). The combined alpha scores achieved for Afrikaans speakers on this scale was $0,6908$ ($n = 143$) and for Southern Sotho speakers it was $0,6662$ ($n = 70$). These scores are relatively low ($<0,70$), although they are close to $0,70$. Findings should be interpreted carefully.

4.2.4 Racial identity attitude scale

Helms (1993) and her associates developed Likert scales (50 questions in each of the two scales) that measure black and white racial identity attitudes. Two related, but different scales have been developed to capture the essential aspects of Black and White racial identity attitudes. These scales take into account that Black and White racial identity have developed from different positions owing to historical reasons. This is true for the American and South African contexts.

The cultural identity questionnaire for Southern Sotho mother tongue respondents included the "Black racial identity attitude scale"⁶² (Helms & Parham, 1984). This scale was slightly adjusted to accommodate the South African situation. Item 11 (Section D1), for example, had to be changed. This item tests Black respondents' frequency of use of abusive racist words towards Whites. The American words "pig", "devils" and "honkies" were replaced with similar South African words: "boere", "whities" and "settlers". The "Black racial identity attitude scale" was developed to measure racial identity attitudes that reflect the stages of racial identity proposed by Cross (1971; 1978 in Helms & Parham, 1984: 1).

The five stages for which the scale was developed are: Pre-encounter, Encounter, Immersion, Emersion and Internalisation. The Pre-encounter stage is defined by Cross (1978 in Helms & Parham, 1984: 1) as the stage in which the black person is conditioned to think about the world as "non-black" or the opposite of black. The Pre-encounter person's worldview is dominated by a Euro-American frame of reference, and behaviour shows a devaluation or denial of the own blackness and an idealisation of everything that is white. Items 4, 8, 9, 12, 17, 21, 24, 25, 29, 31, 32, 35, 38, 40, 41, 42, 46 and 47 of the scale relate to the Pre-counter stage [18 items]. During the Encounter stage, the person begins to question her or his established identity. Usually this happens after or during a startling personal or social event. This stage is characterised by ambivalent feelings of euphoria, because the person decided to become and to act "black", and anxiety because the person does not have a

⁶² It is numbered as section D1 in Appendix A.

clearly defined new identity to replace the old one. Items 3, 19, 23, 28, 43 and 44 relate to the Encounter stage [6 items].

In the third stage, Immersion, the person experiences high levels of Black pride and overt denigration of everything white. Anger and anxiety are the primary affective experiences during this stage. Items 11, 14, 15, 18, 26, 27, 33, 34, 36 and 39 relate to Immersion [10 items]. Items 5 and 20 relate to the fourth stage, Emersion [2 items]. At this stage there is joy and contentment in the own group environment. During the final stage, Internalisation, the person experiences a sense of inner security about her or his blackness and she or he feels satisfied with it. A general decline in strong anti-white sentiments is typical of this stage. Reason is now more important than emotion. Items 1, 2, 6, 7, 10, 13, 16, 22, 30, 37, 45, 48, 49 and 50 relate to this stage [14 items].

The "White racial identity attitude scale"⁶³ (Helms & Carter, 1992) was included in the cultural identity questionnaire that Afrikaans respondents completed. This inventory was designed to assess five types of White racial identity attitudes. These attitudes are:

- **Contact:** this includes a sense of naivete and lack of awareness of the socio-political significance of racial group membership, especially one's own. Items 1, 6, 11, 16, 21, 26, 31, 36, 41, and 46 [10 items] of the scale relate to this stage.
- **Disintegration:** at this stage, confusion and self-disorientation with respect to one's own Whiteness as well as an ambivalent awareness of the implications of race for members of other racial groups are predominant. Items 2, 7, 12, 17, 22, 27, 32, 37, 42 and 47 [10 items] of the scale relate to this stage.
- **Re-integration:** during this stage, active and passive endorsement of white superiority and black inferiority is experienced. Items 3, 8, 13, 18, 23, 28, 33, 38, 43 and 48 [10 items] of the scale relate to this stage.
- **Pseudo-independence:** this relates to white liberalism characterised by an intellectualised acceptance of one's own whiteness and quasi-recognition of the

⁶³ It is numbered as section D2 in Appendix A.

socio-political implications of racial differences. Items 4, 10, 19, 20, 24, 29, 30, 39, 44 and 49 [10 items] of the scale relate to this stage.

- **Autonomy:** during this stage, racial humanism is expressed from a positive white (non-racist) orientation (Helms & Carter, 1992: 1). Items 5, 9, 14, 15, 25, 34, 35, 40, 45 and 50 [10 items] of the scale relate to this stage.

Both these scales were used with high school and tertiary students (Helms & Parham, 1984: 4). Helms and Carter (1992: 1) encourage researchers to calculate their own reliability coefficients since environmental factors would influence racial identity development. The alpha scores achieved for Afrikaans respondents in this study are 0,5509 (n = 146) and for Southern Sotho respondents 0,6391 (n = 82). These scores are low (<0,70) and should be interpreted with great care. This might be an indication that black and white racial identity in America (the origin of the scales) are different from black and white racial identity in South Africa.

Although the scales are comprehensive, Helms and Carter (1992: 1) encourage researchers to use it in its entirety. It is not a primary aim of this study to identify the black or white racial identity stages of the respondents; dominant stages were calculated and correlated with levels of English L2 proficiency. The primary use of these scales in this study is to investigate links between racial identity attitude items and the English L2 proficiency of respondents.

4.2.5 Attitudes towards in- and out-groups

The semantic differential scale by Bornman (1995: 377 - 379) was used. It measures respondents' attitudes towards specific groups. It consists of 15 statements about people that are then applied to Black/African people and to Whites/Westerners. For Afrikaans respondents, responses about Blacks/Africans are interpreted as expressing attitudes towards the out-group and responses towards Whites/Westerners are interpreted as expressing attitudes towards the in-group. For Southern Sotho respondents, responses about Blacks/Africans are interpreted as expressing attitudes towards the in-group and responses towards Whites/Westerners are interpreted as expressing attitudes towards the out-group.

Respondents have to rate their opinions of the different groups on a scale of 1 - 5 where 1 can be close to "fair" and 5 close to "unfair". (See Appendix A, section E for the rest of the semantic differential scales.) Reliability coefficients of 0,89 were achieved for black and white groups concerning the out-group. A reliability coefficient of 0,84 was achieved for the evaluation of the in-group for blacks and 0,81 for the evaluation of the in-group for whites. The alpha scores achieved for Afrikaans speakers for the in-group on this scale was 0,8769 (n = 142) and for the out-group it was 0,7932 (n = 146). The alpha scores achieved for Southern Sotho speakers for the in-group on this scale was 0,8696 (n = 74) and for the out-group it was 0,7940 (n = 81). Findings from these scales can, therefore, be interpreted with confidence.

4.2.6 Language use and preference

In this section, there are 19 questions on language use and preferences. It is important to keep in mind that the data from this section is nominal. Respondents were asked to indicate which language or languages (three options were possible) they use when they:

- watch television,
- listen to the radio,
- talk to friends at school or the Technikon,
- talk to family on the telephone,
- write a letter,
- read a book,
- write an assignment or do homework,
- make notes to study,
- read a newspaper or magazine, and
- think.

All these questions (except number 10)⁶⁴ were repeated, but the second time, respondents had to indicate which language or languages (three options were possible) they would prefer to use.

⁶⁴ The researcher is of the opinion that respondents should not need to change their language of thinking. It is felt that asking respondents to select a "preferred" language of thinking is a "non-question".

4.2.7 Ethnolinguistic vitality

The "Perceptions of linguistic vitality scale" (11 questions), used by Bornman (1995: 387 - 390) is included in this section of the questionnaire. This scale relates to the perception of the three dimensions of ethnolinguistic vitality as identified by Bourhis *et al.* (quoted in Bornman, 1995: 235), namely, status of the group and the language of the group; numerical representation of the group; and institutional support for the group. This scale is a semantic differential scale. Reliability coefficients of 0,81 and 0,88 are possible for black and white people. The alpha scores achieved for Afrikaans speakers on this scale was 0,8511 (n = 146) and for Southern Sotho speakers it was 0,8814 (n = 82). Results from these scales can be summated and interpreted with confidence.

The researcher added a final section: "Advice to all South Africans about learning other languages" (3 items), to this scale. These items relate to the following questions:

- How many languages would you advise South Africans to learn?
- Motivate your answer – why must South Africans learn X number of languages?
- Which languages would you advise South Africans to learn?

4.2.8 Other relevant information about the cultural identity questionnaire

In conclusion, it is important to state that each section of the questionnaire takes about 20 minutes to complete. Although there were no time constraints for the completion of this part of the questionnaire, respondents took about 90 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

It is also important to mention that in order to minimise any possible effect of "language of questionnaire" on responses, the questionnaire was available in Afrikaans, English and Southern Sotho. An English "source" questionnaire was compiled for Afrikaans and Southern Sotho respondents. These "source" questionnaires were then given to L1 speakers of Afrikaans and Southern Sotho who both work in schools of language at South African tertiary institutions. They translated the "source" questionnaires into Afrikaans and Southern Sotho. Both

questionnaires (the English “source” questionnaires and the translated questionnaires) were then given to L1 speakers of Afrikaans and Southern Sotho to “edit”. The task given to the “editors” was to compare the two questionnaires (English and Afrikaans, and English and Southern Sotho) and to recommend changes to the Afrikaans and Southern Sotho questionnaires. Both translations were found to be very functional by the two editors. Some sections of the questionnaire were already available in Afrikaans and English. This made the translation and “editing” of the Afrikaans questionnaire relatively easy. The “editor” of the Southern Sotho questionnaire commented that the Southern Sotho translator amazed her. Her strategy was to first read the English “source” question, to think how she would translate it and then to compare her Southern Sotho translation with the translator’s version. Very often, she thought that translation of the English questions into Southern Sotho was almost impossible. She remarked that she was amazed at the ease with which the Southern Sotho translator succeeded in doing the seemingly impossible – to effectively translate the meaning of the English questions into Southern Sotho. The translators and the editors were paid for their professional services.

All but one of the Afrikaans respondents opted to answer their cultural identity questionnaires in Afrikaans. Only 7% (6 respondents) of the Southern Sotho respondents (total of 86) opted to answer their cultural identity questionnaires in Southern Sotho. Four of these respondents asked for an English questionnaire during the completion of the questionnaire and used them concurrently. All six respondents who used a Southern Sotho questionnaire gave very positive (verbal) feedback about the experience and all of them stated that it was the first time ever that they answered a “formal” document in Southern Sotho.

5 Data collection procedures

The two different test samples (categorised according to educational context - tertiary students and high school learners) required two different data collection approaches. It is always risky to execute a research project that requires that respondents should be available at two different test dates. When one depends on the goodwill of respondents to participate in a research project, the risk of them not turning up for the second test date is omnipresent. This is particularly true when tertiary students are

used as respondents and in situations where the researcher has no formal link with these students. Other researchers experienced similar problems (cf. Dreyer, 1992: 83).

As stated previously, the support of high school principals and teachers and the more rigid organisation of teaching and learning at high school level, makes the participation of high school learners in research projects much easier than to involve tertiary students. The data collection procedures at the two participating high schools were, therefore, relatively straightforward.

First of all, the researcher met with both principals separately to discuss the possibility of involving some grade 11 and 12 learners from their schools in the project. At this meeting, the researcher explained the broad aims of the research project to the principals and discussed the measuring instruments in detail. Both principals felt that participating learners could benefit personally from the project in two ways: they would receive an objective measure of their English L2 proficiency and they would be exposed to research – an activity that might motivate them academically. The researcher also offered to share final results of the project with interested learners, parents and teachers.

Once the commitment of the principals was secured, a list with the names of all grade 11 and 12 learners was requested. The school computer systems could indicate the gender of all learners, but the data on the L1s of learners were not available. In the case of High School A, this was not problematic, because nearly all the learners use Afrikaans as L1. At High School B, this was problematic, because of the more multilingual nature of the school. However, stratified random sampling was done (gender of learners and choice of language of teaching were taken into account) and it was decided to simply ignore the responses of learners whose L1 was not Afrikaans, although they attend the Afrikaans classes offered at this school. Teachers also helped to assign a L1 to randomly selected respondents until the researcher was sure that very few data sets might be jeopardised because the respondents do not use Afrikaans as L1. As stated earlier, all Southern Sotho learners (total of 23) from High School B in grades 11 and 12 were invited to participate in the project.

After the stratified sampling was completed, a list with the names of selected learners was taken to the principals. At this occasion, an appointment was made for the completion of the test and questionnaire. The principals then asked the grade 11 and 12 class teachers to inform the selected learners that they would be excused from classes to participate in the research project on the chosen dates. The researcher conducted the project at the respective schools on Thursday, 25 March 1999 (8:00 at High School A) and on Friday, 9 April 1999 (8:30 at High School B). Great care was taken by both principals to select dates and times during which all selected learners could freely participate in the project. Dates before tests or big social events were not considered appropriate by the principals, because some learners would then have to be in class for last minute instructions about tests or final arrangements for social events important to them. The two dates selected both constituted an "ordinary" school day for the learners at these respective schools. No urgent school matters were on the agenda.

High School A did not have a venue available that could accommodate the planned 80 learners comfortably at the same time. The researcher, therefore, trained a field worker to conduct the research project with the group of grade 12 learners, while she completed the project with the grade 11 learners. At High School B, all prospective learners could be accommodated in their language laboratory. The researcher took another field worker with her to assist with the handing out and collection of test material and general discipline with this larger group of respondents.

On both occasions, the researcher and the field workers followed the same strategy. As a form of introduction, the respondents were informed that the researcher was busy with a formal qualification and that this project formed part of that qualification. Respondents were told that the aim of the project was to determine what young people think about language and social issues. It was stressed that they would benefit from participation in the project, because their English L2 proficiency would be tested for free. Respondents were then informed that they would have to complete two tests: an English L2 proficiency test and a "social attitude"⁶⁵ questionnaire. They were

⁶⁵ The title "social attitude" questionnaire was used because it would give respondents a broad idea about the "theme" of the questionnaire, without influencing them. No attempt was made to explain "cultural identity" as it is operationalised for the purposes of this study.

reminded that the total testing time would be about two hours and twenty minutes (forty minutes for the English L2 proficiency test, a break of about ten minutes after that, and then about 90 minutes for the "social attitude" questionnaire).

An important aspect of the research project was to ensure anonymity of respondents. Some of the questions in the "social attitude" questionnaire can be regarded as addressing very sensitive issues. It was important that respondents would feel comfortable to share this information with the researcher. In order to achieve this, respondents were asked to select an "imaginary name" and to use this name on all test material. However, if they wanted to receive feedback on their English L2 proficiency score, they had to complete a "control slip" with their initials, surname, imaginary name and their home class number. All respondents selected to do this. Respondents were encouraged to ask questions before the testing started. (Very few questions were asked).

The researcher and field workers then handed out the test material for the English L2 proficiency test (multiple choice answer sheets and the test books). Respondents brought their own pencils and erasers. The instructions for the English L2 proficiency test were followed as stipulated (cf. Van der Schyff, 1991: 2-3 for detail). Respondents were then asked to complete the English L2 proficiency test. The time limit of forty minutes was observed strictly. After forty minutes the test material (test books and answer sheets) was collected. Respondents then took a break of about 10 minutes. The majority of the respondents stayed in the room and simply stretched their legs. Some respondents went out for a few minutes.

After the break, respondents returned and the researcher and field worker read and explained all instructions to the "social attitude" questionnaire to respondents. Respondents were informed that this questionnaire was available in three languages (Afrikaans, English and Southern Sotho) and that they should please choose the language they would prefer to answer the questionnaire in.

The differences between the two "tests" were emphasised. Respondents were informed that the English L2 proficiency test had a time limit and that there were definite right and wrong answers. The "social attitude" questionnaire was very

different. There was no time limit – respondents could use all the time they needed to complete each question and there were no right or wrong answers. The researcher and field worker used affiliation to a sport team (a rugby and soccer team) to illustrate this point. One can never say that somebody who supports team X is “wrong” to do that – he or she simply supports another team and it is perfectly normal that people will support different teams. It is even possible for people to support more than one team. It was stressed that honest answers were valued in the answering of this questionnaire, and that respondents should be comfortable with the diversity of ideas that would probably be present in the answers of the group. In other words, it was stressed that the researcher was not interested in what the “group” would say about certain issues – the individual answer of each respondent was required. Respondents were, therefore, also instructed to complete the social attitude questionnaire in silence – no discussion was allowed between respondents. The respondents were asked to read the instructions for every question carefully and to ask when they were not sure how to answer. They were also informed that the researcher and field worker would page through the completed questionnaire of every respondent before they left the room. This was necessary to ensure that the questionnaire was completed fully and to ensure that the researcher and field worker did not have to bother the respondents again.

Respondents were then asked to continue with the completion of their “social attitude” questionnaires at their own pace. The researcher and field worker announced every twenty-minute interval – but it was not compulsory for respondents to stretch their legs after every twenty minutes. (They were not allowed to leave the room or talk, because the researcher and field worker did not want them to discuss their responses with each other). The majority of the respondents chose to complete the “social attitude” questionnaire without taking more than one break. Several questions about instructions to complete sections of the questionnaire were asked. When two different respondents raised the same question, the researcher and field worker drew everybody’s attention to that section and explained the instruction on the green board. Every questionnaire was checked with every respondent before they could leave. Respondents handed in as they completed. Hand in times ranged from one hour fifteen minutes to two hours.

Exactly the same procedures were followed with the randomly selected first year students from the Technikon. However, to accommodate the different time schedules of the selected students, several test dates were available. Selected students were informed about the project by means of posters (about thirty posters) that were put up all over the campus. Two sets of posters were put up. On the first set of posters, the students (initials, surnames, student numbers and diploma/degree registered for) were informed that they were selected to participate in a research project on campus. They were invited to an information session. Of the three hundred students invited, only 64 attended the information session. At this session, the researcher explained that she was busy with a formal qualification that investigated the attitudes of young people about language and social issues. Students were informed that they would have to complete two “tests” and that the duration of the “tests” would be about three hours. Students were also informed that they could benefit from participation, because their English L2 proficiency levels would be tested for free. The researcher also explained that she would appreciate the participation of every selected respondent and that she would attempt to make the test dates as flexible as possible to accommodate as many students as possible. Students who attended the information session were asked to look at the lists of selected students and to motivate friends and fellow students who were not present at the information session to participate in the project.

On the second set of posters, the invitation and information about the selected students were repeated and a list with the following dates for completion of the questionnaires was added:

Date	Time	Venue
Friday, 9 October 1998	08:00 – 11:00	Auditorium 200
Wednesday, 14 October 1998	14:00 – 17:00	Auditorium 200
Thursday, 15 October 1998	11:00 – 14:00	Auditorium 200
Friday, 16 October 1998	14:00 – 17:00	Auditorium 200
Thursday, 22 October 1998	10:00 – 13:00	Auditorium 200
Friday, 23 October 1998	08:00 – 11:00	Auditorium 200

October is a good calendar month at the Technikon, because most of the formal course work and testing have then been completed. Students are mainly busy getting their notes together to start preparation for the final examinations for semester two that usually starts during the first week of November. Some students (4 in total) could not attend any of these test dates and individually reported at the office of the researcher on the following dates: 27 October 1998, 19 November 1998 and 20 November 1998. Apart from the fact that the respondents were not tested in one venue at one date, exactly the same procedures as those described for the high school learners were followed.

6 Data analysis procedures

The statistical analyses reported in this study were completed with the help of Dr Philip Pretorius (lecturer at the School for Modelling Sciences at the Vanderbijlpark campus of the Potchefstroom University). Dr Hubert Korzilius⁶⁶ assisted the researcher during a study period of three months at the University of Nijmegen (November 1999 – January 2000). The data were analysed with the SPSS statistical programme.

This is an exploratory study that aims to relate a variety of aspects of cultural identity to levels of English L2 proficiency of respondents and to use findings to improve acquisition planning for English as a L2 in multilingual South Africa. The empirical investigation focused on achieving four of the secondary aims of this study:

- to determine the English L2 proficiency of two groups of L2 learners of English in South Africa (L1 speakers of Afrikaans and Southern Sotho respectively) as representatives of the broader L2 community in South Africa,
- to describe their cultural identities,
- to determine if aspects of cultural identity are related to the English L2 proficiency of the subjects (Pearson Product Moment correlations), and

⁶⁶ Dr Korzilius is an assistant Professor of methodology at the Department of Business Communication Studies at the University of Nijmegen (in the Netherlands). He is also associated with the Research School Centre for Language Studies at Nijmegen University.

- to determine if aspects of cultural identity contribute to variance in the English L2 proficiency (stepwise multiple regression analysis) of the subjects.

According to McClave and Sincich (2000: 2), the applications of statistics can be divided into two broad areas: descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics are used to look for patterns, summarise and to present information in a convenient form and inferential statistics are used to make estimates, decisions, predictions or other generalisations about a data set (McClave & Sincich, 2000: 2). Two of the secondary aims (reporting the English L2 proficiency and describing the cultural identity profiles of respondents) of this study were achieved by using descriptive statistics⁶⁷ (for example, calculation of frequencies and means). In order to determine if aspects of cultural identity were related to English L2 proficiency, Pearson Product Moment correlations were conducted. The aim of this analysis was to determine the direction and strength of relationships between the dependent variable, English L2 proficiency, and the different independent variables, aspects of cultural identity. A stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine how aspects of cultural identity contribute to variance in English L2 proficiency. The English L2 proficiency scores were regarded as criterion measures and the different aspects of cultural identity were regarded as the predictor variables. Pearson Product Moment correlations and stepwise Multiple Regression analysis are examples of inferential statistics.

Data analysis procedures also include certain conventions about statistical significance or probability. The researcher needs to be able to report that results did not occur by chance (Brown, 1988: 115; McClave & Sincich, 2000: 2). The following cut-off points apply for the determination of various levels of statistical significance when reporting Pearson Product-Moment correlations and multiple regression analysis: $p < 0,05^*$ and $p < 0,01^{**}$. Several researchers accept these cut-off points (Cohen, 1969: 2, 12-13; Gay, 1987: 383; Brown, 1988: 116).

⁶⁷ According to Brown (1988: 65-66, 114), studies in second language learning usually provide some form of descriptive statistics to indicate how the group performed. Two aspects should be considered: how the group performed and how individuals varied from typical group behaviour.

Cohen (1969) argues that statistical significance provides proof that the phenomenon that is investigated exists. He extends the idea of significance by arguing that one should not only be satisfied that a particular phenomenon exists (as illustrated by statistical significance), one should also be concerned about "the degree to which the phenomenon exists" (Cohen, 1969: 4). In order to determine practical (also called psychological) significance, Cohen's effect size was used. Results from Pearson Product Moment correlations (r) are used to determine practical significance. The following scales and indications for a re-interpretation of r -values are used:

- $r = 0,1$ small effect size,
- $r = 0,3$ medium effect size, and
- $r = 0,5$ large effect size (Cohen, 1969: 76-77).

Concerning multiple regression analysis, the following formulas are used to determine practical significance: $f^2 = R^2 \text{ change} / (1-R^2)$ and $f^2 = R^2 / (1-R^2)$. The practical significance of individual variables' contributions to cumulative R^2 is calculated with the first formula and the practical significance of cumulative R^2 is calculated with the second formula. The following cut-off points apply for the determination of practical significance for multiple regression analysis:

- $d = 0,2$ small effect size,
- $d = 0,5$ medium effect size, and
- $d = 0,8$ large effect size (Cohen, 1977: 20-27).

These formulas and cut-off points are the same as those used by Van der Walt (1997: 118-119).

The use of standardised and well-established measure instruments adds to the data rich environment created in this study. Comparison of, for example, reliability coefficients add to possible insights from this data set.

7 Conclusion

This study obviously displays several limitations. The focus on only two L1 populations (Afrikaans⁶⁸ and Southern Sotho) that learn English as a L2, make broad generalisation of the findings to other L1 populations in the multilingual South

⁶⁸ Readers are reminded that findings of the study only pertain to the lives of white Afrikaans speakers, because no coloured Afrikaans respondents participated in this study.

African context difficult. The inclusion of respondents from different contexts (concerning level of education, language policy of institution and general socio-economic situation), and different L1 backgrounds, however, would make broader generalisation to these L1 communities possible. If one keeps in mind that the context of possible implementation of findings from this study is the Vaal Triangle region and that these two L1s are prominent in this region, some social justification for this choice is offered. It is also argued by some researchers (for example, Buthelezi, 1995) that the English L2 variety (BSAE) of L1 speakers of Southern Bantu languages display similarities. In this context, findings from this study could point to important research areas to compare findings from this study with that of L1 speakers of other Southern Sotho Bantu languages. The main reason for the exclusion of more L1s is feasibility of the study.

The focus on **macro social dimensions** that impact on English L2 acquisition planning could also be regarded by some as a limitation of this study. In his discussion of the "linguistic paradox of our time", Tollefson (1991: 22), however, argues that L2 acquisition research busied itself with explaining variation in L2 proficiency by investigating "internal psychological variables" for the past twenty years. The dominant theories and models of L2 acquisition for the past twenty years locate the primary causal variables for success in acquiring and learning L2s within the individual (Tollefson, 1991: 27). According to Tollefson (1991: 36-37), it is time for L2 acquisition research to explain the link between the organisation of society and changes in language structure and use. The central theoretical task for a social study of L2 acquisition is to "specify the role of language in the processes which structure societies, and the ways in which planning can affect these processes" (Tollefson, 1991: 37).

The central focus of the empirical investigation in this study is the exploration of links between aspects of cultural identity and English L2 proficiency. Two questions are central to the secondary aims of this study: are aspects of cultural identity related to English L2 proficiency and can a particular cultural identity profile explain some of the variability in the level of English L2 proficiency achieved by Afrikaans and Southern Sotho learners who participated in this study? No claims are made that aspects of cultural identity are the **only** elements that are related to English L2

proficiency or that could contribute to the English L2 proficiency of these respondents. An opinion held in the study is that “individual learner differences” have sufficiently been studied from “internal psychological” perspectives. It is believed that a focus on the social dimensions of L2 learning could contribute other insights into the complex process of L2 learning. This focus should, therefore, not be regarded as a limitation – but should rather be seen as contributing another perspective.

A final concern might be the focus of the study on quantitative methods. One should keep Du Plessis’ (1991: 381) scepticism about the abuse of empirical findings in mind when one busies oneself with an empirical investigation related to language planning and the attitudes of language learners. Apart from the fact that very few empirical studies about social and language attitudes have been conducted, Du Plessis (1991: 363, 381) argues that findings from these studies are often not reliable or valid, and that generalisation of findings is often impossible. He particularly warns against the presentation of empirical data without integrating findings into the broader language planning discussion (1991: 335). These concerns need to be kept in mind when findings in this thesis are interpreted and discussed.

However, the exploratory nature of the study and its overt aim to function within the framework of the sociology of language, suggested a quantitative rather than a qualitative approach. Furthermore, Alexander (1992: 177) argues that some types of quantitative research should form part of the language planning and policy research. He (1992: 178) highlights attitude surveys as a particular area of research that should be updated so that it can inform future language planning and policy-making. This matter is also expressed in the Langtag (1996: 16-17) report (cf. discussion in §4.3.3.4, Chapter 2). The implementation of a multi-method approach would obviously have enhanced the databases of the study tremendously. However, when one deals with complex constructs (like cultural identity) the feasibility of the project could have been jeopardised if more qualitative approaches were favoured. Future research projects that aim to duplicate this study might involve more qualitative strategies (for example case studies) to explore the quantitative findings of this project. It is, however, beyond the scope of this study to explore that avenue.

Chapter 5

Presentation and discussion of empirical results

1 Introduction

The results from the empirical investigation are presented and discussed under the following rubrics:

- English L2 proficiency,
- Cultural identity “profiles”,
- Correlations between English L2 proficiency and aspects of cultural identity, and
- Aspects of cultural identity as contributors to English L2 proficiency.

These results relate to the secondary aims stated in Chapter 1 [§2]. The results are reported separately for Afrikaans and Southern Sotho respondents. This should be acknowledged as an attempt to compare apples with apples. It would be very problematic to compare the findings (particularly those related to the English proficiency scores) for Afrikaans and Southern Sotho respondents, because the conditions under which these learners acquire English as a L2 differ so vastly. Therefore, results are analysed “within” each group. This would at least enable one to compare learners who learn in similar contexts with each other. Comparison of findings across groups would only be attempted by analysing the nature of the cultural identity profiles within groups to establish if similar themes correspond across groups.

It is important to again emphasise that this study does not claim that only aspects of cultural identity correlate with English L2 proficiency or that aspects of cultural identity are the sole contributors to English L2 proficiency. Psychological variables, for example those identified by Dreyer (1992) and Van der Walt (1997), have already been shown to correlate with English L2 proficiency and to predict the English L2 proficiency of South African learners. It is, therefore, expected that selected variables from this study would correlate with and would contribute to the English L2 proficiency of participants in this study. The ultimate aim of this study is to relate