# An analysis of the relationship between communication skills, communication apprehension and academic achievement of secondary phase learners

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Dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree *Magister Educationis* in Curriculum Studies at the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University

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It all starts here ™

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# Solemn declaration

I, Zelda M Mentoor, declare that the dissertation hereby submitted by me, in the fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Educationis at the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University is my own independent work.

I have acknowledged all material and sources used in this dissertation.

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# Abstract

**An analysis of the relationship between communication skills, communication apprehension and academic achievement of secondary phase learners**

This study indicates that communication skills and communication apprehension of English First Additional Language (EFAL) learners are important aspects in teaching and learning, as well as for academic performance. A learner's major hurdle to overcome in communication in a second language classroom is a fear of failure. Communication skills and communication apprehension are challenges teachers have to face in language classrooms. Communication barriers that may lead to fear, distress and poor performance should be identified at an early stage. Therefore, it is critical for teachers to know about the communication process, communication skills, and communication apprehension to design positive solutions and teaching strategies to assist learners to overcome fear of communication, especially in the area of second and additional languages. A sample of 779 male and female learners in the secondary phase in Kannaland District, Western Cape participated in the study. For this non-experimental quantitative study, data were gathered using two questionnaires, Communication Skills Scale, and the Personal Report Communication Apprehension questionnaire. To explore the relationship between communication skills, communication apprehension and academic achievement, the first and second term EFAL marks of grades 7-9 learners were used. The data were presented as descriptive statistics, factor analysis, reliability analysis, correlations and comparisons. Results distinguished no differences between males, females, or grades. Findings were discussed with regard to communication skills and the academic achievement, as well as communication apprehension and academic achievement of the learners. Results indicate that there is no significant relationship between communication skills and academic achievement. Nevertheless, distinct relationships between communication skills and communication apprehension (group work, meetings and public speaking) were established and discussed. Communication apprehension (group work, conversations and in the classroom) and academic achievement presented clear relationships that were reported in detail. The factors identified may have a negative impact on learners' academic achievement in EFAL. Insight generated by the research in Kannaland District, Western Cape will help to develop an understanding of the situations that affect the degree of communication apprehension of secondary phase EFAL learners. It will allow for a better understanding of the influence of communication skills and could assist teachers to understand EFAL learners' fear, distress or ability to communicate.

**Keywords:** Academic achievement, communication, communication apprehension communication skills, classroom communication, classroom conversations, group work, public speaking, second language learning, speech anxiety.

# Opsomming

## 'n Analise van die verhouding tussen kommunikasievaardighede, kommunikasievrees en akademiese prestasie van sekondêre fase leerders

Kommunikasievaardigheid en kommunikasievrees is twee faktore wat gedurende die onderrig en leer en ook by akademiese prestasie van leerders in Engels Eerste Addisionele Taal aandag moet geniet. 'n Bepalende hindernis rakende tweede taal kommunikasie is vrees wat ervaar word ten opsigte van mislukking. Taalonderwysers word gekonfronteer met uitdagings wat verband hou met kommunikasievaardighede en kommunikasievrees. Identifisering van verskeie kommunikasie-hindernisse op 'n vroeë stadium in die lewe van 'n leerder is belangrik aangesien die hindernisse waarskynlik vrees, spanning en swak prestasie veroorsaak. Insig aangaande die kommunikasie-proses, kommunikasievaardighede en kommunikasievrees is fundamenteel wanneer onderwysers remediërende oplossings en onderrigstrategieë ontwikkel om leerders te ondersteun om kommunikasievrees in spesifiek 'n tweede of addisionele taal te oorkom. Leerders (779 manlik en vroulik) vanuit die sekondêre fase in Kannaland Distrik, Wes-Kaap het vrywillig aan die studie deelgeneem. Vir hierdie studie het die navorser gebruik gemaak van 'n nie-eksperimentele kwantitatiewe benadering. Die empiriese inligting is verkry deur middel van twee gestruktureerde vraelyste (Communication Skills Scale en die Personal Report Communication Apprehension Questionnaire) wat deur graad 7 – 9 leerders voltooi is, asook die eerste en tweede termyn-punte van leerders in Engels Eerste Addisionele Taal. Die empiriese inligting word as beskrywende statistiek, faktor-analises, betroubaarheidsanalises, korrelasies en vergelykende statistiek ontleed. Die bevindinge van die studie toon aan dat geen betekenisvolle verskille gevind kan word tussen manlike en vroulike of graad 7, 8 en 9 leerders betreffende kommunikasievaardighede en kommunikasievrees nie. Bevindinge word bespreek na aanleiding van die betekenisvolle verband tussen kommunikasievaardighede en akademiese prestasie, asook kommunikasievrees en akademiese prestasie van die leerders. Geen betekenisvolle verband is gevind tussen kommunikasievaardighede en akademiese prestasie vir die sekondêre fase leerders in die Kannaland Distrik, Wes-Kaap nie. Nogtans is 'n betekenisvolle verband bepaal tussen kommunikasievaardighede en kommunikasievrees (groepwerk, gesprekvoering en gedurende klastyd). Vanuit die bevindinge word 'n betekenisvolle verband tussen kommunikasievrees (groep werk, ontmoetings, openbare optrede) en akademiese prestasie aangetoon. Verder word die voorafgenoemde bevindinge deeglik bespreek. Geïdentifiseerde kommunikasievrees faktore beïnvloed akademiese prestasie van leerders in Engels Eerste Addisionele Taal op 'n negatiewe wyse Die navorsingsbevindinge in Kannaland Distrik, Wes-Kaap verskaf aan onderwysers duidelikheid oor faktore wat die graad van kommunikasievrees in die sekondêre fase beïnvloed. Op grond van die bevindinge kan die invloed van kommunikasievaardigheid op die Engels Eerste Addisionele Taal leerder verklaar word. Die bevindinge skep geleentheid vir onderwysers om die leerder se vrese, spanning en vermoë om te kommunikeer te identifiseer en aan te spreek.

**Sleutelwoorde:**  Akademiese prestasie, groepwerk, klaskamerkommunikasie, klaskamergesprekvoering, kommunikasie, kommunikasievaardigheid, kommunikasievrees, publieke optrede, spraakvrees, tweede taal onderrig,

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# List of Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| ANOVA | Analysis of Variance |
| CAPS | Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement |
| EFAL | English First Additional Language |
| KMO | Kaiser-Meyer Olkim |
| NCS | National Curriculum Statement |
| NWU | North-West University |
| PRCA | Personal Report on Communication Apprehension |
| SD | Standard Deviations |
| SPSS | Statistical Package for the Social Sciences |

# Chapter One

## Orientation to the study

*It is evident that English is the language of international communication, but it is also evident that the dominance of English today causes not only communicative inequality but also the feeling of anxiety and insecurity on the part of those who cannot speak the language in a rapidly globalising world where English dominates extensively (Dalkilic, 2001, p. 2)*

## 1.1    Introduction

In Chapter One the research study is introduced. The identified problem is explained and the rationale for the study is discussed. Furthermore a brief description of the research design and methodology follows. The conceptualisation of the instruments used in the empirical section is explicated and the chapter is concluded with the outline of the chapters in this research study.

## 1.2    Statement of the problem and motivation

Effective communication in the classroom in the school situation is the key to maintaining good relationships between the teacher-learner and learner-learner in the education context (Mowahed & Kabr, 2011). An effective classroom situation is characterised by positive and trusting relationships between the teachers and learners. It is also critical that all learners develop trusting and enriching relationships with one another and their teacher in various classrooms (Cohen, 1994). One can conclude that learners communicate with one another and within specific groups through language, which is consequently significant to their social relationships (Breakwell, Hammon, Fife-Schaw, & Smith, 2007). According to Wikan (2008), oral language is an important component of language development and inadequate oral communication skills and communication apprehension appear to be factors affecting the leaners' decisions to communicate in the second language classroom.

Classroom communication often involves interactions between learners and teachers from dissimilar cultures, which influence classroom learning because of their different communication styles influenced by their cultures (Cohen, 1994). Cultural differences tend to be revealed in the use of language, and misunderstandings between individuals tend to arise from their oral use of a second language to communicate with each other (Erikson, 1968). Over the years, researchers have attempted to quantify the relationship between communication anxiety on foreign [second] language skills and achievement, but these efforts yield mixed results (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; McKay, 2009).

Challens (2000) notes that learners' major hurdles in communication in the classroom is to overcome a fear of failure, and furthermore states that presenting themselves is more a matter of confidence than of brilliance.  Practical classroom strategies can be used to improve learners' communication skills, while minimizing their apprehensiveness regarding speaking in front of a group (De Vito, 2009; Drinkwater, 2002).  Communication in society is an important activity as it is essential in every aspect of our daily lives (Drinkwater, 2002).

Moreover, one should know that communication skills do not merely refer to the way one communicates but also comprise many other aspects. Communication messages refer to three sub-components, namely verbal (the words we use), paraverbal (how we say the word) or nonverbal (the body language we use) (Windle & Warren, 2010).  The importance of communication skills in effective communication between individuals cannot be ignored, especially in a classroom context (Wood, 2010).  Moreover, Abdulla (2006) explains that communication and communication skills are highly intercultural, and are prominent in the oral use of language and the interpersonal styles individuals use.  Slobin (1996) points out that in the American culture, new communication skills are taught and learnt through oral instruction.  Nevertheless, fear of oral communication is found among learners of all ages .  Many learners are not equipped with the necessary oral communication skills, and consequently are too afraid to speak in front of individuals, even their peers (Tubbs & Moss, 2008), and this fear or distress can produce communication apprehension (Calloway-Thomas, Cooper, & Blake, 1999).

Communication apprehension can be described as the real or possible fear or distress experienced by the communicator when communicating with other individuals (McCroskey & Yoon, 2004).  These fears (or distress) experienced by the communicator have various causes.  McCroskey (1977a) pioneer in the field, defines communication apprehension as "broadly based anxiety related to oral communication".  Berger, Richmond, McCroskey, and Baldwin (1984, p. 47) describe communication apprehension as "the way a person feels about communication, not how they communicate."  Horwitz et al. (1986, p. 127)  define communication apprehension as "a type of shyness characterized as fear of, or anxiety about communicating with individuals."  They state that communication apprehension "refers to an individual's level of anxiety in communication with others."

In a South African study amongst secondary school learners, Malimabe (1997) explains various causes of communication apprehension such as genetic, critical impact of negative reinforcement, inadequate communication  skills development and absence of adequate communication models .  He concludes that the learners of Qwaqwa secondary schools experience high communication apprehension when communicating using English.  Vreken (1998, p. 346) investigated the relationship between foreign [second] language anxiety and language performance, and declares that "communication anxiety [apprehension] was ranked as the highest factor which negatively correlated with language achievement."

In the South African context, different languages are used as the language of instruction, and according to Geurrero and Farinelli (2009, p. 115) learners are not confident to enthusiastically participate in activities in the English classes as "they try to avoid embarrassment and being teased by their peers" when they make a mistake. For the purpose of this study it is therefore accepted that communication apprehension refers to a nervousness experienced by learners when they communicate in English First Additional Language (EFAL) classroom. McNamara (2008) who studied communication apprehension among English Second Language learners, concludes that for learners who experience high levels of communication apprehension in an English Second Language classroom, many of the academic activities during oral communication in the classroom prove a difficult task. These learners need support from their teachers to communicate effectively with teachers and peers.

Krashen and Selinger (1976) explain that individuals do not only need to speak and write, but also understand how the others perceive their message if they are to respond in ways to address the concerns and questions of the audience to communicate effectively. Thus, it is necessary for learners to express their thoughts verbally and to understand those of others in both social and learning situations. The speaking skill in any language is vital because it enables the individual to communicate by using oral words to understand both the sender and the recipient (Everson, 2009). Linguistic skills relate to the use of more or less complex structural verbal patterns (Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2010). According to Cohen (1994) structural linguistic skills encompass the sound of language, vocabulary, grammar, narrative discourse and auditory verbal information processing. Everson (2009, p. 1) explains that, "listening is a vital skill of language in the sense that it enables one to be able to understand what other people are saying or communicating." It is imperative for a learner to understand both written and spoken words in order to produce English orally (Everson, 2009). He states that for a learner to give a presentation, speak during a meeting, or participate in group work, the speaking skill seems paramount. However, to be able to perform the "speaking dependent activity" also entails that the learner "depends on having read, understood and summarized relevant information ahead of time" (Everson, 2009, p. 2). To comprehend the responses or questions of the other participants is important to react effectively.

McLuhan and Flore (1967) noted that learners with language impairments have difficulty participating in peer group conversations. Cohen (1994) furthermore states that language and communication proficiency provide tools for learning and for engaging in social relationships. De Jong, Steinel, Florija, Schoonen, and Hulstijn (2013) assert that fluency is an important linguistic skill and can be seen as overall speaking proficiency. They argue that fluency refers to the "ability to write and talk fluently, utilising a broad vocabulary to express the precise meaning of what teachers and learners wish to convey" (De Jong et al., 2013, p. 17).

Despite numerous causes pertaining to communication apprehension, there are various communication skills techniques and strategies which could be implemented to counter

communication apprehension in the classroom situation. Writing about a South African context Malimabe (1997) posits it is part of the teacher's responsibility to aspire towards the improvement of communication skills and communication apprehension among language learners.

Challens (2000) asserts that learning and teaching English as a second language is no easy task because of learners anxiety levels for this foreign language. Challens also argues that though learners have the necessary skills to participate in classroom activities, learners will inevitably feel more nervous when they are not given ample time to formulate their responses or to answer to the teacher. If a learner is frequently scolded because of some grammar mistakes in oral presentations, he or she will become timid and afraid of making mistakes and may rather choose not to speak (Vreken, 1998). Such behaviour may not improve the learners' oral ability in the EFAL classroom. In a study done by Horwitz et al. (1986) it was found that learners' motivation affects academic achievement in the EFAL classroom. Limited proficiency in English, self-consciousness, embarrassment, lack of recognition for their attempts to participate orally and lack of knowledge are factors that may lead to high communication apprehension levels and inability to speak (Horwitz et al., 1986).

The communication apprehension and academic achievement of secondary phase learners in the Kannaland District, Western Cape, interested the researcher. The researcher explored the relationship between specific communication skills, oral communication apprehension and the academic achievement of secondary phase learners in the Kannaland District in order to determine whether there is any correlation between the variables. This study was conducted in English First Additional Language (EFAL) classrooms in the secondary phase (grade 7-9).

## 1.3    Clarification of concepts

The concepts in the following section are clarified in the context of this research study.

### 1.3.1    Communication

Communication is derived from the Latin *communicare* and means to share with or to make common thoughts, hopes, and knowledge (Business dictionary, 2011). According to De Jong et al. (2013, p. 894) communication is "the process of creating or sharing meaning." It involves a two-way mutual understanding, in which participants exchange information and create as well as share meaning of words and ideas (Tubbs & Moss, 2008). Defining communication is a complex process that includes all methods of conveying any kind of thought or feeling between individuals (Wood, 2010). It is also a process where ideas and feelings are shared effectively and appropriately by those communicating, depending on the relationship between individuals involved in the process (Wood, 2010). To understand the nature and function of speech, we must examine the process of communication of

which speech is a manifestation. In the context of this research, study communication refers to the sharing of thoughts, information and opinions between teachers-learners and learners-learners within a classroom situation.

### 1.3.2   Communication skills

Communication skills are usually termed the abilities in the area of a language, and include understanding, communicating expressively and the application of practical language skills (Vreken, 1996). It is important to stress that, in the context of this research study, the understanding of communication skills refers to general communication skills as identified during the conceptualisation of the questionnaire by the researcher (Table 1.1). Message skills, interaction skills, social skills interaction management, including behavioural alertness, are significant communication skills needed to improve the individual's ability to communicate with others (Tubbs & Moss, 2008). Well-developed communication skills are needed for academic success and achievement (Yahaya, 2009). Individuals with well-developed communication skills are competent communicators who can deal with diverse social situations (Fauuchette, 2001). In order for a person to be perceived as a competent communicator, such a person must possess the ability to be assertive, responsive and versatile/flexible (Mottet, Beebe, Raffeld, & Medlock, 2004).

### 1.3.3   Communication apprehension

Communication apprehension (McCroskey & Richmond, 1982) relates to anxiety to oral communication for the purpose of this study. McCroskey (1977b, p. 98) adds that communication apprehension is an "individual level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons". According to Malimabe (1997, p. 29), communication apprehension can "be conceived as a general unwillingness based on fear and anxiety to communicate or as an avoidance due to inadequate communication skills." Communication apprehension can affect much or all of a learner's communication, social skills and self-esteem (Harris, 1980). Richmond and McCroskey (1984) conclude that about twenty per cent of the population experience communication apprehension. For the purpose of this study, communication apprehension refers to the anxiety or tension experienced by secondary phase learners in a language classroom while verbally communicating teacher-learner or learner-learner.

### 1.3.4   Academic achievement

Academic achievement can be described as how well learners accomplish work in an educational environment (Monyai, 2010) Opportunities for learners to perform oral skills could possible affect their academic performance and behaviour in a positive manner (Francis et al., 2004). Waage (2014) explains that academic achievement is a very broad term and difficult to capture in one definition. She divides academic achievement into three main categories: (i) cognitive attitudes and skills, (ii)

academic behaviour, and (iii) academic performance. In the context of this research study academic achievement refers to the first and second term results the learners attain during formal and informal testing in EFAL.

## 1.4    Review of relevant literature

Weimer (2013, p. 3) explains that "a researcher cannot perform significant research without first understanding the literature in the field." In traditional disciplinary research it is not that difficult to construct a literature review as the researcher communicates with a distinct audience about commonly accepted problems that focus on a principle of disciplinary shared knowledge. However, in education research "we are often faced with the challenge of communicating with a diverse audience, and it is very difficult for us to assume shared knowledge and methodologies or even commonly agreed-upon problems"(Weimer, 2013, p. 14).

This review of literature focuses on communication skills, communication apprehension and other relevant topics such as second language proficiency and communication competence related to the academic achievement of learners in the second language classroom. Therefore the results of the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2011 in South Africa is significant to this study as it stated that teachers spend most of their instructional time on basic reading skills and strategies and less time on more inferential types of skills (Howie, Van Staden, Mishack, Dowse, & Zimmerman, 2012). It is indicated in the report that the patterns of language usage reveal a strong relationship between location and province and Afrikaans is the most frequently spoken home language in the Western Cape. Howie et al. (2012) state that listening and speaking receive less emphasis than reading and writing skills from Grade 7 onwards. Furthermore they assert that according to the results of PIRLS 2011 nearly half of Grade 5 learners did not speak English before attending school, resulting in a significant variance in their academic achievement in English (Locke, Ginsborg, & Peers, 2002). Bezemer (2008) explicates that learning how to speak, and on which occasions, implies the ability to communicate using verbal communication. Everson (2009) opines that the learners require verbal and nonverbal communication skills in order to speak during classroom activities. Within the constantly changing and diverse learning and teaching environment, it is important to keep in mind that the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 requires learner-learners and teacher-learners to be competent towards a communicative interaction approach (Howie et al., 2012).

The CAPS forms part of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12, which represents a policy statement for learning and teaching in South African schools (Department of Basic Education, 2012). According to CAPS there are three language teaching approaches: the text-based approach, communicative approach and process approach to address in order to develop the learners' language competence (Department of Basic Education, 2011) . Firstly, the purpose of the text-based approach

is to "enable learners to become competent, confident readers, writers, viewers and designers of text which indicate the focus on writing" (Thomas, 2000, p. 18). Secondly, a communicative approach suggests that the learners must have ample opportunities and exposure to practise language orally for social purposes. This indicates the importance of oral communication development in the language classroom, especially in the second language classroom (Thomas, 2000). Lastly, the process approach is used when learners produce written or oral text, with a clear focus on the expression of their thoughts in a natural way (Thomas, 2000). It seems that for second language development in South African schools it is imperative to adhere to CAPS requirements (Van Staden, 2011). McNamara (2008) explains that oral communication skills are a prerequisite both for academic learning and the social atmosphere in the classroom and school environment.

Drinkwater (2002) states that in the classroom environment poorly developed communication skills negatively influence the learners' academic achievement. Researchers investigated the relationship among well-developed communication skills and high communication apprehension, academic success, academic studies and retention (Berger et al., 1984). Komba, Kafanabo, Njabili, and Kira (2012, p. 324) reported "that there was a statistically significant relationship between the students' overall academic performance and their abilities in the written English language skills." The results of an investigation by Iyamu (2005, p. 2) show that "a significant positive relationship exists between verbal communication skills and students' performance." Literature reveals that high communication apprehension does indeed affect learners' academic achievement (Comadena & Prusank, 1988; Malimabe, 1997; McCroskey, 1977a). MacIntyre, Babin, and Clément (1999) explain that oral communication apprehension has a significant negative effect on learners' achievement. However, they suggest that questions regarding preservative effects of oral, receiver, and writing communication apprehension may be of little consequence. McCroskey and Daly (1976, p. 135) content those learners with "high communication apprehension and low communication apprehension did not differ significantly in their grade averages." In the context of this study learners experienced high communication apprehension and high communication skills but did not differ significantly in their academic achievement. According to Thakathi and Lemmer (2002), a favourable relationship between oral communication skills, communication apprehension and language proficiency should be attained in the classroom environment. They point out that well-developed communication skills do not necessarily help to reduce communication apprehension or increase academic achievement.

Malimabe (1997) argues that high communication apprehension and poor communication skills levels indicate individuals with high anxiety, while low levels of communication apprehension and well-developed communication skills indicate a person who experiences less communication fear and distress. Mantero (2002) establishes that oral and written communication are moderately correlated. Thus, a poor oral communicator is not necessarily a poor written communicator. Introverts for example can be poor oral communicators because of their fear or anxiety level in the language classroom, but they can prefer to express their thoughts and opinions in written communication (Hamidah, Sarina, & Kamaruzaman, 2009).

No matter how good a communication system seems to be, barriers can and often do appear (Kok, 2003). Calloway-Thomas et al. (1999) assume that when multiple languages exist in school settings, there are multiple communication barriers that restrict the communication process. It can be concluded that communication barriers may lead to fear and distress should be identified in an early stage. It is only through effectively recognising the learner's communication barriers that teachers will understand the learner's communication ability. Communication ability has different meanings to different individuals (Tubbs & Moss, 2000). Generally the ability can be delineated as intentional or unintentional interchange or transmission of knowledge, ideas, needs, perceptions or feelings (West & Turner, 2010). It is essential for teachers to understand the dynamics of communication to support the learners that resist communication. Communication in a social [school] environment comprises a speaker or instructor, words used to communicate and reader or listener (De Vito, 2009; Tubbs & Moss, 2008; Vreken & Vreken, 1989). Communication is a critical skill required for success, not only in the school environment but also for lifelong learning within a society (Vreken, 1996).

An explanation for the poor communication competence of some learners and their incapacity to spontaneously interact with other learners according to De Vito (2009), is that it can be ascribed to uncertainty, shyness, introversion and social anxiety or low self-esteem. These are some of the challenges teachers have to face regarding communication apprehension and lack of communication skills. It is important for teachers to establish why certain learners withdraw from certain communication situations in the classroom, and why they tend to hold back from communication (Drinkwater, 2002; Malimabe, 1997; Vreken, 1996). It seems that the application of positive solutions and teaching strategies leads to a decrease in the fear to communicate, especially in the area of second languages (Calloway-Thomas et al., 1999). If learners feel comfortable and free to communicate in the classroom, their opportunities for learning will not be hampered and they will be more motivated to excel academically (McCroskey & Daly, 1976). Combs (2003) argues that in the primary as well as in the intermediate phase academic achievement of learners with high communication apprehension is generally lower than that of learners in the higher grades.

The treatment of oral communication apprehension has long been a persistent concern of both teachers and researchers in the field of communication (Clevenger & Phifer, 1959; Lomas, 1937; McCroskey, 1977a; McCroskey, 2009). Extensive research is available on communication skills and communication apprehension, as well as on related constructs such as reticence, shyness and unwillingness to communicate (Cole, McCroskey, & Jamshidnejad, 2003). However, most research concerning communication skills and communication apprehension relates to other countries; only a few reports relate to the South African school context. To date, these two areas have not been adequately researched at school level (grade 7-9), a special population with high apprehension levels.

Malimabe (1997) reports on his investigation of communication apprehension in QwaQwa secondary schools. He presents a list of suggestions that may reduce communication apprehension at school

level. The suggestions include: (1) teachers need in-service training; (2) teachers should be able to identify communication apprehension in learners; (3) teachers should aim to prevent, and overcome communication apprehension during their teaching; (4) learners with high communication apprehension need counselling, and (5) literature should provide expert advice on communication apprehension. The aforementioned research study inspired the researcher to gather data using the questionnaires developed and adapted by Kok (2003), Malimabe (1997) (McCroskey, 1998) and Vreken (1998) to explore communication skills and communication apprehension in the secondary phase in Kannaland District, Western Cape. At the school where the researcher teaches, the learners' home language is predominantly Afrikaans. From the researcher's anecdotal observations in the EFAL classrooms, learners with good oral communication skills tend to show low communication apprehension and average academic achievement.

From the literature, the researcher postulates that certain communication skills can be used to increase the level of communication apprehension in EFAL classes and consecutively show a relationship with the academic achievement of the learners. The researcher was interested in the relationship between communication skills, communication apprehension and academic achievement of the predominately Afrikaans speaking learners in EFAL classrooms.

The following three research questions guided this study:
- What is the relationship between communication skills and academic achievement of secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape in EFAL?
- What is the relationship between communication apprehension and academic achievement of secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape, in EFAL?
- What is the relationship between communication skills and communication apprehension of secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape, in EFAL?

## 1.5    Research aims

The aims of this study were to explore the:
- Relationship between communication skills and academic achievement of secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape in EFAL.
- Relationship between communication apprehension and academic achievement of secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape in EFAL.
- Relationship between communication skills and communication apprehension of secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape in EFAL

**1.6    Research methodology**

**1.6.1    Literature study**

A broad literature review on communication, communication skills and communication apprehension was conducted to form a conceptual framework for the study and substantiate the findings of the research aims.  The researcher made use of Google Scholar, Academic Research Premier, EBSCOhost, Science direct, and relevant primary and secondary sources.  The following keywords were used:  *Communication skills; communication apprehension; communication; speech anxiety; classroom communication; academic achievement; second language learning.*

**1.6.2    Research design**

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005, p. 85), "research is a viable approach to a problem only when there is data to support it."  A research design is the "plan or proposal to conduct research" (Creswell, 2009, p. 4).  The research design employed for this study was a quantitative non-experimental approach (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008).  According to Creswell (2009), quantitative research is the investigation into human or social problems.  McMillan and Schumacher (2010) state that quantitative research aims to determine the relationship between an independent and dependent variable in a population by gathering data and numerically analysing this relationship.  They contend that quantitative research is "a research paradigm in which objective data are gathered and analysed numerically" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 489).  Fraenkel and Wallen (2008) explain that quantitative data are obtained when the variable being studied is measured along a scale that indicates to what extent that variable is present.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p. 489) describe survey research as "the process of collecting representative sample data from a larger population and using the sample to infer attributes of the population."  The researcher opted for a one-shot survey as the participants were secondary phase learners in EFAL classrooms in the Kannaland District, Western Cape.  In a one-shot survey the unit of analysis usually experiences some factor as important in shaping an outcome (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, & Delport, 2005).  As noted by Borg and Gall (1983, p. 411), "studies involving one-shot surveys comprise a significant amount of the research done in the education field."  The researcher intended to learn from participants how they  interpret their communication skills and communication apprehension in a language classroom environment.

### 1.6.3 Study population

The study population was secondary phase male and female learners from eight schools in Kannaland District, Western Cape. The sample comprised secondary phase learners (grades 7-9) from seven schools in Kannaland District, Western Cape.

### 1.6.4 Data collection

The research study took the form of a quantitative survey design (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). A survey is usually conducted by means of questionnaires. The researcher collected the data at seven different schools, using survey research. A battery of pen-and-paper questionnaires was completed using structured questions. Some advantages of the use of questionnaires are that "many respondents can complete the questionnaires in a short space of time and respondents can be reached across long distances, and the response rate is optimal" (Maree & Pieterson, 2010, p. 157). A disadvantage is that the researcher did not have full control over the conditions and this could lead to different responses from the participants (Maree & Pieterson, 2010). The self-report questionnaires assisted the researcher in the interpretation of the individual scores and the description of how the secondary phase learners in seven secondary schools in Kannaland District, Western Cape, experience their own communication skills and communication apprehension.

### 1.6.5 Variables

Field (2013) describes a variable as any quality or characteristic in a research investigation that has two or more possible values. In this research study the following independent variables were identified: communication skills, communication apprehension, gender, grades 7-9 (three grades). The dependent variable was academic achievement (term 1 and 2) in EFAL.

### 1.6.6 Measuring instruments

The two measuring instruments were carefully chosen. The researcher compared the items of the questionnaires with one another to get a good understanding of how the items of the two questionnaires relate to one another. Most of the items like group work, conversations, public speaking and meetings in these questionnaires correspond to oral communication skills as set out in the CAPS (Department of Basic Education, 2011).

#### 1.6.6.1 Communication Skills Scale

A 21-item self-developed questionnaire adapted from Vreken (1996), and Kok (2003) was used in this research study. The researcher conceptualised the Communication Skills Scale that relates to

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several of the items on the PRCA (Table 1.1). The researcher thought about the research aims and identified concepts that she thought captured the phenomenon being studied. The aim with this questionnaire was to attain general oral communication skills information for the one-shot survey. Additional questions on other communication skills were included to detect the consistency of the respondents' responses (Brace, 2008). During this conceptualisation of the adapted Communication Skills Scale the researcher consulted with a grade 7 and a grade 8 EFAL teacher in an effort to determine if they too perceived the statements as relevant. They agreed that these were relevant questions. In completing the Communication Skills Scale, participants indicated their agreement to each of the statements using a four-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (never), 1 (seldom), 2 (sometimes) to 3 (always). A Cronbach's alpha reliability index of 0.78 was reported among the grades 7-9 sample of learners for this research study.

There are various factors that can enhance or hinder the learners' verbal participation in the language classroom. Table 1.1 refers to the measuring instruments and the statements which relate to each other.

**Table 1.1**      **Conceptualisation of communication skills questionnaire**

| | Statement related to Communication Skills | Statements related to Communication Apprehension | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Group work | | | |
| 8 | Explain work to friends | Generally I feel comfortable while participating in group discussions | 2 |
| 4 | I take part in discussions during group work | I like to get involved in group discussions | 4 |
| 15 | I am the only person talking during group work | I am calm and relaxed while participating in group discussions | 6 |
| 16 | I ask the others in the group questions | | |
| 17 | I explain work to my fellow group members | | |
| Conversations | | | |
| 8 | I explain work to my friends | I have no fear of speaking up in conversation | 14 |
| 9 | I have conversations with individuals | Ordinarily, I am calm and relaxed in conversation | 16 |
| 11 | I speak to my classmates about work completed in class | While conversing with a new friend, I am very relaxed. | 17 |
| 19 | I discuss the news read in newspapers with individuals | | |
| 12 | I discuss employment opportunities with my friends outside class | | |
| Classroom Communication | | | |
| 4 | I answer the teacher immediately when I am asked a question | I like it when the teacher asks a lot of questions. | 26 |
| | | I am never afraid to go to class | 28 |
| | | It does not bother me if I have to answer a question in class while the principal/inspector is on a visit to the class | 30 |
| Public speaking | | | |
| 18 | I take part in debates at school | I have no fear of giving a speech. | 19 |
| | | I feel relaxed while giving a speech | 21 |
| | | I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence | 23 |
| Meetings | | | |
| 4 | I take part in discussions during group work | Usually, I am calm and relaxed when participating in meetings | 8 |
| 16 | I ask the others in the group questions | I am very calm and relaxed when I am called upon to express my opinion | 10 |
| 18 | I take part in debates at school | I am relaxed when answering questions at a meeting | 12 |

| Reading | | |
|---|---|---|
| 19 | I discuss the news read in newspapers with individuals | The communication apprehension questionnaire is developed to measure oral communication. |
| 20 | I read out loud in front of the class | |

**1.6.6.2 Personal Report on Communication Apprehension Questionnaire (PRCA)**

A thirty-item internationally recognised questionnaire developed by McCroskey (1998), adapted by Vreken (1998) and used by Malimabe (1997), was used in this study.  Completing the PRCA the participants were requested to indicate their agreement to each of the statements using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (agree), 3 (undecided), 4 (agree) to 5 (strongly agree).  The personal report contains five sub-scales; (1) group discussions, (2) meetings, (3) conversations, (4) public speaking and (5) classroom speaking.  A Cronbach's alpha reliability index of 0.8 was reported among a grades 7-10 sample of learners (Slobin, 1996).  For this study amongst secondary phase learners (grades 7-9) in the Kannaland District, Western Cape, the reliability index for the different sections of the questionnaire varied from 0.5 to 0.64.

**1.6.6.3 English marks**

The participants' academic achievement in EFAL in the first and second term was looked at.

**1.6.7 Data analysis**

The data were analysed by means of the following statistical techniques:

- Descriptive statistics:  Frequencies, mean scores, standard deviations and missing values were calculated for the questionnaires.
- Factor analysis and reliability analysis:  An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the questionnaires to determine the construct validity.  Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was used to describe the reliability of the factors extracted from the multi-point formatted questions.
- Comparisons:  Independent t-tests were conducted to compare academic marks, communication skills and communication apprehension for male and female learners.  Cohen's d-value was reported and used for interpretation.  ANOVA tests were conducted to compare academic marks, communication skills and communication apprehension for grades 7-9.
- Correlations: Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to investigate the correlations between the different variables.

The data analysis of the questionnaires was performed in collaboration with the Statistical Consultation Services of the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus.

### 1.6.8    Ethical aspects

The North-West University ethical application was completed, submitted to the ethical committee at the University, and approved (Annexure 1.1).  The ethics number given to this study is NWU-00041-11-A2.

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the relevant authorities:
- Western Cape Education Department
- circuit manager in the Kannaland district
- school principals
- parents of the learners.

The stakeholders were informed about the confidentially and privacy of the participants.  All the stakeholders were assured that the data would be kept confidential and would only be used for the purpose of this research project.

### 1.7    Chapter outline

The dissertation comprises five chapters.

Chapter One provides the orientation and problem statement of the study.  The research aims are identified.  The research design, study population, measuring instruments, statistical techniques and ethical aspects are revealed in this chapter.

A broad theoretical discussion on communication, communication skills and communication apprehension is presented in Chapter Two.  The contextual gap is identified and the theoretical framework for the study is clarified.  The chapter concludes with a deliberation on teaching and learning of EFAL in the South African context.

Chapter Three comprises a discussion of the research design and methodology that guided the study. It introduces the world view that guided the researcher and describes the strategies that were followed.  The research context, population, measuring instruments and data collection are clarified. Data analysis and procedures followed are presented and the chapter concludes with limitations of the study.

The most important research findings, as analysed, are offered in Chapter Four.  The chapter introduces an in-depth discussion of the biographical information gathered by means of the two questionnaires.  A clarification of the factor analysis and reliability analysis of the questionnaires is

followed by a comparison between male and female learners, along with comparisons between the grades in the secondary phase.  Finally, the Pearson correlations calculated are interpreted.

Chapter Five comprises a short summary of the study and the implications of the study are considered.  Recommendations for further study conclude Chapter Five.

# Chapter Two

## Review of literature

### 2.1 Introduction

Chapter Two sets out the theoretical framework that forms the background of this research study. The contextual weakness in the literature is identified. Human communication and the communication process are clarified and various communication models are explained. The key issues relating to communication skills and communication apprehension are elaborated on and language acquisition in the school context is discussed.

### 2.2 Theoretical framework and contextual space

Cooper and Simonds (2006) explain that a theoretical framework provides the underlying principle for conducting research to investigate a particular research problem. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p. 74) the theoretical framework can be described as the "theoretical perspective in which the research problem is embedded." They state that to establish the theoretical framework in quantitative research is essential, especially when researching a problem that has been studied. The theoretical framework indicates the researcher's perspective and helps the reader to understand the specific context of the research study (Cooper & Simonds, 2006). The researcher consulted various existing literature on communication, communication skills and communication apprehension to assist in the planning of the research. English as a second language in the school context provided the background for specific communication skills in the classroom. According to the description by Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2010) the researcher identified a contextual weakness in the literature, as no studies on communication skills, communication apprehension and academic achievement among predominately Afrikaans speaking learners as experienced in the English classroom in South Africa have been conducted. The focus of this research study is the relationship between communication skills, communication apprehension and academic achievement of secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape when communicating in EFAL. In Figure 2.1 the theoretical framework and contextual gap are identified and linked to the worldview that guided this study, the methodology is identified and the framework includes the models and theories that support the theoretical perspective of the research study.
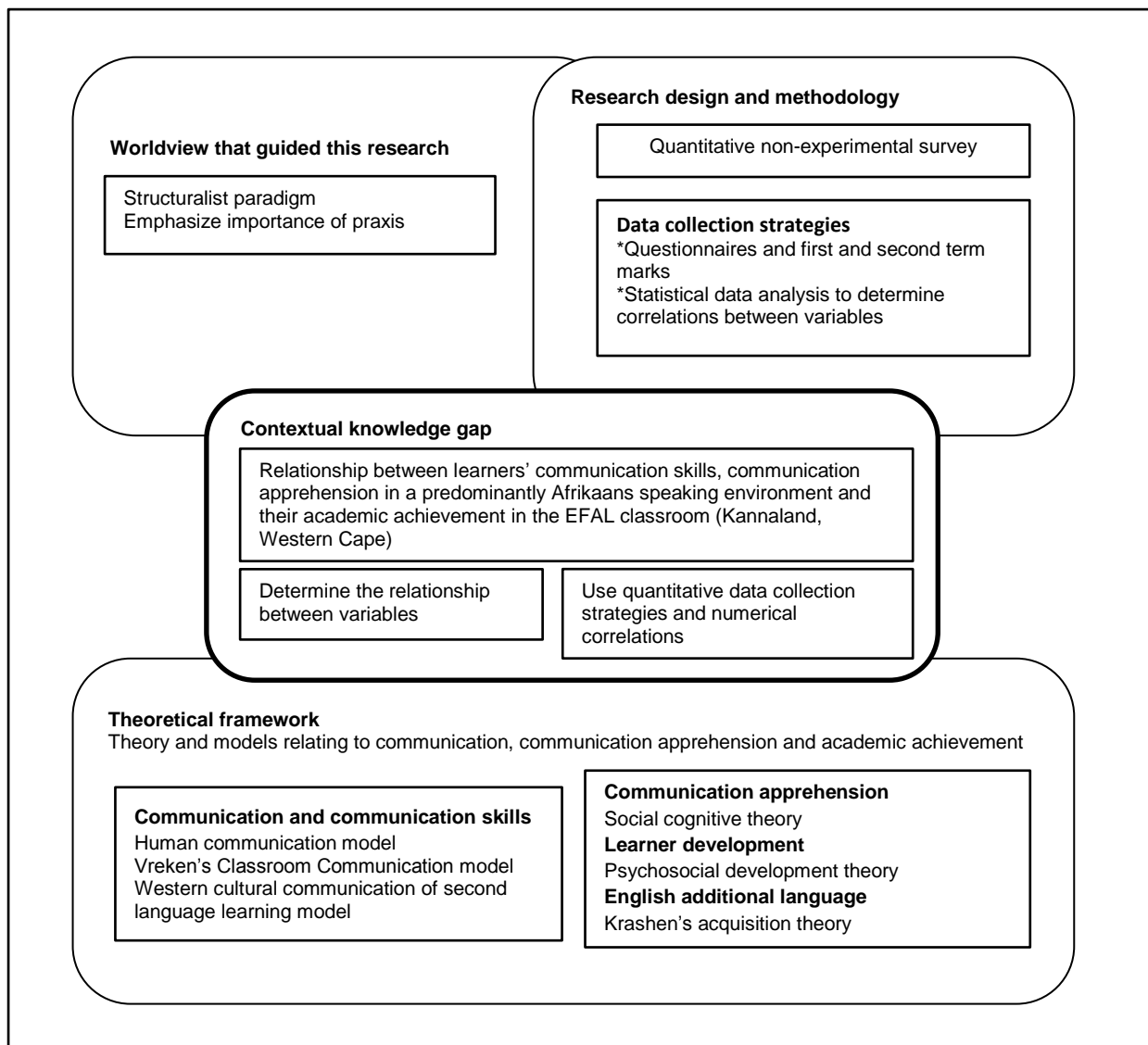
**Figure 2.1    The theoretical framework and contextual knowledge gap**

## 2.3    Rationale

It is widely acknowledged that communication is a central part of education. According to Murtonen (2005) communication is the most important prerequisite for effective teaching and learning. It is further mentioned that theory related to communication is of little value unless you understand the influence thereof on what you do and how you do it. Therefore it is essential for teachers to know about the communication process and communication skills to know what pedagogical impact communication can have on learners when they communicate in language classrooms (Singleton & Lengyel, 1995). Teachers and learners need to join forces to address communication apprehension, particularly in language classrooms. English is an international language and is used for communicative purposes globally in many societies, both as a native or second language (McKay, 2009). A critical factor in the South African education system is the use of English for teaching and

learning (Singleton & Lengyel, 1995).  In some schools English is regarded as First Additional Language, a language other than the home language with learners not necessarily possessing the skills to speak English (Thomas, 2000).  EFAL refers to the English language taught in addition to the learner's mother tongue (Horwitz, 2001).  The aim of EFAL teaching and learning is for learners to use another language other than their home language effectively and with confidence for a variety of purposes (Thomas, 2000).  Learners generally do not use English at home therefore teachers play a significant role in supporting learners to develop English communication skills at school to guide them to develop confidence and higher levels of achievement in English (Slobin, 1996).  Berko, Wolvin, and Wolvin (2012) state that advocates of communication and language teaching believe that the more communicative the classroom, the more effective the language teaching will be.  Many second language learners do not proactively try to speak English in class or learn English outside the class (McCroskey, 1977a).  Oral participation in the second language is beneficial for language learners because acquisition of the language occurs mostly during the verbal communication process (Comadena & Prusank, 1988).  For many South African learners, proficiency in English is primarily developed in the classroom setting, and this has implications for second language learners' academic achievement (McCroskey & Daly, 1976).

The implementation of EFAL in this phase is guided by the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) grades R-12 and represents "a policy statement for learning and teaching in South African schools" (Department of Basic Education, 2011, p. 3).  The NCS for EFAL grades 7-9 aims to produce learners that are able to
•        identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking
•        work effectively as individuals and with others as members of a team
•        organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively
•        collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information
•        communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and/or language skills in various modes
•        use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the
         environment and the health of others
•        demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that
         problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation (Department of Basic Education, 2011).

According to the Department of Basic Education (2011, p. 8) "learning to use language effectively enables learners to acquire knowledge, to express their identity, feelings and ideas, to interact with others, and to manage their world.  It also provides learners with a rich, powerful and deeply rooted set of images and ideas that can be used to make their world other than it is; better than it is; clearer than it is.  It is through language that cultural diversity and social relations are expressed and constructed, and it is through language that such constructions can be altered, broadened and refined".

According to Locke et al. (2002) many learners living in disadvantaged and remote schools are facing incredible challenges each day that affect their willingness and ability to achieve success in the classroom. They explain that many learners in the United Kingdom are not able to communicate during teacher-learner interaction or learner-learner interaction, especially during the first half of the school year. Locke et al. (2002) explain that even if learners have good skills to use their first language at home but are not confident to use it in the classroom, these learners are judged as shy and anxious and their communication problems may not be identified.

In this study the learners reside in urban and semi urban areas in the Kannaland District, Western Cape, where Afrikaans is predominantly the language of communication. The majority of these learners are from disadvantaged areas and commonly are only exposed to EFAL in school. Learning more about learners who are challenged by the various communication aspects may shed light on their academic achievement in the EFAL classroom. The appropriate use of language and effective human communication is the basis for accomplishment in any learning area.

## 2.4    Human communication

Human communication serves as the foundation for communication skills and communication apprehension (Morrin, 1987). In conceptualising human communication the researcher refers to Tubbs and Moss (2008, p. 8) who define human communication as "the sharing of experiences" and "experiences shared by most living organisms." They explicate that human communication is about making sense of what is being said and the exchanging, sharing and expressing of thoughts amongst one another. Tubbs and Moss (2008) regard human communication as the most important skill that an individual can acquire and explain that human communication is presented by an ability to create symbols (words or signs) which enable them to share experiences and knowledge about issues in an effort to understand each other. They argue that as we know more about the minds of other individuals, the gathered information will help us to understand their specific intentions in a particular event.

Communication as explicated by Tubbs and Moss (2008, p. 6) is "closely related with one's definition of self." People develop a "sense of identity and worth by comparing themselves to others" (Tubbs & Moss, 2008, p. 6). The feedback from others and the attention received from others when communicating provides self-identity. They conclude that human communication is therefore the "process of creating a meaning between two or more people" (p. 8). In other words, to produce learners as set out in the NCS aims (§ 2.3), a teacher's main concern should be to identify communication as one of the highest priorities within the second language classroom environment. Tubbs and Moss (2008) note that communication can improve interaction and enable perfect communication when the person can select the right words, prepare his or her message ahead of time and state it precisely. The channels of oral communication are sensory organs, and the

individuals mostly rely on hearing, feeling and sight (Tubbs & Moss, 2008). "In general the more channels being used, the greater the number of communicative stimuli transmitted" (Tubbs & Moss, 2008, p. 12)

According to Chapin (2012, p. 2), human communication is "sending a message from one individual to another and the most common forms of human communication is the sharing of verbal conversation." It can be concluded that human communication is created through the sending of verbal messages through various channels. Therefore, individuals that talk to each other, have to understand each other's medium of communication in order to give feedback to one another. Bowman (2002, p. 2) is of the opinion that primary communication channels are categorized as nonverbal, oral, and written, with each channel comprising "certain characteristics that can either help or hinder communication, depending on the circumstances, the message, and the sender and audience characteristics that can enhance or hinder communication." Against the background of a transactional view , Tubbs and Moss (2008, p. 9) provide a "tangible model to describe the process".

### 2.4.1    Model of human communication

Every communication process includes certain elements necessary to complete a communication cycle. In Figure 2.1 the most fundamental human communication process that involves two individuals is presented. Tubbs and Moss (2008, p. 9) posit that while you are talking you "concurrently perceive the other individual's behaviour and reaction." According to Tubbs and Moss (2008, p. 9), this determines the extent to which the individuals "involved create a relationship as part of their communicating"
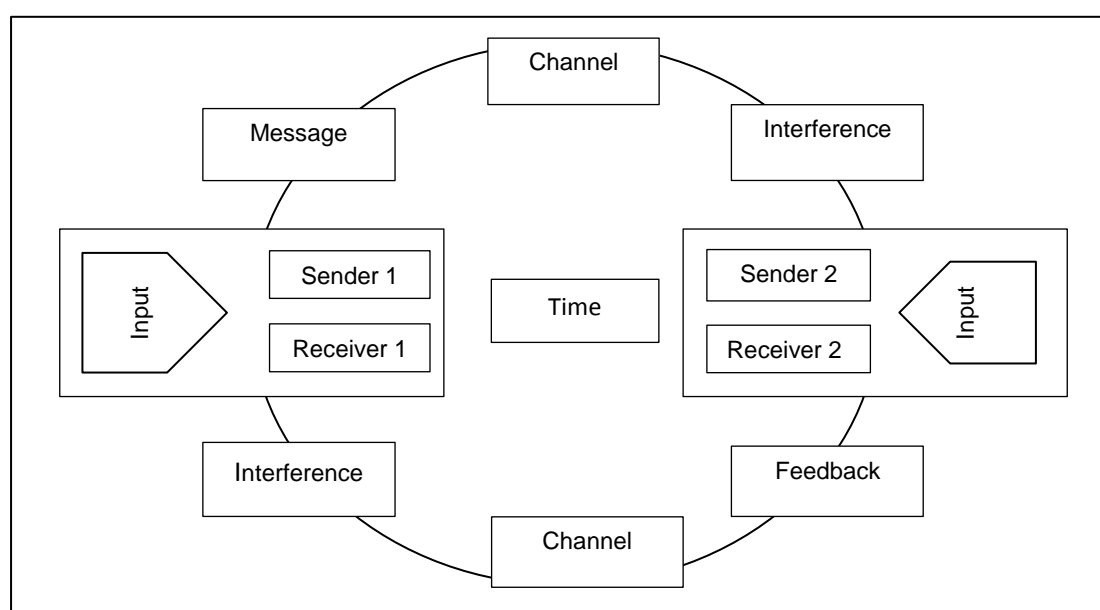


**Figure 2.2        The Tubbs and Moss communication model (Tubbs & Moss, 2008)**

The communication process consists of the following core elements as explained by Tubbs and Moss (2008):

- Communicator 1: Sender/Receiver 1
- Communicator 2: Sender/Receiver 2
- Feedback
- Time

### 2.4.1.1 Communicator 1

Communicator 1 is the individual who tries to convey a message, although communicator 2 is simultaneously sending and receiving a message. During this process knowledge, feelings and attitudes are important and influence the transmitted message. The four types of messages that can be sent are: intentional and unintentional verbal and intentional and unintentional nonverbal. During the communication process two or more types of stimuli can overlap. The researcher discusses oral communication. The content of an oral message plays a role in the interpretation thereof (Johnson, 1999). Tubbs and Moss (2008) are of the opinion that a face-to-face interaction is a multichannel experience and exclusively relay hearing, touch and sight. They explain that interference means that the information can be distorted during transmission and therefore distract the receiver from receiving. Furthermore, there are technical or semantic interferences that can have an influence on the message. According to Tubbs and Moss (2008, pp. 12-13) technical interferences can be any factors that "cause the receiver to perceive distortion in the intended information" while semantic interference will occur "when the receiver does not attribute the same meaning to the signal that the sender does." There is always some kind of interference present during the sending or receiving of a message.

### 2.4.1.2 Communicator 2

Traditionally communicator 2 is the receiver of the message. Visual perception and listening are two aspects in verbal message reception (Tubbs & Moss, 2008). When a communicator receives a message, interrelated processes take place: hearing, attention, understanding and remembering. From Figure 2.1 it is clear that there is "no definite starting point with a sender or termination point with the receiver" as it is an on-going process (Tubbs & Moss, 2008, p. 14). They explain that communicator 2 decodes the message and reacts as a result of the interpretation of the message. Unambiguous and instantaneous feedback during face-to-face [oral] communication depends on the different communicators and may take various forms.

### 2.4.1.3 Feedback

Tubbs and Moss (2008, p. 14) refer to Luft (1957) who calls feedback "the return to you of behaviour you have generated." Feedback either reinforces behaviour or extinguishes behaviour. Therefore verbal feedback can be described as the return of an oral message between two communicators.

The response from the communicator (receiver) shows whether the message was received in its intended form or not. Feedback according to Tubbs and Moss (2008) is important during the development of relationships and is therefore an important part of the communication process.

**2.4.1.4 Time**

Communication between the communicators is a cyclic process; it consists of multiple cycles over time. Tubbs and Moss (2008) argue that time is the final element in their human communication model. Good timing plays a significant role in the communication process, and can affect the message delivered. As time passes, the relationship between the communicators changes as a result of the interactions between them.

In addition Tubbs and Moss (2008) state that there is no communication model to be used as a blueprint because each communication process has unique characteristics. In the language classroom, effective human communication is the guide to realising effective communication skills and language achievement. As it is clear that human communication occurs in diverse settings. Tubbs and Moss (2008) refer to specific communication contexts in which human communication occurs. In the process of creating meaning between two or more individuals, some of these communication contexts are significant for this research study and will be discussed in the following section.

**2.5     Communication environments**

**2.5.1     Interpersonal communication**

De Vito (2009, p. 4) explains that interpersonal communication is a complex concept and can be defined in various ways: it is the "exchange of a message between two or more individuals." He states that it includes a didactic dimension that relates to the number of communicators and the relationships between them, as well as the developmental dimension that relates to a process that "begins as interpersonal and becomes more and more personal as the interaction increases in frequency." Duck and McMahan (2010) define interpersonal communication as verbal and nonverbal communication practised every day and indicate that it refers to the process of sending and receiving information between two or more individuals. It is based on the process of human communication and involves a sender and receiver that exchange messages, channels and feedback (§2.4.1.1, §2.4.1.2. and §2.4.1.3). Balliram (2002) argues that it is crucial for teachers and learners to develop interpersonal relationships in order to exchange information (knowledge), to communicate with success and secure mutual understanding and respect for each other in the classroom. Tubbs and Moss (2008, pp. 16-17) argue that "classroom talk includes all the elements of interpersonal communication." They regard this kind of communication as "conversation with a purpose" because the teacher may gather or convey information, influence learners' attitudes and at times influence their

behaviour. It creates an opportunity for role players in a teacher-learner and learner-learner relationship with the ability to turn their thoughts into "verbal and nonverbal words and transmit their thoughts, ideas and feelings." De Vito (2009) and Vreken (1998) regard interpersonal communication as the connection between individuals who are in some way related and who are also interdependent, because what one person says has an impact on the other person. Some consequences of ineffective communication can be conflict, frustration, psychological stress and anxiety (De Vito, 2009).

### 2.5.2 Small-group communication

Tubbs (1998, p. 5) defines small-group communication as "the process by which three or more members exchange verbal and nonverbal messages in an attempt to influence one another." Likewise Sharpe (1991) states that "a group functions by communication about ideas", he also notes that by exchanging ideas, members of the group attempt to influence one another and explain certain constructs. The aim of group communication is to consider ways to improve work. It can be accomplished by sharing different ideas or opinions, solving problems or making decisions (Tubbs & Moss, 2008). For the small-group to fulfil its potential, all members should feel comfortable in communicating their ideas and should feel responsible to contribute towards the group discussion (Sharpe, 1991). It can be presumed that in the teaching and learning situation, small-group communication is significant since learner-learner interaction takes place. Group work is supposed to give learners the opportunity to relax because their opinions are not constantly judged (Temerová, 2007). Klopf and Cambra (1979a) assert that group work also allows learners to work at their own pace, and it helps them to build confidence for further conversations. In order to ensure this, EFAL learners need to be accustomed to use a second language without the teachers' permanent support in the class. Muttonen, Olkinuora, Tynjala, and Lehtinen (2008) are of the opinion the small-group work can also help the teacher to work with those learners who may have poor oral communication skills by encouraging them to participate in discussions in a subtle way. Self-directed small-group work teams are also a way to improve the learners' organizational performance (De Vito, 2009). Within our diverse country with so many cultures in our schools learners can learn about intercultural communication processes through group work (Department of Basic Education, 2010).

### 2.5.3 Intercultural communication

Tubbs and Moss (2008, p. 19) describe intercultural communication as a process between "members of different cultures." De Vito (2002) explains that intercultural communication competence, undeniably, has recently emerged as a critical global skill. South Africa as a nation has many cultural differences within its societies (Calloway-Thomas et al., 1999). Different languages, races, and cultures are just some of the diversities that are present. According to Redden (2010) the quality and quantity of communication is guided by the communication interactions between cultural diversities. The author explains that having knowledge of cultural settings, being able to interact with others, and

individual reactions, are noteworthy factors that play a role during intercultural communication. When teachers and learners understand and are aware of cultural differences, classroom activities which take cognisance of this, improve the effectiveness of classroom communication (Calloway-Thomas et al., 1999). They regard intercultural communication as a way of life, developed and shared by a group of individuals, and passed down from generation to generation. Schwenk (2003, p. 15) explains that "all students have been socialized by their own culture to view the world, make attributions, and communicate in specific ways." It is important to understand the influence of culture on classroom communication that directly influences teaching and learning (Cohen, 1994). The challenge that the English Second Language teacher has with reference to the South African context is to be aware of how the context is recognised during the interactions between the members involved (Monyai, 2010; Schlebusch & Thobedi, 2005). They found that the significance of intercultural communication is recognised by teachers who observe learners' acquisition of a second language.

### 2.5.4    Public communication

For centuries public communication has been the foundation on which societies have been built (Tubbs & Moss, 2008). As explained by Malimabe (1997) public communication is conceptualised as debates, public speaking and speeches in the school environment. It comprises a communicator and an audience (Tubbs & Moss, 2008). Different from intrapersonal communication, public communication is not spontaneous and informal but the speaker must do thoughtful speech preparation (Chenaksara, 2005). "Public speaking demands the learners to be more deliberate and organised than in a private conversation. The speaker has to inform and persuade the listeners" (Tubbs & Moss, 2008, p. 424). After a speech or during debates, speakers anticipate answering questions. This kind of communication provides learners with an opportunity to express themselves in a structured way in the presence of others. According to CAPS (Department of Basic Education, 2011), EFAL teachers are required to equip learners with the most basic techniques of delivering a speech and take part in kinds of public communication.

### 2.5.5    Organisational communication

Organisational communication is defined as "the flow of messages within a network of interdependent relationships" (Goldhaber, 1990, p. 11). In this research study, the researcher conceptualises the organisational communication context as communication that occurs within a school environment. Koschmann (2012) refers to organisational communication as more than just organisational since it organises the activities and understandings of numerous individuals into an organised and recognisable way. He states that it "alters or sustains actions in an attempt to create and sustain structures in the organisation" (p 3). Teachers use organisational communication to attain outcomes and goals as stated in the curriculum (Erasmus-Kritzinger, Bowler, & Goliath, 2008). Teaching and learning of languages is based on effective communication within a school environment (Temerová,

2007).  It can be concluded that different kinds of communication creates opportunities to EFAL learners for collective and creative oral communication within a secure environment.

### 2.5.6   Intrapersonal communication

Intrapersonal communication takes place when one talks to oneself, which can be the starting point of any communication.  Sometimes we are conscious of our vocalising within our minds, but it is often silent thinking, an internal whisper, and we are scarcely aware of automatic nonverbal reactions (Berko et al., 2012).  Like any other communication process (§2.4.1) it requires a sender, receiver and feedback, the only difference being that the message is relayed to the self.  Thus, when a person is communicating inaudibly it is regarded as intrapersonal communication.  Individuals use this kind of communication to reflect on something and evaluate it, and to convince themselves of something they believe in. Self-concept, perception and expectations are fundamental aspects of intrapersonal communication.  Morin and Everett (1990) explain that self-concept regulate how individuals perceive themselves and their abilities.  Self-concept affects the language proficiency of the individual. Perceptions are embedded in the values, attitudes and beliefs of the individual (Jemmer, 2009). Expectations relate to the belief that an individual has "that something is likely to happen and how successful it will be" (Morin & Everett, 1990, p. 340).  Self-concept and proficiency are therefore associated with perceptions and expectations.  EFAL learners are expected to perform self-evaluation as part of the outcomes specified in the CAPS document (Department of Basic Education, 2011). This is why intrapersonal communication is inevitable and crucial during teaching and learning.

### 2.6   Types of communication

### 2.6.1   Verbal communication

Verbal messages convey the meaning the speaker has encoded into words of utterance.  A receiver who has understood the utterance, has gone beyond the literal meaning of the words and grasped the particular sense which the sender intended to convey (Krauss, 2002).  The medium of the message between the sender and receiver is oral or written (Kok, 2003).  Oral communication is a dynamic transfer of information and is the most effective medium of communication (Ferraro & Palmer, 2005). Furthermore it is spontaneous, retractable and can engage an audience psychologically (Ferraro & Palmer, 2005).  They explain that written verbal communication is less personal, more logical and organised.  The researcher conceptualises verbal communication as oral communication for this research study.

Breakwell et al. (2007) identified important functions which language fulfils as a medium of verbal communication.  Firstly, intrapersonal communication is possible and complex thoughts can be formulated into words in an effort to share ideas, discuss matters, reveal experiences, impart

knowledge, solve problems and make presentations.  Secondly, individuals socialise through language and thereby produce anticipated social behaviour.  The third function is using language to get control of situations and people to improve achievement and increase commitment.  The spoken word is powerful and influential, hence oral communication between sender and receiver must not be underestimated (Johnson, 1999).  Vreken (1998) asserts that oral communication through participation is an interaction that forms the foundation of teaching and learning in all classrooms.  In the language classroom, questions are asked and thoughts are shared orally in an attempt to verify that learners understand the statement that was made or the question that was asked (Calloway-Thomas et al., 1999; Kok, 2003).  In the context of second language learning, class oral participation means speaking and interacting while engaging in instructional tasks or activities (Comadena & Prusank, 1988)

Dabaj (2011) explains that when individuals verbalise things in a certain way, they have a particular goal in mind.  According to Erasmus-Kritzinger et al. (2008), oral communication can be direct or indirect.  Steinberg (2007) suggests that direct oral communication is used when individuals communicate face-to-face and the true meaning is revealed in the message.  She suggests that direct communicators value short and direct answers that do not involve as much analysis.  Indirect oral communication is more submissive, as the communicator speech can be viewed as weak, illusive and ambiguous.

Gallow (2000) is of the opinion that oral communication can be intentional.  Reference is made to the speaker that knows exactly what information to convey.  Intentional oral communication implies that individuals speak with awareness of the aim of the message and its effect on others.  According to Mottet et al. (2004) and Schlebusch and Thobedi (2005) intentionality has a significant role in the acquisition of language (§2.11.2.2) and is related to expressive language.

### 2.6.2    Nonverbal communication

Nonverbal communication can be defined as "communication without words, communication by means of space, gestures, facial expressions, touching, and silence" (De Vito, 2002, p. 393).  Nonverbal communication plays an important role in everyday interactions.  De Vito (2009) asserts that nonverbal communication is often used to accentuate, to emphasise some part of the verbal message.  Weimer (2013) explains that nonverbal communication includes tone, loudness, speed, and timing of the words in communication. Unspoken words are revealed as behaviour, emotions, sign language, facial expressions, signs, and attitudes (De Vito, 2002).  While not involving pure verbalisation, sign language is a form of communication that incorporates nonverbal cues commonly associated with basic communication (Weimer, 2013).

According to Mottet et al. (2004), teachers who include nonverbal cues in their classes can easily involve learners in verbal conversations.  Giving positive nonverbal cues to children definitely leads to

active participation of learners (Gallow, 2000). The use of nonverbal cues during communication can enhance learner performance (Mottet et al., 2004). It is stated that when the explanation of rules of languages is combined with the right posture, facial expression, body language and a little entertainment, the most difficult lesson can become easier. Moving around in the classroom or leaning slightly forward will communicate to the learners that the teacher is approachable, reliable, receptive and friendly (Mottet et al., 2004). If a teacher is relaxed and comfortable the learners will experience the teacher as more open to the teaching situation (Vreken, 1998). The gap between the learners and the teachers can be bridged by the nonverbal cues which serve as a major component in strengthening communication skills (Mottet et al., 2004) The author asserts that nonverbal cues can pave the way for meaningful communication between the teacher and learner. Mottet et al. (2004) also argue that a warm relationship can be established between teacher and learner through the right posture and body orientation. De Vito (2009) explains that nonverbal cues give information about intentions and emotional responses. Praising through nonverbal cues shows appreciation, and may foster a positive attitude towards the teaching and learning of languages (Van Staden, 2011).

Learners' ability and comfort with processing instructions and information can be interpreted from their nonverbal cues, which, in turn allow the teacher to advance the lesson based on the type of observed cues (Weimer, 2013). Teachers whose nonverbal communication patterns are congruent and reinforcing will be able to provide learners with a clear sense of confidence in their actions because the lack of congruity in nonverbal cues can result in a high degree of uncertainty for learners (Van Staden, 2011). Only good interaction between teacher-learners and learners-learners can enhance classroom communication (Mottet et al., 2004). These authors support this notion and add that the reaction between individuals during communication is complementary (behaviour of the individual enhances the behaviour of the other person) or symmetric (the one person reacts exactly the same as the other person). Tubbs and Moss (2008) explain that individuals are central to the communication process and the progressive process, and cannot be excluded from the communication process. Communication in the classroom is usually based on the transmission of verbal and nonverbal information between the teacher-learner and learner-learner (Weimer, 2013).

Monyai (2010) argues that nonverbal messages also communicate the exact same meaning as verbal messages. McCroskey and Anderson (1976) oppose the statement and state that words allow individuals to refine and reconstruct meaning and to recognise the association of what was previously said in a way that nonverbal communication cannot express. The way people speak and how they act/react on spoken words will be interpreted differently by different individuals. De Vito (2009, p. 129) agrees that the "crucial aspect of nonverbal communication is that the message you send is in some way received by one or more individuals." According to Tubbs and Moss (2008), nonverbal messages replace, reinforce or contradict a verbal message. Sometimes these actions can also imply the individual's likes or dislikes (De Vito, 2009). Silence can also be seen as nonverbal communication because by displaying silent treatment you can also hurt someone (Steinberg, 2007).

Nonverbal behaviour contributes much to the interpretation of a learner's verbal message (Malimabe, 1997).

It is therefore significant for teachers to understand how the elements of the verbal and nonverbal communication process as explained in this section, are linked together and will automatically lead to a better understanding in everyday life (Thatcher, Fletcher, & Decker, 2008). Oral communication in a second language classroom makes learners more aware of the ways in which a language is structured and how it can be manipulated, and is usually supported by unspoken words (Thatcher et al., 2008). The literature refers to nonverbal communication in any classroom as an indispensable part of teaching (Drinkwater & Vreken, 1997; Malimabe, 1997; Vreken, 1998). It is explained that for effective communication in a classroom setting, the ability to use both verbal and nonverbal cues is related (Mottet et al., 2004). Although nonverbal communication supports verbal communication, nonverbal communication is not specifically distinguished as part of the oral evaluation of the learner in the CAPS document for secondary phase learners and therefore is not the focus of this study (Horwitz, 2001).

## 2.7    Classroom communication

Classroom communication is communication interaction between skilled teachers and learners that actively participate. Classroom communication therefore depends mostly on how the available knowledge is presented (Hamm, 2006). Classroom communication forms an indispensable part of teaching and learning (Vreken, 1998). It is central to shared understanding amongst teachers and learners and can only be effective if the sender and the receiver respond to the message.(Malimabe, 1997). Effective communication is the single most important prerequisite to effective learning (Lamb, Bibby, & Wood, 1997). The relationship between communication and communication skills is a necessity in both the academic and social atmosphere of the classroom (Thatcher et al., 2008). According to Lamb et al. (1997), effective communication not only helps learners to develop specific concepts about classroom content but it also shapes their attitudes and beliefs about the real world and people in it. Effective communication takes place only when the listener clearly understands the message that the speaker intended to send (De Vito, 2009). Effective teaching and learning presupposes effective communication. Effective communication between the teacher and learners is a necessary condition of academic achievement. The teacher makes effective communication possible by identifying the needs of the learners, addressing the needs at the appropriate level, and creating a relaxed atmosphere in which a free, democratic flow of discussion is possible (Lamb et al., 1997). In the school environment, the classroom is the primary place where effective communication can augment teaching and learning. In a language classroom effective communication forms the core of language teaching and learning. Malimabe (1997) explains that there should be feedback from both the sender and receiver. He states that the sender encodes the idea before it is sent, and the receiver decodes the message and gives meaning to it (§2.4.1).

Classroom communication is an ever-changing and never-ending process between teacher-learners and learners-learners in the classroom (Vreken, 1998; Vreken & Vreken, 1989). Learning, academic and social processes to acquire knowledge are included as part of classroom communication and thus require more than just the learning of facts (Green, 1983). Classroom communication does not only occur during lessons, but continuously in the class, providing learners with opportunities to attain communication skills on a daily basis. It is important to understand that classroom communication and classroom instruction are inherently linked (Puro & Bloome, 1987). The purpose of classroom communication is to transmit meaning about knowledge and experiences and to express opinions about these experiences and views (Hamm, 2006).

Hamm (2006) explains that the fundamentals of a communication system in the classroom can be categorized into six main components, namely the transmitter (teacher), channels, message, receiver, noise and feedback. He is of the opinion that the speaker's role is to focus on the attention of the learners. It is very important for any teacher to assess his or her learners in order to decide on the best way to reach them, verbally and nonverbally. There is nothing as challenging to a teachers as getting learners engagement and holding their attention during a second language lesson (Hamm, 2006)(Hamm, 2006). Therefore teachers continuously initiate communication with learners to understand the learners' needs and "be able to better facilitate their learning" (McCroskey, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2005, p. 27). Through well-planned verbal classroom communication, a supportive classroom environment is established and the teachers set a favourable situation for helping all learners who experience difficulties with oral communication (Murphy, 1986).

There is no perfect communication process. However, creating a well-fitted oral communication process is necessary in the language classroom, especially during the teaching and learning process, to establish reasonable communication to improve the meaningful learning of EFAL learners. Many learners experience barriers during oral language instruction and activities (Dumanig, 2008). Poor English language acquisition, fear and anxiety of speaking, poor motivation to speak English, overcrowded classrooms, cultural differences and other personal barriers can affect the oral communication of the language EFAL learners (Erven, 2002). Johnson (1999) explains that effective oral communication begins within the conducive classroom environment. Teachers need to construct a safe communicative environment against which learners' performance and expression are interpreted. According to Monyai (2010, p. 15), motivating learners to take part in the communication lessons to "overcome their fear of speaking up will help them to be active in the learning process." Without good oral communication from teachers in the classroom, teaching and learning will not be effective (Osakwa, 2009). All individuals want to learn, and learners need opportunities in class to communicate what they know about the content and how they think they understand the content. The manner in which the teacher communicates with learners will be the result of how the learners interact in the classroom. Teaching EFAL, especially in an overall Afrikaans speaking environment, is a challenge for teachers and therefore calls for dedicated, motivated and creative teachers. Osakwa

(2009, p. 57) defines learning as "a natural process of pursuing meaningful goals, discovering and constructing meaning, and experience filtered through learners' unique perceptions, thoughts and feelings." He explains that teaching is an inter-active process of the facilitation of instruction between the teacher and learner through the process of verbal communication.

Lee (1997) proves that "communication skills should be taught explicitly and implicitly through the teacher's modelling of communication skills." Modelling forms an integral part of classroom communication because learners have to learn from the example of the teacher (Hamm, 2006). A teacher's attitude and motivation towards effective classroom interaction is a manifestation of what is important because it determines the achievement of education goals (Wikan, 2008). An enthusiastic and knowledgeable teacher will anticipate how learners will act on or react to a message. It is therefore imperative for teachers to use their voices effectively as it will help learners to reach the outcomes of the curriculum (Hismanonoglu, 2006). Thus the correct pronunciation is significant and he/she should speak at a moderate speed. Pronunciation is an important aspect of oral communication and presents communication as a mutual relationship between the speaker and the listener. Hismanonoglu (2006) argues that the teaching of pronunciation is of great importance for successful communication to take place, since it is an important ingredient of communicative competence. In the communicative approach, oral communication is the primary medium of transmitting a message and therefore should be the main method of instruction (Gardner, Tremblay, & Masgoret, 1997). A non-threatening learner-friendly environment is an important requirement in pronunciation instruction. Stress-free, relaxed interaction between teacher-learner and learner-learner should be emphasized. Although the spoken word is the most common way of communication, written communication cannot be neglected (Hismanonoglu, 2006).

Learners perform better in oral communication when they are relaxed (Drinkwater & Vreken, 1997). Using different techniques to increase support and encourage learners' self-esteem in language classrooms can reduce their level of communication apprehension (Rashidi, Yamini, & Shafiei, 2011). It is imperative for oral EFAL communication to adjust the classroom environment and set some communication rules and guidelines so as to make classroom communication pleasant to the learner Creative and resourceful EFAL teachers can set a relaxed environment to teach verbal communication skills. By viewing video clips of an interview of someone delivering a prepared speech, learners can get a better understanding of what is expected of them. Learners may become more enthusiastic about the lesson through the practical application of the second language. Learners may become more engaged in the lesson if they receive the message through practical demonstrations and visual materials (Department of Basic Education, 2011).

Teachers should be equipped with the necessary communication skills and knowledge about the communication process for effective pedagogical communication. During classroom communication, teachers ask thought-provoking questions to foster dialogue among learners (Kok, 2003). Recognising the basic elements of communication is essential to the classroom communication

process. EFAL teachers can modify the methods of classroom communication in order to create an environment that promotes learners' use of EFAL for teaching and learning. When a teacher communicates effectively, learning will become easier and the teacher-learner and learner-learner relationship will develop into a social relationship. Effective teacher communication will create a positive atmosphere to promote learning. In order to understand the classroom communication process, certain elements of this process need to be clarified.

In the next section Vreken's classroom communication model and the Western cultural communication model of second language learning are discussed.

### 2.7.1    Classroom communication models

Classroom communication models are patterns which should be followed to convey a message between teacher-learner or learner-learner (Vreken, 1996). Instructional communication rests on oral communication and its impact on teaching and learning of a language is imperative. The ability of a teacher to communicate effectively in the classroom situation is very important (Malimabe, 1997). Johnson (1999) argues that oral communication requires that teachers and learners must be able to send and receive messages accurately. The author also mentions that teachers must understand the nature of language of the learners. Only then can the teacher decide how to approach communication difficulties in the classroom. In the modern multi-cultural and multi-linguistic context teachers should be aware of the importance of communication skills (Kok, 2003). Well-developed communication skills provide an opportunity for better communication in the classroom situation (Malimabe, 1997).

### 2.7.1.1  Vreken's classroom communication model

Effective teaching depends on successful communication and involves the imparting of basic knowledge and skills in a formal or informal situation that will bring change in behaviour.
The classroom communication model of (Vreken, 1996) highlights the complexity of the classroom situation. He emphasizes all the important aspects vital for effective teaching and learning through communication in the classroom. It is an interactive communication model where the teacher and learners are included in the communication process. Figure 2.3 illustrates the seven facets of the classroom communication process as indicated in Vreken's classroom communication model.
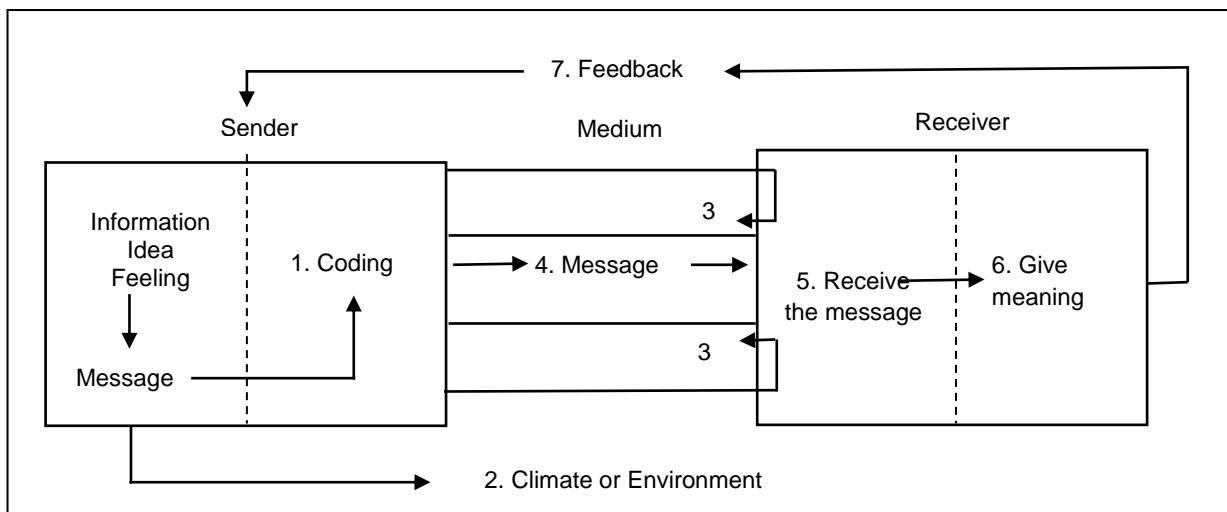
**Figure 2.3   Vreken's Classroom Communication Model (Vreken, 1998)**

**2.7.1.1.1        Coding of a message**

Coding of a message by the teacher takes place in two steps.  The teacher first has to transform the information, ideas, thoughts, feelings or instruction into a comprehensive message in his thoughts so that it can be understandable for the learners. Faulty coding may result in incorrect interpretation of an idea.  Thus planning for coding a specific message is crucial for the teaching and learning situation, especially for second language learners.  Coding can be viewed as a planning process of how the teacher can make a specific message as clear as possible to the learners (De Jong et al., 2013).  It is important that the teacher prepares and plans lessons and decides on the appropriate strategies and media (Drinkwater, 2002).

During educational instruction teachers know exactly which questions in connection with the learning content will be asked in order to get the specific messages across to the learners.  The second step is to transform the message into a medium so that it can be conveyed to the receiver who is the learner. During this stage the message which will be conveyed is being made ready for sending (Vreken, 1996).  For the purpose of this study the medium will be the learners' second language and the message should be plain and simple to understand.  If learners are able to decode the message in an understandable way, it will give a clear understanding for the teacher on how to plan methods and strategies to enhance learning in the class.

**2.7.1.1.2        Climate**

Vreken (1996) is of the opinion that the second facet of the teacher's task is to create a climate in the classroom which is conducive to communication and effective teaching.  He furthermore states that a

positive psycho-sociological environment is important for effective teaching. A peaceful learning climate and other physical factors can have a positive influence on learning. A relaxed teaching and learning climate can enhance good task-based participation, acceptance and trust between learner and teacher. If a teacher is in control of his or her class it will enhance good discipline. Drinkwater (2002) asserts that the type of classroom climate created by the teacher can either increase or decrease a learners' ability to learn.

### 2.7.1.1.3      Message

The conveying of a clear message to the learners is very important (Krashen, 2002). Learners' attention for participation in classroom communication is essential. The teachers should set the stage for learners to receive the message so they need to be focused, and be ready to get the new message. Providing a communication friendly environment for the learner to receive the message is crucial for the teaching and learning (Vreken, 1996). By doing this, learners will receive the message in a positive manner. However, teachers need to be equipped with the necessary teaching skills to convey a clear message to the learners (Vreken & Vreken, 1989). For good interactive participation in the EFAL class, the relevant prior knowledge of learners regarding the content plays an indispensable role in receiving the message. EFAL teachers and learners are required to be skilful communicators and must know how to produce clear messages. The manner in which a teacher speaks in order to convey a message is imperative because it can influence the intention of the message (Vreken & Vreken, 1989). A teacher [communicator] uses language to communicate a message and the learner [receiver] indicates the success of the message transmission through displaying how much he/she understood (Murphy, 1986). There are various methods of conveying messages to learners during language lessons. For example, visual aids can be implemented to convey an idea more effectively in an effort to improve learners' skills to understand the message better. The learners support needs will depend on the complexity of communication apprehension they experiences (Gardner et al.,1997). Moving from the known to the unknown by asking questions or stating problems will support learners to participate in the new learning task. Gardner et al. (1997) are of the opinion that support to learners (scaffolding) during English Second Language teaching improves the comprehension of messages.

### 2.7.1.1.4      Decoding the message

A well-structured message should be conveyed to the learners, relating to their level of understanding, and which is clear to them (Krauss, 2002). The message should be translated from one form into another form and meaning must be formulated. Decoding presents the abstracting of a message from a conveyed code (Vreken, 1996). For the purpose of EFAL learners the language use needs to be simple and well-structured in order for learners to get a better understanding of the message.

**2.7.1.1.5        Receiving the message**

According to Vreken (1996), learners receive the message which is conveyed by the teacher through all their senses.  It is thus through the senses that the message reaches the thoughts of the learner. Learners react differently pertaining to the same message.  Their communication skills and level of communication apprehension will affect the way they respond to a message (Madileng, 2007). The sender of nonverbal cues, whether it is the teacher or a learner, can use his or her face, eyes, body or voice to get nonverbal messages across (Krauss, 2002).  Furthermore the receiver on the other end can use his or her vision, hearing, touch and smell to make meaning of the message sent through the different nonverbal cues (Van Staden, 2011).  Vreken (1996) asserts that successful communication can only take place if both the sender and receiver of the message interpret the message in the same way.  Their communication skills and level of communication apprehension will affect the way they respond to a message (Wikan, 2008).  Both the teachers and learners become ardent observers and receivers of the message and the subject (Drinkwater & Vreken, 1997) .

**2.7.1.1.6        Giving meaning**

To give meaning to the message which the learner receives, learners should assimilate the message in his or her thoughts (Madileng, 2007).  The message will then be interpreted and meaning will be given.  This will enable the learner to recognise and recall it at a later stage and he/she will also be able to see the connection to which it is applied (Vreken, 1996).  Giving meaning is closely associated with decoding.  The best way to test the understanding of the learning content is to ask questions. This can give the teacher a good indication of the success of the teaching process.  By answering questions, learners' verbal and cognitive skills are tested and participation in the classroom may be enhanced.  Questioning may help the EFAL teacher to evaluate him or herself regarding the message that was conveyed and the learners' ability to understand the message.

**2.7.1.1.7        Feedback**

Feedback is one of the most important aspects to enhance learning in any classroom situation and teachers need to give feedback that can motivate learners to achieve the goals that ought to be reached (Thomas, 2000).  Assessment is part of the learning process where teachers assess learner performance and where learners evaluate their own learning or their peers' performance (Horwitz, 2001).  Thorough assessment feedback is given to the learners to determine if they have achieved the outcomes of the lesson, the goals that ought to have been reached (Yegoroma, 2002).  Feedback can take place either internally or externally.  Internal feedback entails the teacher listening to and thinking about the feedback he/she receives while communicating.  External feedback refers to the feedback that the teacher receives through verbal or nonverbal responses of learners. Feedback is important for the teacher and the learner and may determine how successful the transfer and interpretation of the message was.  It also forms the basis of identifying faulty interpretations of the

message and provides the teacher with opportunities to make the necessary adjustments. Feedback can take place either internally or externally. Internal feedback entails the teacher listening to and thinking about the feedback he/she receives while communicating, while external feedback refers to the feedback that the teacher receives through the verbal or nonverbal responses of learners (Vreken, 1996). Therefore EFAL teachers need to ensure that the feedback they give will enhance oral participation in the classroom.

The Vreken (1996) model displays all the aspects related to classroom communication interaction during teaching and learning. To achieve effective communication in the classroom is challenging and depends on the context of the teachers and learners.

**2.7.2    Western cultural communication model of Second language learning**

The NCS and CAPS emphasise an active communicative problem-based and learner-centred approach which is based on communication skills development and on how to put the developed skills into practice (Department of Basic Education, 2011). Teaching and learning underscores that learners know how to asses, evaluate, understand and produce information they have located from a range of sources in a classroom environment (Middle States Commision on Higher Education, 2003). Second language teachers' teaching styles distinguish them from other teachers and these styles are based on a particular cultural framework (Doyle, 2005). The framework of Jin and Cortazzi (1998, p. 100) "detailed the influence of culture on language learning and culture of learning in a language classroom".
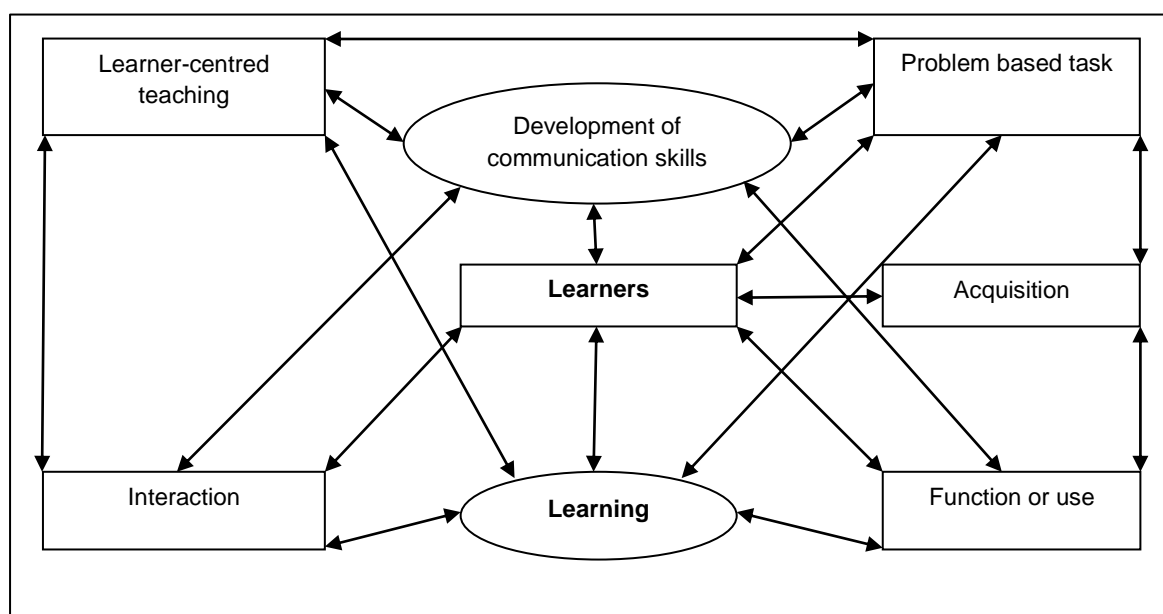


**Figure 2.4        Western cultural communication model of language learning**
**(Jin & Cortazzi, 1998)**

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The Western cultural model of language learning focuses on interaction and use of language. Woodrow (2006) explains that teachers should not simply be sensitive to the cultural framework, but also take into account learners' anxiety experienced in the Second language classrooms. For some this has a debilitating effect on speaking English. It is imperative that teachers are aware of the processes involved during second language teaching. Only then can they provide support to learners to minimise second language anxiety. According to Figure 2.4, the Western cultural communication model of second language learning, it is essential for teachers to be conscious of five fundamental aspects:

### 2.7.2.1 Learner-centred teaching

Learner-centred teaching has become an indispensable part of the NCS and focuses on both teacher and learner. It is based on the theory of constructivism. Constructivism challenges reductionist thinking and purports that learners construct their own knowledge (Donald, Lazarus, & Lolwana, 2002). The construction of knowledge is viewed to be the result of learners' attempts to use their existing knowledge to make sense of new experiences (Dufresne, Gerace, Leonard, Mestre, & Wenk, 1996). The learner-centred approach is an interactive approach which focuses on the process of active learning where the teacher is the facilitator and learners are actively involved in and responsible for their learning (Blumberg, 2009). EFAL teachers expose learners to activities where they construct their own learning. In EFAL, learner-centred learning focuses on how the language is used in typical daily circumstances. The learners answer one another's questions and the teacher acts as an information source, constantly answering and asking questions which learners should answer to show their understanding. Teachers who teach using a learner-centred approach expect from learners to analyse, critique and reflect upon their own learning (Donald et al., 2002) . Learners who feel insecure and anxious hesitate to answer or withdraw from the activities (Vreken & Vreken, 1989).

Gray (1997) states that constructivist teaching is based on the belief that learning occurs as learners are actively involved in a process of meaning and knowledge construction. Lifelong learning is one of the basic principles of this approach where learners learn skills that they can use in the future. The current curriculum emphasises the learner-centred approach where learners have to reach certain outcomes and assessment standards. Constructivist classrooms are structured so that learners are immersed in experiences within which they may engage in meaning-making inquiry, action, imagination, invention, interaction, hypothesizing and personal reflection (Gray, 1997). Therefore it is imperative that learners in the EFAL classroom demonstrate good communication skills and a low level of communication apprehension.

### 2.7.2.2 Problem-based learning

Problem-based learning is a process and forms an integral part of a curriculum (Barret, 2005). Barret (2005) also state that a curriculum consists of carefully selected and designed problems that demand the learners' acquisition of critical knowledge, problem-solving proficiency, self-directed learning strategies and team participation skills. The problem-based learning approach is based on active, interactive and collaborative learning (Gallow, 2000). This approach tends to enhance learners' learning and motivation. The use of problem-based learning is built on the premise that sustained engagement with an appropriate set of problems will help learners to acquire a substantial knowledge base, deepen their understanding of important concepts and principles, and develop skills (including problem solving skills and interpersonal skills) that are relevant to their future careers (Killen, 2010). By confronting learners with real world problems to solve, relying on what they know, can enhance their critical thinking and their interest in the subject. These problems are solved in small groups as the teacher facilitates the learning process. Learners are expected to develop independence, autonomy and responsibility (Sheikhzabeh, 2011). This means that learners take charge and responsibility for their own learning, make decisions about their learning and implement those decisions accordingly. In the groups, learners get the opportunity to work cooperatively, gather information, discuss relevant facts, and construct solutions. During this cooperative learning process, learners learn to explore. Killen (2010) asserts that problem solving develops learners' ability to make informed judgments and emphasise the importance of being able to explain and justify those judgments. Learners then become critical thinkers. Skills such as how to analyse, synthesise, evaluate and how to apply new information to a given context can be learnt through this approach. Problem-based learning is thus an active mental learning process. During problem-based learning, learners construct their knowledge together (Barret, 2005). It can be argued that problem-based learning is based on a social constructivist view and that effective cooperative communication is needed to achieve success, especially in the EFAL classroom. Effective cooperative communication supports and encourages learners to develop their oral communication skills.

### 2.7.2.3 Development of communication skills

Valette (1973) explains that learners should engage in communication activities to acquire communicative competence. Activities such as listening comprehensions, self-expression in speaking, reading comprehensions and writing in a language are examples of activities to develop communication skills in the classroom. Answering questions, role play, delivering of speeches, debates, and group discussions, listening, reading and writing are important components for learning to take place. Cini (2012) argues that if learners express themselves orally, it will improve reading comprehension and speaking skills. In order for communication skills to be mastered, teachers must bear in mind that they need to keep learners interested during teaching and learning.

The ability of teachers to adapt materials and activities to suit the context and use techniques to address learners is imperative (Department of Basic Education, 2010) Teachers' different teaching strategies and pattern of interaction with the learners will lead to the development of oral communication skills. Valette (1973) explains that classroom discussions as well as individual support to the learners can enhance the development of communication skills and provide a stress-free communicative environment. Showing individual interest can convey a sense of involvement in communication activities within the learner and increase the confidence of learners. It will also bring about better learner and teacher interaction in the EFAL classroom.

### 2.7.2.4 Interaction between teacher-learner and learner-learner

Hall and Walsh (2002) note that effective teaching and learning cannot take place without interaction between teacher-learner and learner-learner. Classroom interaction is one of the primary means by which learning is accomplished in the classroom (Hall & Walsh, 2002). Teachers and learners construct a common body of knowledge by interacting with each other. Because schools are important socio-cultural contexts, the classrooms, and more specifically the discursively-formed instructional environments created through teacher-learner interaction, are consequential in the creation of effectual learning environments and ultimately in the shaping of individual learners' language development (Hall & Walsh, 2002). It is important for teachers and learners to engage in activities where speaking, listening, reading and writing skills are linked together in order for learners to negotiate and interact meaningfully. Mutual understanding of the learners' expectations of their involvement as members in the classroom is created through interaction (Horwitz et al., 1986).

### 2.7.2.5 Function or use of message

Bilash (2009) asserts that during the communication process a speaker makes use of language to transmit a message which may be clear, fairly clear, not so clear or not clear at all. One of the main goals of language teachers is to provide learners with tools to be effective communicators in the language class (Bilash, 2009). The manner in which a teacher speaks to convey a message is very important because it can influence the intention of what the teacher wants to convey. A speaker makes use of language to transmit a message and the hearer may indicate how successful communication has been, in terms of how much has been understood (Murphy, 1986). Intervention to correct the misunderstanding of the message which has been sent is imperative. Teachers can use visual aids to convey an idea more effectively in order for learners to understand the message which is sent by the teacher.

It can be deduced from the preceding argumentation that to become a skilled communicator (teacher or learner) requires understanding the roles of each element of communication. The teacher or learner can use the above-mentioned elements in many ways: interpersonal, intrapersonal, group intercultural communication, public communication and organisational communication (§2.5).

Effective communication plays a vital role in successful teaching and learning. Teachers need to deal with the application of these communication elements in an educational context.

## 2.8     Educational communication

Educational communication includes different communication contexts (§ 2.5) since learners have to be educated for the real world outside the classroom. These communication contexts form an integral part of the educational communication process. Education is commonly defined as the principles of methods of instruction, and instructional education at all levels is mediated through the communication process (Donald et al., 2002). An effective teacher is a subject expert who supports learners and teaches them self-directed learning (Monyai, 2010). Haskins (2000) explains that educational communication is the practice a teacher uses for various communication skills in order to augment pedagogic subject knowledge. Educational communication is reflected in the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 and refers to what the teacher needs to teach learners Thomas, 2000). The way in which teachers and learners communicate with each other affects instruction (Green, 1983). This educational communication does not exist in isolation; the interaction context is constructed by the teachers and the learners (Boyle & Nicol, 2003). Various teaching strategies are implemented to keep the learners interested in the interaction in the classroom. Yegoroma (2002) regards educational communication as communication which intends to provide educational activation in the real psychological contact which occurs between teacher and learner, as well as among peers, which turns them into subjects of communication. In educational contexts, learners can be assisted to overcome a variety of barriers that arise in the interaction process in the classroom.

Learners need some skills to plan and organise, and have to learn to set goals while monitoring themselves, and also perform self-evaluation. Zimmerman (1990, p. 4) regards self-regulated learning as "an approach that shifts the focus from learners' learning ability and environment as fixed entities to their personally initiated processes and responses designed to improve their ability and their environment for learning." For learners to become self-regulated learners, it is important for teachers to help learners to develop self-confidence which will lead to independent learners. Unfortunately many of these skills are not developed due to certain physical factors in the classroom.

Overcrowded classrooms provide for limited interaction and discussion between the teacher-learners and learner-learner (Boyle & Nicol, 2003). The limited space in certain schools may lead to one-way communication between the teacher and the learners. Boyle and Nicol (2003) are of the opinion that two-way communication between the teacher-learners or learner-learner in the classroom gives the learners reassurance that they are not the only ones who make mistakes. This can make the learners feel comfortable about communicating in a safe environment. Teachers have to foster a warm and caring social environment so that learners can feel free to communicate the content with the teacher.

Educational settings place a major emphasis on oral communication skills, focusing on public speaking and interaction in small groups (Blood, Blood, Tells, & Gabel, 2001, p. 165). Teachers should create opportunities for learners to work in smaller groups in order to promote and provoke oral communication in class. Classroom interaction and discourse derive from an integration of the teachers' and learners' understanding of the content, and greatly depend on the language employed and the teacher's intention (Cehan, 2002). Expert teachers, who cannot communicate subject knowledge in a way that learners can understand, experience that learning is ineffective.

Only when teachers stimulate concept development through visual variation and vocal variation, will learners will be interested in the subject matter, and this can promote good communication in the classroom (Horwitz et al., 1986). According to Cooper and Simonds (2006), clear instructional goals in the classroom are imperative. This provides teachers with opportunities to communicate to learners what they expect from them and why. All learners have an expectation to learn; therefore teachers should adapt their instruction to the needs of the learners (Singleton & Lengyel, 1995).

Active learning needs to be encouraged where learners can engage in discussions, role play, group work and presentations so that they become actively involved in the learning process (Singleton & Lengyel, 1995). According to Gunter, Estes, and Schwab (1999), successful teachers help learners to realise their existing knowledge and base new concepts and content on what learners know. New information should be made interesting so that learners can get interested and connect their existing knowledge to the newly acquired knowledge.

Cehan (2002, p. 10) explains that "educational communication does not only include lesson planning but also the needs and interest of the learners." For effective teaching and learning to occur, good lesson planning, development of supportive educational material and communication modelling are needed. Various instructional methods are important to accommodate the different learning needs of the learners in the language classroom (Donald et al., 2002). Teachers who accommodate learners' capabilities and use differentiation in their lesson planning will address learners' cognitive and emotional levels. Teachers need to constantly analyse their teaching strategies and redesign their instructional plan to fit the teaching and learning circumstances (Gunter et al., 1999). In the EFAL classroom teachers are obliged to create activities where learners have to practise various communication skills to become competent communicators. Learners need good communication skills in order to become good communicators in society (Thatcher et al., 2008). The development of good communication skills changes learners into confident individuals with low levels of communication apprehension in their second language.

## 2.9 Communication skills

### 2.9.1 Introduction

Communication skills (§1.3.2) are imperative to any teacher in the teaching and learning environment, and include speaking, listening, writing and reading. Faiz (2008) is of the opinion that educational communication is learnable and teachable—communication skills in the teaching and learning context should thus be taught and learnt. He also argues that successful teaching and learning requires multi-pronged strategies including building up knowledge, demonstration, feedback and self-assessment, and repeated practice in a safe and stimulating environment. Teaching and learning encompasses a two-way communication process, where learners should be able to, and be given the opportunity to feel free to, ask questions; and teachers should be able to give them feedback in a manner so that they will be eager to ask questions in the future (Kok, 2003). Class discussions are an opportunity for learners to demonstrate their understanding of a topic and to explain it to their classmates (Hamm, 2006).

Researchers found that communication skills are significantly related to an encouraging educational atmosphere and academic achievement (Schlebusch & Thobedi, 2005; Sugishita et al., 2012; Yahaya, 2009). In a study by Agunsoye and Okeowo (2000), results indicate that communication skills affect academic achievement in different subjects in different ways. They established that communication skills affect learners' academic achievement positively in Agricultural studies but not in Art studies. Studies in Africa have reported relationships between communication skills and academic performance. A Nigerian study indicates a significantly positive correlation between oral communication skills and learners' performance (Iyamu, 2005). A recent study in Tanzania shows a statistically significant relationship between learners' overall academic performance and their written communication skills (Komba et al., 2012).

It is accepted that classroom communication skills form the foundation of teaching and learning (Glomo-Narzoles, 2013; Steckler, 2012). According to Bradley and Friedenberg (1988), many learners lack communication skills in English Second Language which forms the foundation of academic achievement. Within the current South African EFAL curriculum, learners' ability to express themselves is emphasised, and it is mandatory for learners to acquire the necessary communication skills (Department of Basic Education, 2011). Hence it is necessary to mention that according to the CAPS for EFAL grades 7-9, the recommended time for speaking and listening is merely two hours per week-long cycle (Department of Basic Education, 2011) Learners who lack the necessary communication skills usually experience difficulties to communicate during oral learning activities (Lamb et al., 1997; Vreken & Vreken, 1989). To acquire communicative competence, learners must engage in speaking, listening, writing and reading activities in the EFAL class.

### 2.9.1.1 Speaking

Speaking is a skill taught at schools and provides the learners with the ability to express their opinion, thoughts and ideas about a particular matter (Thornbury, 2006). The teaching of speaking should include knowledge of the process and communication strategies (retracing, rephrasing, substitution, demonstration, gesture, mime, sounds and appeal for assistance) (Thomas, 2000). Speaking practices may include meetings, discussions, role play, debates, guessing games, pair and group work to actively involve learners in conversations in the EFAL classroom. According to Thornbury (2006), speaking a second language has often been viewed as the most demanding of the four communication skills because it is seen as a productive skill. Comadena and Prusank (1988) state that speaking forces learners to attend to syntax instead of only semantic and strategic features. Speaking allows learners to provoke immediate feedback during Second language communication. It is proposed that the frequent use of a second language improves the development of the language and the speaking skills (Comadena & Prusank, 1988). Mottet et al. (2004) state that discussions can be characterised as the most autonomous form of communication because all learners have an equal chance to participate in expressing ideas. Learners need to be encouraged to speak English no matter how many mistakes they make (Thornbury, 2006). If the latter does not occur it may lead to high levels of communication apprehension or unwillingness to communicate in EFAL.

### 2.9.1.2    Listening

Listening is the act of hearing attentively; it is a dynamic language skill receiving and replying to verbal messages (Vreken, 1996). Staab (1992, p. 15) emphasizes that listening is an "active process of constructing meaning and for this to happen, listeners need active mental involvement." Listening is the language skill which learners find the most difficult to master (Department of Basic Education, 2011). Learner's listening ability should be tested at a young age to identify barriers to communication. Balliram (2002) argues that a learner who has a short attention span while listening may experience difficulties in understanding instructions. Through effective listening learners collect and synthesise information, construct knowledge, and solve problems (Goldenberg, 1991). Therefore, learners need to listen attentively to make sense of knowledge communicated by the teacher. According to Berger et al. (1984), listening instruction usually involves pre-listening, listening and post-listening.

Pre-listening activities are used to get learners focused, listening activities help them to recall detail and evaluate, and post-listening involves learners to respond. Teachers need to prepare learners for a listening task and they need to ensure that learners understand the language of communication. Eye contact between learner and teacher is imperative during listing activities. Learners need to be encouraged to participate in activities that involve listening. Listening is important because it ensures that the message is received accurately, and it affects the feedback. Teachers must not be discouraged, because although students are quiet and not speaking during activities, they usually listen to the dialogue in the target language (Comadena & Prusank, 1988). Effective listening in the

classroom situation can create an environment where everyone feels safe to express ideas and save time by helping clarify information (Thornbury, 2006).

### 2.9.1.3 Writing

Writing is a process of representing language in a visual or tangible manner. Writing uses sets of symbols to symbolise the sounds of oral communication, and also requires symbols for numerals and punctuation (Boltz, 1999). Written communication is part of our everyday lives as it is also a way to get the message across to the receiver. Written communication is a permanent means of communication because it is more binding than speech (Mowahed & Kabr, 2011). Written communication is also a useful tool and powerful instrument during communication. Sometimes it is difficult for people to express themselves orally and they prefer to write the message (Killen, 2010). Writing encourages learners to consider the manner in which they orally communicate their thoughts to others.

Writing allows learners to construct and communicate thoughts and ideas coherently (Department of Basic Education, 2011). The ability to read and write cannot be separated. Reading should be developed in conjunction with writing from an early stage (Cooper & Simonds, 2006). As the learner progresses through the different phases in school, the process of mastering reading and writing skills gradually strengthens. Mowahed and Kabr (2011) note that effective written communication requires organising your thoughts into a logical order before you begin to write. Writing in the EFAL class is important because it enables learners to think about grammar and spelling. During the process of teaching learners to write, the learners firstly need to be able to write and understand words; the next step should be to do phrasing, and lastly a short paragraph will follow. The Department of Basic Education (2011) asserts that teachers should encourage learners to correct their own mistakes. Mowahed and Kabr (2011) mention that written messages may be difficult to understand because they can contain many words that are unknown to the learners.

### 2.9.1.4 Reading

Reading is "the basic life skill and a cornerstone for a learner's success at school and throughout life, (Oberholzer, 2005, p. 16) whiles according to Bohlmann and Pretorius (2002, p. 205), it is "an essential learning tool which if learners have not properly mastered will handicap their potential for success in a learning context." The author is of the opinion that to construct meaning the readers should have communication skills and know how to use the relevant communication skills. Reading is regarded as the basis instruction. It is both a conscious and unconscious thinking process which is essential for success in acquiring a second language (Waage, 2014). Waage (2014) asserts that reading English Second Language texts requires a set of thinking skills and attitudes that grow out of the spoken and written use of English. The learners' cognitive levels are important when learning to read and to comprehend because it will help them to make sense of the information. According to the Department of Basic Education (2011), reading instruction may involve pre-reading, reading and post-

reading activities to enhance learners' understanding in the EFAL class. Pre-reading activities alert learners to surface features of the text type during reading activities and help them organise and analyse its structure, while post-reading produces the genre in a written text of their own. It is through reading that learners acquire much of their knowledge and understanding of the different subject areas. It is essential that the text for EFAL learners is not too difficult to read. The use of illustrations can help to encourage learners to guess the answers before they hear the text. They need to understand the words in the text to be able to acquire the language. Language teachers are obliged to encourage learners to work out the meaning of the vocabulary in the context of the text. It is important for learners to know the purpose of the reading because it can help them to focus more efficiently on the information they need to extract (Department of Basic Education, 2011). Teachers need to ensure that the learners have the necessary background information before they are asked to read. It is very important that learners be encouraged to read up about the topic. This can be done by activating their background knowledge of the topic before they are confronted with the text. The more the learners read, the better their vocabulary becomes and the greater their vocabulary, the better their reading, which may lead to better academic achievement in EFAL.

### 2.9.2    Factors that influence communication skills

Robbins, Judge, Millett, and Boyle (2011) identify different factors that may influence communication skills of learners in the classroom. These factors include; cultural factors, linguistic effects, psychological factors, assumptions and biases. Cultural differences include attitudes and beliefs, that are part of the personal experiences and environment the individual resides in. Linguistic effects are common even among those who speak the language fluently. Linguistic factors are about variance in expression and misunderstanding of messages. Psychological factors are determined by the individual's anxiety and uneasiness due to various issues, such as communication apprehension, poor vision, and ailment or hearing problems. Assumptions can affect the communication skills in the classroom; for example the teacher can assume that because the learners nod their heads they agree and understand the verbal communication. Biases shape who the individual is and is a factor that affects communication in the classroom, especially when the teacher consciously or unconsciously only speaks to those who are likely to understand the language and can respond accordingly (Puro & Bloome, 1987). These factors determine the interaction that occurs in the classroom.

Cooper and Simonds (2006) note that it is important for teachers to foster a good class atmosphere in the English Second Language classroom to get the learners to orally communicate. According to Haskins (2000), teachers should point out the strengths and weaknesses that exist in their messages and sources, and also why they exist. He further argues that teachers should encourage active learning by inviting learners to engage in dialogues about issues related to class topics. A good relationship with the learners and the use of group work are ways to maximise learners' participation and bring classroom communication closer to natural communication while also promoting interpersonal relationships (Haskins, 2000).

Some factors can hamper communication in classrooms, therefore teachers have to be clear in their instruction because it could have an effect on the communication process (Malimabe, 1997). When the teacher is not clear enough, learners will not comprehend what the teacher is saying. This can lead to learners feeling uncertain and insecure in the classroom. Insufficient self-confidence and the fear to speak up can influence the communication process negatively in the classroom and this can create anxiety, nervousness, stress and insecurity (Wikan, 2008). Furthermore these symptoms affect learners' lives in a negative way. Learners develop reluctance or reticence when they have to communicate orally with teachers or peers. Communication apprehension can be a critical factor in the teaching and learning process because it may lead to ineffective learning. It is evident that there are positive and negative factors that can affect communication skills. Communication skills are required to provide common understanding amongst people. Effective communication requires the creation of communication skills. Different communication skills can be learnt and developed through practice in the EFAL classroom. Insufficient communication skills could be due to fear, feelings of anxiety, and having less confidence that exists in some situations when communicating with other people. These fears could be due to communication apprehension (McCroskey, 1998). Communication skills development and communication apprehension are closely associated.

## 2.10    Communication apprehension

### 2.10.1  Introduction

The term communication apprehension (§1.3.3) was coined by McCroskey and Daly (1976). During the I970s McCroskey and Leppard (1975, p. 5) defined the construct of communication apprehension as "a broadly based anxiety to verbal communication." McCroskey (1977a) states that apprehension about oral communication is probably the most common apprehension experienced by individuals. He asserts that oral communication refers to a broad based apprehension about oral communication, from talking to a single person to giving a speech in public. To experience nervousness while giving a public speech is normal, but to have similar experiences when talking to a peer or participating in a group session is not. Communication apprehension is significant in the classroom because it adds to our understanding of the cognitive processes associated with communication (McCroskey, 1977a, 1997). It can be concluded that communication skills in EFAL are the foundation of teaching and learning the language. Therefore communication apprehension is considered a key influence on EFAL development in the school situation.

Learners may experience a sense of overpowering insecurity, tension, stress or anxiety when they think about, or are exposed to, situations where they have to communicate in front of people (Blood et al., 2001). Learners may experience a weakness to function normally in the EFAL classroom because of their fear to communicate, or they may do everything possible to avoid speaking or

participating in group activities. These fears are different from person to person. Although most learners know that these fears are irrational or exaggerated, they are unable to curb the feelings. Learners who are afraid to communicate with others, or in public, usually suffer from communication apprehension. McCroskey (1997) explains that communication apprehension is synonymous with communication fear and anxiety. Learners have a choice to either communicate or not. If a learner is not interested in a certain subject, conversation or even certain people he or she will most likely choose not to communicate. McCroskey and Richmond (1991) report that the personality of an individual is a determining factor in the manner choices are made and what such choices will be. Communication apprehension can be tied to introversion, alienation, low self-esteem, cultural divergence and deficient communication skills (MacIntyre et al., 1999).

Every individual has the ability to choose whether he/she wants to communicate or not. If something does not interest a person, that person is likely to ignore the situation, conversation and/or even people that do not interest him or her. The latter may refer to the teacher, the learning area or even classmates. McCroskey (1997) argues that the personality of an individual may be a determining factor in making some choices in life. These choices may refer to relationships and future careers. Communication apprehension could be experienced during a simple discussion with a new person, or giving a speech in front of a room full of people. All individuals experience some level of communication apprehension at some time. This is usually reflected in the learners' academic achievement. Phillips and Sokoloff (1968) define a reticent person as one "from whom anxiety about participation in oral communication outweighs his projection of gain from the situation." If an individual is handicapped by communication apprehension, such an individual would avoid experiencing negative reactions from anxiety that would surpass projected gain from interaction. This, of course, does not mean that the person would never engage in interaction. The literature identifies four different types of communication apprehension (McCroskey, 1984):

- trait-like communication apprehension
- context-based communication apprehension
- audience-based communication apprehension
- situation-based communication apprehension.

These types of communication apprehension will each be discussed in more detail.

### 2.10.1.1     Trait-like communication apprehension

McCroskey (1984) argues that trait-like communication apprehension refers to people who may be born with it or acquire it over time. Trait-like communication apprehension is described as a relatively lasting personality trait extending over a wide range of contexts (McCroskey & Daly, 1976). This kind of communication apprehension forms an integral part of a person's characteristics. A person with trait like communication apprehension will experience anxiety or at least uneasiness for relatively long periods in a wide variety of contexts. Trait-like communication apprehension is mostly related to oral

communication, writing or singing apprehension (McCroskey & Daly, 1976)**.** This communication apprehension will not improve unless a person suffering from it is treated for this. According to Drinkwater (2002) people who suffer from this, trait-like communication apprehension is usually resistant to change. According to Horwitz (2001) trait-based communication apprehension correlates positively with language anxiety.

### 2.10.1.2        Context-based communication apprehension

Generalized context-based communication apprehension is viewed as a "relatively enduring, personality type orientation toward communication in a given type of context." McCroskey and Daly (1976) describe generalized context-based communication apprehension as:

- communication apprehension about public speaking
- communication apprehension about speaking in meetings, classes or group discussions
- communication apprehension about speaking in educational interactions.

If an insecure and shy learner delivers a speech or participates in group discussions in class or in front of other people, anxiety and uneasiness can occur. Learners with high levels of communication apprehension would rather choose situations where they only have to respond in a nonverbal manner (Vreken, 1998).

### 2.10.1.3        Audience-based communication apprehension

McCroskey and Richmond (1991) regard audience based apprehension as the kind of apprehension which is related to the audience who is communicated to and not to the personality of the individual. Audience-based communication apprehension can be considered as response to stimuli associated with constraints generated by either the context of communication or by the person or group with whom the communication encounter takes place (McCroskey & Leppard, 1975). Furthermore, certain groups of people can stimulate an anxiety response. They explain that interaction with principals at school, or a teacher who speaks in a loud voice and is very austere, can cause fear or anxiety in learners with high communication apprehension. Teaching learners with high levels of communication apprehension can become a challenge to the teacher, especially in language classrooms.

### 2.10.1.4        Situation-based communication apprehension

McCroskey and Richmond (1991) describe situation-based communication apprehension as anxiety in a specific communication situation. Learners sometimes find themselves in very challenging or uncomfortable situations and do not know how to react because of the fear of their communication responses. Tóth (2010) explains that situation-based comprehension of language is based on the assumption that certain types of situations are more likely to produce anxiety than others. Learners

who are socially anxious are concerned about the impressions others form of them and fear undesired judgment.  There is individual variation among people as to what particular situations they perceive as fear-provoking (Tóth, 2010).  When a learner has to speak up in class, read in front of the class or write a test, such a learner may become very anxious.

From the above discussion it is evident that communication apprehension is a multidimensional concept which can affect academic achievement.  Communication apprehension is closely associated with oral communication (McCroskey, 2006).  Teaching oral communication involves a focus on interpersonal, intrapersonal and to a large extent, public speaking.  It is important to get to the core of avoidance of communication.  Teachers will only be able to help learners with high levels of communication apprehension if they are aware of and if they understand the possible causes of communication apprehension.

### 2.10.2  Causes of communication apprehension

Communication avoidance, anxiety and fear have constituted a major concern of social scientist studying communication (McCroskey, 1984).  The following possible causes of communication apprehension are identified in the literature and are explicated.

#### 2.10.2.1        Heredity

Jung and McCroskey (2004) regard heredity as one of the contributors to the destiny of individuals. They state that heredity is an expression of inborn, neurobiological structures and could influence interaction with the environment and which may lead to higher or lower communication apprehension levels.  Infants already differ with regard to their sociability from a very early age (McCroskey, 1984). Heredity is seen as the process by which a learner develops a tendency because of personalities. Heredity could be a reason why learners in the EFAL class are not inclined to communicate with the teacher or other learners as this may cause communication apprehension.

#### 2.10.2.2        Stuttering

Blood and Blood (2004) describe stuttering as a communication difficulty that hampers the fluency of common speech and affects the overall communication process of the learner.  Learners experience negative attitudes from peers, and stereotypes develop which can lead to isolation and withdrawal from oral communication (Swartz, Gabel, & Farzan, 2009).  Stuttering is another reason why learners exhibit very strong signs of communication apprehension.  Learners who stutter are sometimes victimized in the school setting; they usually experience uneasiness, anxiety and fears toward communication during group and interpersonal conversations (Blood & Blood, 2004).  In the second language classroom the teacher should attend to stuttering learners to offer them support and opportunities to overcome their apprehension during oral communication activities.

**2.10.2.3        Development of communication skills**

Insufficient development of communication skills can be related to hereditary and environmental factors (Drinkwater, 2002).  McCroskey (1977a) identifies inadequate communication skills, late development with a second language and speech problems as factors that cause communication apprehension.  On the other hand, he argues that some people may have adequate language and speech pronunciation, but may be severely deficient in social communication skills.  McCroskey and Richmond (1982) regard high communication apprehension as a potential inhibitor of the development of both communication competence and communication skills.  They believe that people who are highly communication apprehensive feel more at ease when they are isolated.  Learners with high levels of communication apprehension tend to avoid oral communication in English Second Language, which may result in the inadequate development of oral communication skills (Mesri, 2012).  The latter may influence the learners' achievement in EFAL.  When learners approach adolescence they become more sensitive to their communicative inadequacies (McCroskey, 1980). Mesri (2012) agrees that communication apprehension occurs in cases where learners lack well-established communication skills, although they may have mature ideas and thoughts.  It is important that EFAL learners overcome communication apprehension as it inhibits communication.

**2.10.2.4        Role models for communication**

Kelly et al. (2002, p. 207) identify a "close relationship between communication apprehension and family communication patterns."  English Second Language learners with strong language role models will learn a lot from them, especially from those with well-developed communication and language skills (Leonard, 2011).  Learners of parents who do not communicate well, or in an ineffective manner, will behave the same in class because family expressiveness has the strongest relationship to communication apprehension (Kelly et al., 2002).  They argue that learners from conversation-orientation families are less likely than learners from conformity families to be influenced by persuasive tactics.  Hsu (2002) agrees that learners who are encouraged by their parents to avoid controversy and obey parents' ideas without questioning are likely to become communicative apprehensive.  A learner who has less contact with other people, and who does not have sufficient role models for communication will probably not develop adequate communication skills.  The teacher in the EFAL class is usually regarded as the only role model for linguistic development and acquisition.  Sometimes even teachers experience communication apprehension and this will affect the levels of communication apprehension in the EFAL class (McCroskey, Booth-Butterfield, & Payne, 1989).

**2.10.2.5        Self-esteem**

Low self-esteem is a crucial factor in determining an individual's success in second language activities (Rashidi et al., 2011). They explain those learners with a low self-esteem, and who are very nervous and shy, would rather choose not to communicate in the second language classroom. Learners who are highly apprehensive suffer their peers' negative perceptions of them because they are not likely to communicate or to interact with them. McCroskey (1980) reports that adolescent learners feel they are incapable of relating successfully to others in their environment. Learners with low self-esteem are more worried about what others think of them (McCroskey, Daly, Richmond, & Falicone, 1977). These learners often do not take any risks in the second language classroom and they therefore do not reach any goals, or their full potential. These learners feel very uncertain, lack confidence and are anxious. Wheeless (1975) says that reporting a fear may be a threat to the self-esteem of many individuals. Because of the fact that they have a fear to communicate they may never tell someone because it may negatively affect their self-esteem. The fear of communication is probably a greater threat to the self-esteem than the disclosure of the fear (Wheeless, 1975). Typical behaviour occurs when "people avoid communication because they believe it is better to remain silent than to risk appearing foolish" (Kelly et al., 2002, p. 203). They state that the environment of the learner will have an impact on the language tendencies that could be carried over into their adult lives and may even lead to shyness or anxiety. Because secondary phase learners are in the adolescent developmental phase (§2.11.1.1) they are aware of themselves – self-conscience – and are afraid to make mistakes in front of their peers. This feeling of anxiety and insecurity may affect the learners' self-esteem and cause high levels of communication apprehension.

**2.10.2.6        Introversion**

Introversion refers to the individual's concern with and interest in his or her own emotions and experiences and often appears to be asocial or aloof (Meyer, Moore, & Viljoen, 2003). It can be tied to anxiety and depression since they usually do not talk about their feelings and experiences to others. These learners usually present passive and asocial characteristics and are quiet and very reserved in the classroom (McCroskey, 2009). They do not provide a lot of oral feedback but they listen and think (Sallinen-Kuparinen, McCroskey, & Richmond, 1991). This aloofness can also be one of the causes of communication apprehension. Sometimes these learners remain unnoticed by the teacher and their peers because of their general shyness and passivity in class (Rashidi et al., 2011). When learners reach the secondary phase, those who are highly communicative apprehensive alienate themselves from society and its values and goals (McCroskey, 1980).

**2.10.2.7      Cultural divergence**

Cultural divergence can lead to communication apprehension as noted by Watson (2007). Communication apprehension is affected by both individual and cultural factors. Levels of communication apprehension are found to differ among cultural groups. Learners are challenged by various cultures in school and diversity of communication may be hampered in different ways, for example low level of communication skills or communication apprehension. Geurrero and Farinelli (2009) assert that the cultural differences seem to be an important determinant of communication apprehension and it can influence the development of all aspects of the individual's life. Cultural divergence is complex and problematic in education. According to Geurrero and Farinelli (2009) communication apprehension can be a source of frustration, misinterpretation, conflict and ultimately school failure. The authors furthermore state that teacher can proactively handle problems associated with communication apprehension in the classroom environment. This is an indication that not only the teacher or learner *per se* but also the teacher-learner relationships correlate with communication apprehension levels in various ways (Geurrero & Farinelli, 2009).

**2.10.2.8      Reinforcement**

McCroskey (1984) elucidates that reinforced patterns are dominant elements during the communication process. If learners are not encouraged to communicate, they will communicate less. Learners usually observe the communication behaviours of individuals in their environment and attempt to emulate these. If their attempts are not reinforced, they alter their behaviour (McCroskey, 1984). Learners develop apprehension because communication is unrewarding or painful due to the lack of supportiveness towards the communication efforts. For many learners the EFAL classroom environment may generate apprehension or anxiety. Hsu (2002) notes that conformity-oriented teachers would like their learners to be quiet in class, avoid disagreements and obey teachers' ideas without question. This can lead to communication apprehension because the learner would then rather keep quiet instead of being insulted or embarrassed by the teacher. McCroskey (1977a) asserts that teacher expectancy of the leaner and the actual achievement of the learner can also lead to communication apprehension. If the teacher expects more from the learner than what he or she can achieve, the learner may develop a negative attitude towards the target language. The fear of failure can be tied to communication apprehension because if a learner has failed before, he or she may become more apprehensive. McCroskey (1984) explicates that a lack of confidence may develop when expectations are neither accurate, nor appropriate and anxiety is produced. Zheng (2008) is of the opinion that the behaviour of individuals is mostly motivated by their internal thoughts, feelings, attitudes and actions, rather than by those of others. According to McCroskey (1984), the more exposed individuals feel, the more likely they are to experience communication apprehension. When learners have to give public speeches they become more exposed and sometimes get uncomfortable when communicating with their peers. They may feel uncomfortable, and because of

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the evaluation by their peers they may become more apprehensive. P'Rayan and Shetty (2008) explain that learners want to be accepted by their peers and teacher in the classroom and do not enjoy being treated like strangers. It can be deduced that various causes of communication apprehension may affect the EFAL learner.

McCroskey and Richmond (1991) clarify that people experience conditions of fear and anxiety while communicating with other individuals. Communication apprehension has been a relatively neglected issue within the South African education system. Learners are expected to communicate with teachers and peers, but may have apprehension that keeps them from engaging in communication opportunities to benefit themselves.

From the aforementioned explanations about the causes of communication apprehension it is clear that learners are "producers as well as products of different social systems" (Bandura, 2001a, p. 2). He explains that "social cognitive theory devotes much attention to the social origins of thought and the mechanisms through which social factors exert their influence on cognitive functioning" of the individual (p. 3). Stacks and Salwen (2014) explain that a theory can provide perspectives on a phenomenon [such as communication apprehension]. Communication apprehension is a social phenomenon that is both self-perceived and observer-perceived. In the following section the researcher discusses the social cognitive theory's relevance to communication apprehension in this research context.

### 2.10.3 Social cognitive theory

The social cognitive theory is "a theory of psychological functioning that emphasizes learning from the social environment" (Gardner et al., 1997, p. 13). Social cognitive theory refers to a psychological model of behaviour that emerged primarily from the work of Bandura (1989). It is an interpersonal theory and is depicted in Figure 2.5. "Human behaviour has often been explained in terms of behaviour that is shaped and controlled by internal disposition or environmental influences" (Bandura, 2001a). The social cognitive theory explains psychosocial functioning in terms of personal factors, environmental factors, and behaviour continuously interacting through influencing and being influenced by each other (Bandura, 1986).
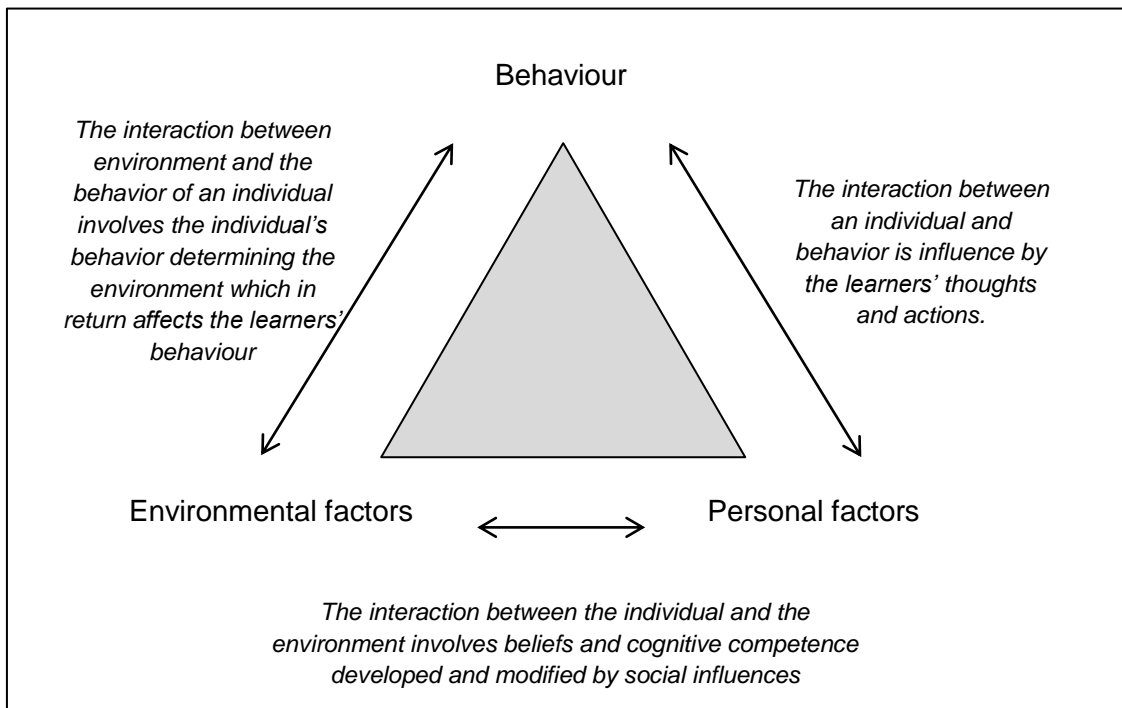
**Figure 2.5     Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2001a)**

From Figure 2.5 it can be deduced that several constructs underlie the process of communication change and learning. Personal factors include instincts, traits and other motivational forces, and environmental factors signify situational impacts and situations in which communication behaviour is performed. According to Bandura (1986) there are six variables that affect or intervene during the process of behaviour change. These variables can be associated with communication apprehension:

- Self-efficacy: A result of the learner's capability to perform certain communication actions.
- Self-Control: The ability of a learner to control his/her own communication activities.
- Outcomes expectations: The result of the consequences that communication actions of a learner will produce.
- Reinforcements: The actions that increase or decrease the possibility that specific communication behaviour will continue.
- Observational learning: The learners' acquisition of communication patterns by observing actions and outcomes of other learners.
- Emotional coping: The ability of a learner to cope with emotional stimuli related to communication actions. This is directly associated with the developmental stage of the learner.

The social cognitive theory postulates that individuals make decisions based on personal factors such as emotions, habits and knowledge, as well as external factors such as social approval and physical environment which are in turn influenced by behaviour (Steckler, 2012). Steckler explains that classroom learning and the behaviour of the learners are shaped by factors within the academic

environment, especially the reinforcements experienced by learners and others. If learners have expectations about their environment, actions, and competence, their behaviour may change based on feedback they may receive (Bandura, 2001b). Since the social cognitive theory deals with human cognition, it accurately explains how learners would experience communication apprehension as behavioural pattern based on the environment, and how changes and patterns can affect the nervousness and anxiety experienced by learners. It can be concluded that it will influence the way in which learners communicate in the classroom.

As Vreken (1996) highlights the complexity of the classroom situation it is imperative for teachers to take all those aspects for effective communication into consideration for learners to take part in the learning process through classroom communication. When Bandura's social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), is extended to communication apprehension in the school context, it would seem that personal and environmental issues are important to explain when and why behaviour exists. The social interaction within the EFAL classroom needs to address the learner's cognitive and overall communication through improvement of environment and behaviour by eradicating and regulating negative input and feedback during the communication process. Learners may inhibit their engagement in behaviour if they observe a peer suffers consequences; they would prefer to avoid similar behaviour. Although many learners may struggle with feeling confident while communicating, it is possible to increase confidence by repeating preferred skills through instruction (Steckler, 2012). The behavioural patterns and environment learners are introduced to shape the manner in which they will interact during oral communication throughout their lives. If leaners get to believe in the importance of effective oral communication skills in the EFAL class they may become more effective communicators.

Pajares, Prestin, Chen, and Nabi (2009) suggest that the learners who are unclear about their language competence and performance capabilities, such as those who lack communication experience and have experienced past difficulties, can be influenced by the teachers' or peers' actions. The learners who develop self-efficacy beliefs as the outcome of verbal communication or the verbal judgments that teachers and peers provide, will be less anxious and more relaxed during oral communication (Schunk & Usher, 2012). Effective communicators will develop self-assurance and start to envision attainable success. It is easier to weaken self-efficacy beliefs through negative interactions than to strengthen such beliefs through encouragement (Bandura, 2001b). To provide support and provide activities to raise learners' confidence levels can increase their performance achievement (Bandura, 1989). Finally, "people can gauge their self-efficacy by the physiological and emotional states (e.g. anxiety, stress, and arousal) that they experience as they contemplate an action" (Wentzel & Wigfield, 2009). The teacher can increase levels of self-efficacy by providing communicative resources and support to raise individual confidence.

Emotional feedback like anxiety and fear when completing a language activity, provides cues about the "anticipated success or failure of the outcome" (Wentzel & Wigfield, 2009). The authors note that

focusing on fears lowers perceptions of the self and causes anxiety that contributes to inadequate academic success.  The second language teacher is able to support and assist learners to augment emotional and psychological strengths by altering their thinking.  Second language teachers can also powerfully influence learners' self-efficacy beliefs about their capabilities in small steps, aiming towards better communication and lower levels of communication apprehension (Yegoroma, 2002). Bandura (1991) writes that in shaping the environment into a conducive setting to communicate freely may offer social support to learners and provide opportunities for behavioural change.  By doing this, learners' communication apprehension levels may decrease.  The Social Cognitive Theory strives to equip self-regulated learners for the education context (Bandura, 1991).  According to Zimmerman (1990), self-regulation refers to the capacity to recognise one's ability by observing one's own behaviour, evaluating its effectiveness and using that information to adapt behaviour that may be more conducive to the learning situation.  If the latter is done, learners' behaviour may be more positive without anxiety and insecurity towards oral communication in the second language classroom.  There may be less communication apprehension which consecutively can enhance academic achievement in EFAL.

### 2.10.4   Consequences of communication apprehension for learners

Learners who are highly apprehensive avoid speaking in language classes (McCroskey, 1977a). Constructivists argue that learners need to construct their own knowledge by their own experience and teachers should create learning communities that are closest related to the collaborative practice of the real world (Tanvee, 2007).  The teaching approach should thus be learner-centred where they are active participants in the learning and teaching process.  Thinking and speaking are not the same (Tanvee, 2007).  Thinking is the process of selecting thoughts systematically before one expresses oneself.  The spoken word is the eventual expression of thoughts.  What a person utters is a reflection of his/her thoughts.  Learners on the receiver's side also benefit from hearing their classmates' explanations (Tanvee, 2007).  When learners listen to each other, they often benefit from hearing concepts being explained from different points and in ways that might be closer to their own way of thinking.

McCroskey and Daly (1976) assert that learners with high communication apprehension usually achieve lower in subjects in which they are expected to communicate, than learners with low communication apprehension.  Anxiety can be harmful to teaching and learning, because in an anxious state a learner cannot concentrate on cognitive learning tasks and effective learning usually follows from good concentration on a task and deep approach to learning (Woodrow, 2006).  As learners come from different backgrounds, one has to keep in mind that learners in urban areas are more likely to express themselves in English than those in the rural areas.  Tianjian (2010) argues that rural learners are more anxious than urban learners as the majority of rural people are not well educated.  He further argues that educated people have a much stronger approach to education.  The parents of the urban learners have the privilege of learning the English language at home.  Learners

in rural areas require more encouragement to get orally engaged. The language of instruction plays a critical role because through language one can assess what may be in the minds of the learners (Mantero, 2002). However, if learners do not understand the language, or the content, it could be possible that they will withdraw from the classroom communication.

To promote good classroom communication and positive behaviour from the learners' side, teachers need to keep in mind that learners want to be praised for their efforts. Madileng (2007) is of the opinion that extrinsic rewards like praise and other acknowledgements could motivate learners to master a second language. Tanvee (2007) explains that communication apprehension can play a large role in the development of communication skills in EFAL. He argues that unrealistic perceptions of beliefs about language learning and achievement could lead to frustration or anger towards learners with poor performance in EFAL. If teachers have a positive relationship with their learners, this positive relationship may lead to positive behaviour and regular attendance.

Cognitive signs that relate to communication apprehension include frustration, forgetting what you know, or what you were about to say, negative thoughts and negative self-talk (Nieme, 2009). The result usually is avoidance of feared situations. Learners who show high levels of communication apprehension tend to have low self-esteem. Such learners try to avoid exposing their unfavourable characteristics and will also avoid anything that may risk revealing their flaws. According to McCroskey et al. (1977) descriptions of individuals with low self-esteem and individuals with high communication apprehension does not seems the same. Learners with low-self-esteem may be anxious and have an inability to talk to unfamiliar people making it difficult for them to develop relationships, while learners with high communication apprehension who do not easily interact with others because of the fear that they will be negatively evaluated. Effective communication is vital to the learning process because learners need to understand what is expected from them in the learning and teaching process. If learners do not understand the content of the lesson, it may lead to communication apprehension, and to a diminished quality of life which can have serious consequences (Nieme, 2009). McCroskey et al. (1989) note that it is reasonable to speculate that communication apprehension is a causal agent in the learner persistence process and one can expect low grade averages and higher dropout rates among high communication apprehension learners compared to those with low communication apprehension. They also argue that communication apprehension leads to avoidance behaviour, cognitive deficits and performance failure.

Learning a language is a skill which should be mastered (Nieme, 2009). Languages have many variants which contribute to making the mastering of such languages complicated. The aim is to develop the skill which eventually leads to mastering. A positive learning environment should therefore be created in the EFAL classroom. A system which fits the needs and demands of a specific group of learners should therefore be created. The NCS (Department of Basic Education,

2011) requires a communicative approach where learning is about communication and EFAL as a global language is a dynamic channel to convey knowledge.

**2.10.5  Effect of communication apprehension on teaching and learning**

Communication apprehension in EFAL could strain the teaching and learning process, therefore teachers need to show that they understand the learners' circumstances and provide support to these learners.  Hindrances should be treated with great sympathy and the correct attitude.  Clear teaching may reduce receiver apprehension by making material easier to assimilate (Chesebro & McCroskey, 2001).  If learners are comfortable with the teacher, the content and the classroom setting, they will not experience a high level of communication apprehension while mastering the learning material.  If learners experience anxiety when listening to the teacher, they will not have a positive attitude towards the teacher and the learning experience.  Learners with a high level of communication apprehension prefer lecture type lessons where they do not have to interact with other learners. These learners prefer to keep their distance.

If a teacher experiences high levels of communication apprehension and avoids communication, it could have a negative effect on the communication of learners in his/her class, particularly learners who do not have appropriate role models at home (Drinkwater, 2002).  Learners look up to teachers for support, whether it is academic or emotional.  If learners feel they belong somewhere it can help to lower their communication apprehension.

When a learner's attitude is negative towards the teaching process, learning could become problematic and difficult for such a learner (Bandura, 1991).  It is the teacher's task to keep learners motivated and support them to overcome their fear of communicating in the classroom.  Teacher clarity represents the process by which a teacher is able to effectively stimulate the desired meaning of course content and processes in the minds of learners through the use of appropriately structured verbal and nonverbal messages (Chesebro & McCroskey, 2001).  Teachers, who speak fluently, stay on task and explain information effectively in order to effect an increased higher achievement in the subject.

The value of educational instruction lies in its ability to actively assist learners to learn faster, to comprehend and to apply the knowledge that they have gained accurately.  The best strategy of effective communication in educational instruction, is guaranteeing continual use of skills by the prospective learners in the production of prototype materials (Ogili, 2005).  A statistically significant negative correlation was indicated between communication apprehension and cognitive performance. McCroskey (1984) found that learners with high communication apprehension achieve lower in subjects where they are expected to communicate, than learners with low communication apprehension.  Research suggests that those debates that encourage different types of responses help learners to develop convincing arguments and allow the teacher and the learner to learn from

each other.  The teacher will also get a good idea of what kind of conceptual knowledge learners have about certain topics.  According to Krider and Schneider (2003), teachers' perceptions of communication apprehension are important because such perception influences behaviour towards learners and also strategies used in the classroom to come up with positive solutions and teaching strategies to help such learners to overcome their fear.

Zheng (2008) argues that the fear of learning EFAL is closely associated with attitudes and motivation.  It is very important that teachers emphasise that language learning entails making mistakes, and they must create a supportive environment for language learning to occur easily.  Rashidi et al. (2011) clarify that second language learners have a dual task: not only of learning the second language but also of performing in it.  Teaching learners to learn a second language can become problematic for the language teacher as learners are sometimes simply not interested in learning a second language.  It is essential for learners to know why they have to learn EFAL.  The affective side of learners is probably one of the very strongest factors in language learning success or failure (Rashidi et al., 2011).  These affective factors that deal with learners' emotional reactions will definitely have an effect on learning itself.  According to Dörnyei (1998), motivation is one of the key factors that influence the success of learning a second language.  If learners are not motivated to learn a second language, they will never be able to speak or use it in situations where they might be forced to do so.  According to Cohen (1994), a learner uses different language strategies to master a second language.  She also refers to affective strategies such as motivation and attitude, social interaction, and cognitive and communication strategies in order to enhance second language learning.  Richmond (1990) argues that it is probable that motivation and learning are mutually causal.  (Cohen, 1994) is of the opinion that those who are more motivated learn more, and those who learn more become more motivated.  The goal is to help second language learners to become more aware of the ways in which they learn most effectively, ways in which they can enhance their own comprehension and production of the target language, and ways in which they can continue learning after leaving the classroom (Cohen, 1994).  Sometimes teachers need to adjust their strategies in order for learners to understand the target language.

During teaching and learning of a second language, teachers often practise code switching.  Greese (2005) regards code-switching as a way to transfer knowledge to learners in an attempt to clarify the second language.  She argues that repeating instructions in the native language may lead to some undesired learner behaviour and learners may lose interest which may have negative academic consequences.

Language learning is a cognitive activity that relies on encoding, storage and retrieval processes (Tanvee, 2007).  When learning a second language one has to bear in mind that anxiety can interfere by creating a divided attention scenario for anxious learners.  In order for a learner to be able to learn English, he or she has to be competent and equipped with adequate teaching and communication skills (Allen, 2008).  One can only learn a second language if the basis of the first language is

established for the sake of translation and comprehension. This means that the teacher can also point out relationships and cognates between their home language, which is Afrikaans, and English as their second language. Teachers can use code-switching in order to transfer necessary knowledge for clarity using second language for efficient comprehension (Greese, 2005). It can be a way to find out how many words the learners know in English. The relevance and importance of learning a second language need to be explained. Learners need to master the second language successfully and the most important tool they will need is vocabulary. Fauuchette (2001) argues that it is not about knowledge of the meaning of words only, but rather "the how to use" the vocabulary in order to reach a communicative goal.

The fear for EFAL learning has mostly been associated with the oral language competency (Zheng, 2008). Some learners become very anxious when given verbal tasks. Anxiety and speech communication apprehension appears to have strong links with each other (Tanvee, 2007). The aforementioned author is of the opinion that in learning a second language, a speaker has to look for a suitable vocabulary, has to construct an appropriate syntactic structure and needs to use a comprehensible accent. Learners have different beliefs about learning a second language. For some learners it can become a burden because they believe that it is not important because it is not their mother tongue and they may have a negative attitude towards the second language. Learning a second language can be frustrating for some learners, especially when pronunciation is regarded as the most important aspect of language learning.

## 2.11 Teaching and learning in a second language in grades 7-9

### 2.11.1. Secondary phase leaners

In the South African context and for the purpose of this study secondary phase learners include all those learners from grade 7-9 of the General Education and Training (GET) Band which is the last phase of the General and Training Certificate (Department of Basic Education, 2012, p. 20). "Learners in this phase are normally between the ages 12 and 15 years, although in the South African context there are often older learners within the school system. They are in the developmental stage commonly known as adolescence" (Locke et al., 2002, p. 10). According to Erikson (1968) the adolescent (11–18 years) stage is characterized with a developmental crisis between identity and role confusion. According to Siyave (2010), adolescence is a time of great change for young people when physical changes are happening at an accelerated rate. The author asserts that adolescence is not just marked by physical changes but by cognitive, social/emotional and interpersonal changes as well.

### 2.11.1.1 The Psychosocial theory

The psychosocial theory of Erikson (1968) covers the entire lifespan and the psychosocial development stages are described and presented in Table 2.1. He clearly categorises the development of an individual into eight distinct stages. For the purpose of this study the fifth stage will be discussed as it relates to the learners in the secondary phase. It is significant to understand the development level of the secondary phase learners to get insight into possible explanations of their development of communication skills and experiences of communication apprehension in the classroom. Secondary phase learners (§2.11.1) are entering the adolescent phase of development. Erikson (1968) asserts that during each stage individuals are confronted with a crisis that requires the integration of personal needs and skills with social and cultural expectations.

**Table 2.1**            **Psycho social theory (Erikson, 1968)**

| Approximate age | Ego strength | Psychosocial crisis | Significant relationship | Examples |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0–2 years | Hopes | Basic Trust vs. Mistrust | Mother | Feeding, Abandonment |
| 2–4 years | Will | Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt | Parents | Toilet Training, Clothing Themselves |
| 4–5 years | Purpose | Initiative vs. Guilt | Family | Exploring, Using Tools or Making Art |
| 5–10 years | Competence | Industry vs. Inferiority | Neighbours, School | School, Sports |
| 11–18 years | Trustworthiness | Identity vs. Role Confusion | Peers, Role Model | Social Relationships |
| 19–39 years | Love | Intimacy vs. Isolation | Friends, Partners | Romantic Relationships |
| 40–64 years | Care | Generatively vs. Stagnation | Household, Workmates | Work, Parenthood |
| 65-death | Wisdom | Ego Integrity vs. Despair | Mankind, My Kind | Reflection on Life |

Erikson (1959, p. 224) explains that there is "no sharp distinction between the person and the social environment while guarding individuality, are far from being isolated, for a kind of communality links egos in mutual activation. Something in the ego processes, then, and something in social processes are – well, practically identical." Erikson stresses the social and cultural elements of development, and focuses predominantly on the ego and the development of ego strength. The ego in Erikson's theory is defined as the person's "capacity to unify his experiences and his actions in an adaptive manner" (Erikson, 1968, p. 16). Erikson (1968) explains that the ego strength makes coordinated and planned function possible. Each stage of the psychosocial model deals with a developmental crisis that arises from the genetic development of the learner and social influences. During the trustworthiness ego strength development phase the learners ask questions about who they are in the

eyes of other individuals and how the image individuals have about them, correlates with their self-image.  This forms the basis for the development of identity.  Identity defines the individual's image of the self and "includes the feeling that a thread of continuity runs through their lives, and that the self-image and the views others have of them are essentially in agreement" (Slobin, 1996, p. 75).  Horwitz (2001) explains that if they are not accepted by other individuals for who they think they are, they can become socially disconnected and feel rejected.  During this developmental stage the development of social skills, like competence to communicate and interact with other individuals, will be determined by successes and failures along the way of trying their social skills (Slobin, 1996).

During this process youth will experience both successes and failures along the way as they experiment with different approaches during their interactions with others (Dalkilic, 2001).  Every learner wants to be recognised and accepted by the teacher and peers.  The learner who experiences feelings of rejection because of poor social skills can develop a poor self-image and self-esteem.  Teachers need to be aware of these individual situations and assess to determine if this is related to communication and interaction problems (Ericson & Gardner, 1992).  By supporting the social development of the learners and encouraging them to believe in their own abilities, teachers are giving learners the tools they need to succeed academically (Horwitz et al., 1986).

### 2.11.2  English First Additional Language

EFAL "refers to a compulsory language subject that learners have to study" (Department of Basic Education, 2010, p. 3).  According to Thomas (2000, p. 8) EFAL refers to ":a language which is not the native language of the speaker but which is used for certain communication functions in the general society."  The curriculum provides strong support for those learners who will use their first additional language as a language of learning and teaching.  By the end of Grade 9, these learners should be able to use their home language and first additional language effectively and with confidence for a variety of purposes, including learning.  In addition educationally, it is a compulsory subject in all schools, and is the preferred medium of instruction in most schools and tertiary institutions (the only other medium of instruction at advanced levels at present being Afrikaans).  It is firmly embedded in the fabric of South African education and society (Chetty & Mwepu, 2008).

This means that they must reach a high level of competence in English. They need to be able to communicate well in English.  "Learners in the secondary phase are increasingly expected to be able to reason independently concerning concrete material and experience" (Tlabane, 2004, p. 10).  In a multilingual country like South Africa it is important that learners reach high levels of proficiency in at least two languages and that they are able to communicate in other languages.  Monyai (2010, p. 1) explains that in South Africa the secondary phase learners in EFAL "do not know English well enough to cope with the academic demands in their schooling.  Their English Language Proficiency (ELP) is limited."  The author are of the opinion that secondary phase learners rarely speak a few words of English with their friends "outside the classroom situation and rarely contribute in the classroom; their

English proficiency is not adequate for the purpose of formal learning and as a result they do not succeed academically" (Monyai, 2010, p. 2). She explains that in the EFAL classroom the learners must be motivated and encouraged to use the language orally.

### 2.11.2.1 Second language acquisition

It is difficult to envisage in second language acquisition what makes some individuals learn faster and better than others (Singleton & Lengyel, 1995). Some factors have been isolated as playing some part in this, for example, age is one such factor (§2.11.1.1). Language acquisition does not necessarily refer to the practice of language teaching but rather to what the learner does during language acquisition. Second language acquisition is primarily referred to as a subconscious process that happens while the individual focuses on communication activities (Ganai & Mir, 2013). They explain that second language learning describes how language education assists the learning of languages through a more conscious process. Consequences of language acquisition in the second language classroom include the notion that the teacher can create situations for specific communication activities which facilitate natural acquisition; therefore comprehensible input is very important (Wille, 2006). Monyai (2010) asserts that speaking a second language, especially English, represents one of the essential requirements of today's society. "English as second language should be a resource appropriated and owned by all, not only the elite, to be used as a gateway to the wider world. For this to happen, creative solutions and massive expenditure would have to be applied to teaching of English, particularly in schools where indigenous languages are the mother tongues of learners" (Chetty & Mwepu, 2008, p. 343). In order for learners to have enough oral proficiency in EFAL, oral communications skills have to be mastered. In the EFAL class teachers are expected to provide learners with adequate knowledge of English as their First Additional Language in order for learners to cope with the language. It is of great significance for the purpose of this study to understand second language acquisition as it influences the development of communication processes as experienced by the grades 7-9 learners. In the section that follows the theory of second language acquisition by Krashen (1981) will be discussed within this research context.

### 2.11.2.2 Krashen's theory of second language acquisition

Under ideal circumstances, it takes the average second language learner two years to acquire interpersonal communication skills in English as a second language, while it takes five to seven years under ideal conditions to develop academic English language proficiency to an adequate level of communication (Tlabane, 2004). According to Krashen (1981, p. 10) "real language acquisition develops slowly, and speaking communication skills emerge significantly later than listening communication skills, even when conditions are perfect." Krashen is of the opinion that "language acquisition does not require extensive use of grammatical rules and does not require monotonous drill" (p. 11). Furthermore the aforementioned author makes it clear that learning is less important

than acquisition. Nevertheless Chetty and Mwepu (2008, p. 60) explain that "a teacher can promote acquisition, by providing students with appropriate clear input."

**Table 2.2**                    **Krashen's theory of second language acquisition**

| Krashen's five hypotheses | |
|---|---|
| Acquisition/learning | 'adults have two distinctive ways of developing competences in second languages...acquisition, that is by using language for real communication...learning..."knowing about" language' (Krashen & Terrell, 1983) |
| Natural order hypothesis | 'we acquire the rules of language in a predictable order' (Krashen, 2002) |
| Monitor hypothesis | 'conscious learning...can only be used as a monitor or an editor'(Krashen, 2002) |
| Input hypothesis | Human in only one way – by understanding messages or by receiving " comprehensible input" (Krashen, 1985) |
| Affective filter hypothesis | 'a mental block, caused by affective factors...that prevents input from reaching the language acquisition device' (Krashen, 1982) |

Table 2.2 summarizes Krashen's theory of second language acquisition. The principles of second language acquisition as set out by Krashen (1982) provide a better understanding of the communication processes and achievement in EFAL.

The first hypothesis clearly shows that there are two ways to develop language ability (Krashen, 1985). The acquisition-learning hypothesis as provided by Krashen focuses on acquisition as the subconscious acceptance of linguistic knowledge through communication processes. He emphasises that learning, on the other hand, is the conscious acceptance of knowledge about a language. Learners need to be encouraged to use EFAL without concentrating on the errors they make while speaking. EFAL learners may be worried about the level of their language and this may prevent them from speaking the language. It is very important for learners to gain language proficiency in order to be communicatively competent in the EFAL classroom. This may lead learners with well-developed communication skills and more confidence to use the second language in real life situations.

The natural order hypothesis suggests that the acquisition of grammatical structures follow a natural order which is predictable (Krashen, 1982). Krashen points out that the order of acquisition of grammatical structures is dependent on the learners' age, levels of exposure and contextual conditions. The second language acquisition process begins by building a listening vocabulary, which then lends itself to the creation of verbal language (Krashen, 1985). In the EFAL classroom it is important that the teacher is aware that learners may not acquire certain practices of language since they are not ready. Therefore language structures should be taught in an order that is conducive to learning language, to provide learners with ample chances for acquisition, according to their individual natural order. In the EFAL classroom the teacher must first introduce language concepts that are relatively easy and understandable for learners. Therefore understanding the developmental stage of

the learners in the EFAL classroom may contribute to a better understanding of the readiness of the learners to acquire certain communication skills.

According to the monitor hypothesis as explained by Krashen (1982), acquisition and learning work as an acquisition system. Verbal communication is initiated and the learning system monitors the message to correct errors. He argues that the use of monitoring must be limited as it can act as a barrier to second language acquisition. Lack of self-confidence is frequently related to the over-use of monitoring. Furthermore monitoring can lead to nervousness and fear of verbal communication among the learners. The teacher in the EFAL classroom is confronted with the challenge to uphold communicative competence and keep a balance between over-use and under-use of monitoring. The balance between the level of language communication skills and the accuracy and fluency of the language use will affect the communication competence of the learner.

The input hypothesis highlights the importance of the usage of the EFAL in the classroom. It is an attempt by Krashen (1985) to explain how second language acquisition takes place, it is concerned with acquisition and not learning. Everson (2009) argues that acquisition is the result of natural interaction with the language via meaningful verbal communication. Krashen (1982) believes that language acquisition develops exclusively through comprehensible input. Thus a second language learner acquires language competence and confidence through exposure to an understandable language that is meaningful to him/her (Tricomi, 1986). Comprehensible input means that learners should be able to understand the essence of what is being said or presented to them (Krashen, 2013). This does not mean, however, that EFAL teachers must use only words learners understand. In fact, instruction can be incomprehensible even when learners know all of the words during presentations, explanations or the use of visual clues and re-wording (Tricomi, 1986). With EFAL as part of the curriculum the purpose is for learners to be able to communicate effectively. By providing ample comprehensible input opportunities the EFAL teacher creates chances for language acquisition to learners, even outside the classroom situation. The more learners are exposed to opportunities to speak freely, the more self-assured and confident they will be to verbally express themselves in EFAL. Sufficient comprehensible input can reduce the levels of communication apprehension experienced by learners in EFAL.

Finally, the affective filter hypothesis embodies Krashen's (1982) opinion that various affective variables play a role in second language acquisition. This affective filter does not impact acquisition directly but rather prevents input from reaching the language acquisition part of the brain. According to Krashen the affective filter can be prompted by many different variables including anxiety, low confidence, low motivation and debilitating anxiety, which in turn impede language acquisition. He furthermore claims that learners with high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, and a low level of anxiety are better equipped for second language acquisition and ultimately for good academic achievement. The affective side of learners is probably one of the strongest factors in language success or failure (Rashidi et al., 2011). In EFAL, it is important to create a welcoming, safe

environment in which the learners can verbally express themselves.  It is important that learners feel they are able to make errors and take verbal communication risks when communicating in their second language.

## 2.12    Communication apprehension and EFAL achievement in the secondary phase

The language during the former South African apartheid era was predominantly Afrikaans spoken mostly by white Afrikaners and the Cape Coloured communities.  "Less than 10% of South Africans are English first language speakers and the rest of the population are notably heterogeneous.  This diversity within the group of second language learners complicates the matter of using a second language even more" (Naudé, Engelbrecht, Harding, & Rogan, 2005, p. 2). In the environment under investigation, that is a rural one, English is not the native language of the leaners.  These learners are not able to express themselves spontaneously and with self-confidence in English owing to insufficient regular practice in English Second Language. Environmental circumstances and conditions may not always be conducive, but the English teacher is required to have a thorough knowledge of what he or she is dealing with.  According to Madileng (2007) learners in disadvantaged and rural communities have few or no real life encounters with, or experience in using, the English language, except for the limited practice which is provided by the English teacher in a conducive classroom environment.  Learners should be assured of the English teacher's full support and encouragement when conversing in EFAL in the classroom.

The NCS states that learners in the Senior Phase (grade 7-9) have to be taught or groomed to speak with ease and accuracy as this is the most valuable asset of their lives, both personal and professional (Department of Basic Education, 2011).  The EFAL curriculum for Grade 7-9 demands that teachers teach the basic techniques of giving a good speech, and this should include knowledge and communication strategies (Amogne & Yigzaw, 2013).  If teachers fail to do this, learners will not spontaneously speak up in second language classes.  There are many factors that determine academic success in EFAL but it is clear that communication apprehension is a crucial determinant. If a learner experiences fear or nervousness to communicate in EFAL it may lead to lower achievement. Jamshidnejad (2011) is of the opinion that these learners are faced with problems of self-expression and comprehension when they attempt to convey a message in an unsupportive second language context.  This may occur due to the lack of the language knowledge or due to fear of negative evaluation from the teacher's side.  Learner silence has long posed a problem for teachers in the English Second Language classroom, the class responds to the teacher with a nod, a smile or a blank expression without any answer (Lucas, 1984).  She writes that although learners want to speak, they hesitate or withdraw due to poor oral communication skills or communication apprehension.  In a recent study Mak (2011, p. 212) found that "being corrected by peers or teachers when speaking and using student mistakes to elaborate teaching points were anxiety provoking" among English Second Language speakers.  Being part of a second language [EFAL] classroom can be anxiety provoking as

"the process places linguistic, cognitive and psychological demands on the learner" when they speak. Therefore teachers are expected to ensure that learners are given time to prepare before being asked to speak in front of the teacher, or their peers.

Tianjian (2010, p. 95) points out that "learner differences in second language learning [achievement] cannot only be interpreted in terms of cognitive factors such as language aptitude" but factors such as apprehension can also affect academic achievement. He found that anxiety and nervousness are likely to distract the attention or occupy the cognitive resources which could otherwise be used for learning. Learners suffering from anxiety are likely to have lower efficiency of learning and consequently lower achievement (Tianjian, 2010). Second language and foreign language researchers and linguists have long been trying to associate anxiety with language learning in general as well as in the classroom situation. Awan, Azher, Anwar, and Naz (2010) agree that second language acquisition affects learners' attitudes and their achievement in language learning. Learners with high levels of anxiety may get discouraged when they experience negative evaluation and may lose faith in their own abilities. Anxiety has been found to interfere with many types of learning, and has been one of the most highly examined variables of psychology in education (Horwitz, 2001). Learners who get poor marks or do not reach the expected outcomes in the second language class may become anxious. Awan et al. (2010) found that EFAL learners who are highly communicative apprehensive are also worried about grammatical mistakes, pronunciation and being unable to respond quickly. It is obvious that when learners fear EFAL they may also become anxious when writing tests. Learners may experience fear of failing the tests and may want to avoid oral communication evaluation situations. Eslami and Hu (2010) argue that if language learners are unable to convey their message; they may feel uncomfortable using EFAL and thus develop language learning anxiety. Too much anxiety can lead to a debilitating effect which may lead to avoidance of work or insufficient achievement (Zheng, 2008). One can thus argue that the detrimental effects of communication apprehension can undermine an individual's academic achievement and successes in life.

Academic achievement can be defined as the specified level of attainment or proficiency in academic work as evaluated by the teacher (von Stumm, Hell, & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2011). Comadena and Prusank (1988, p. 275) argue that academic achievement refers to "knowledge attaining ability or degree of competence in school tasks usually measured by standardized tests and expressed in a grade or units based on pupils' performance" in the classroom. Different schools may offer learners with different learning experiences, and these, in turn, may contribute to differences in learners' academic achievement and competence (Akey, 2006). In addition Jones (2008) pronounces that effective teachers can predict learners' academic achievement when the teachers themselves provide the proper support and clear guidance towards the successfulness of the learners. Academic English proficiency is key to learners' English academic achievement, particularly at the secondary phase (Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, Kieffer, & Rivera, 2006). Madileng (2007) asserts that language achievement refers to the learners' score in a test or examination and it indicates to which extent skills

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and knowledge have been acquired by learners during the teaching and learning of that particular language.  Madileng (2007) regards language competence and performance as the ability to use appropriate grammatical structures to construct meaningful and comprehensive utterances depending on the demands of the situation.  Wille (2006, p. 10) adds that learners with "limited second language proficiency exhibit difficulties with academic achievement" and it is important to find ways to identify and monitor language skills of the learners with limited communication skills in English.  Allen (2008) concludes that for learners to attain achievement in a second language they should be exposed to various material and subject matter, such as literature, poetry, alternative reading techniques and oral communication.  The development of communication skills contribution towards leaners development of interpersonal relationships and the evaluation of mediated verbal messages. Learners learn to present themselves in effective and competent ways to others.

A balance of active and passive activities comprising listening and speaking should be in the teacher's planning (Allen, 2008).  The importance of learner to learner and teacher to learner communication cannot be underestimated.

## 2.13    Summary

The chapter provides the theoretical framework and identified the contextual gap that underpins this research study.  The first section of Chapter Two identified the contextual space in research on communication skills, communication apprehension and academic achievement.  In order to get a better understanding of communication and concepts relevant to this study, the researcher studied the literature.  It is concluded that human communication is a complex and multidimensional process and forms the basis of all communication experiences.  The researcher deliberated on different communication skills, communication apprehension, second language teaching and learning as well as academic achievement in a second language by means of a literature study and pertinent models and theories.  The research design and methodology will be dealt with in Chapter Three.

# Chapter Three

## Research design and methodology

### 3.1    Introduction

Chapter Two provided an overview of relevant literature on communication, communication skills, communication apprehension, and the influence these independent variables could have on learners' academic achievement in English as their second language, as well as on the inadequate communication skills and high communication apprehension levels in the classrooms.

Chapter Three describes the research design and methodology followed during this study to determine the relationship between the above-mentioned variables.  It also addresses the world view that this study relates to, the research context, the strategies followed, the study population, the variables, measuring instruments, data analysis, ethical aspects, data collection and procedures, as well as reliability and validity of the study.

### 3.2    The world view of this study

This study relates to the view of Burrell and Morgan (1979) who hold that knowledge is personal, subjective and unique.  Social research is about uncovering knowledge of social behaviour and tends to focus on the cause and effect of human behaviour.  Burrell and Morgan (1979) uphold that social research relates to four basic world views: the interpretivist, functionalist, structuralist and humanist paradigms (Figure 3.1).
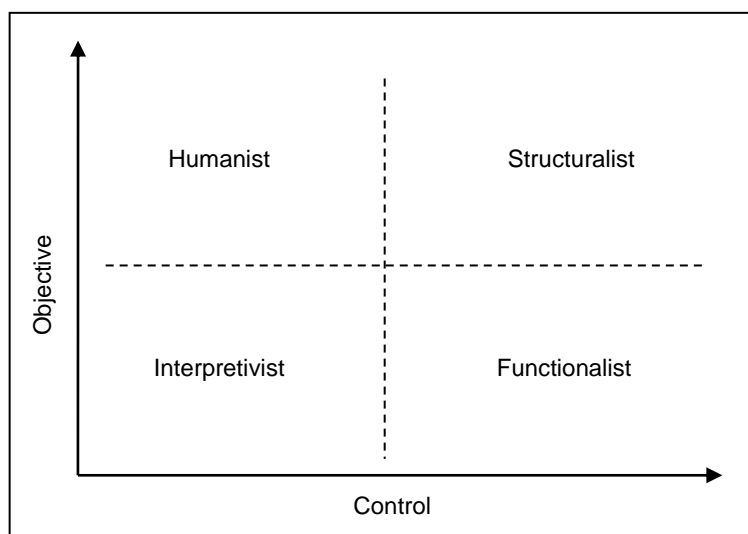


**Figure 3.1:  The four paradigms of social theory (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 22)**

The research questions that guide this study are:
- What is the relationship between communication skills and academic achievement of secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape in EFAL?
- What is the relationship between communication apprehension and academic achievement of secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape in EFAL?
- What is the relationship between communication skills and communication apprehension of secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape, in EFAL?

In this study, the relationship between communication skills, communication apprehension and academic achievement in English as a second language was investigated.  The study relates to human nature and in particular the relationship between human beings and their environment.  This research study aimed to investigate the relationship between communication skills, communication apprehension and the academic achievement in English as the second language in the classroom and therefore relates to Burrell and Morgan (1979) *structuralist* paradigm of understanding social structures.  The researcher therefor ground her stance from the classical work of Burrell and Morgan (1979) to establish the theoretical foundation for the study.  The structuralist view is rooted in a materialist view of the natural and social world that advocates *sociology of radical change* from an *objectivist* standpoint.  Theorists from the structuralist paradigm adopt an approach which emphasises change, built into the very nature and structure of existing society, and they search for explanations of the interrelationships within the context of total social formulation (Burrell & Morgan, 1979).

The structuralist paradigm explores the social reality according to the philosophical ideas of the French philosopher August Comte, who emphasizes observation and reason as means of understanding human behaviour (Dash, 2005).  The basic beliefs of positivism lead them to believe the world is external and objective, and science is value free (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).  The structuralist paradigm is based on the assumption that social reality has an objective ontological structure and individuals respond to this objective environment.  Structuralists also believe that scientific aspects provide a valuable base of knowledge that rely on the assumption of determinism (Cohen et al., 2007).  This indicates that there are causes for events which are also determined by other circumstances.  A principle of structuralism is to aim to explain things that have occurred, as well as to predict things.  The structuralist believes in quantification by using appropriate techniques to provide appropriate answers.  There is thus an objective truth out there that can be measured and scientifically explained.  Scientific knowledge is testable and evidence can only be proved by empirical means, and not by argumentations or through deductive logic and statements that cannot be tested.

Structuralists prove their research by using logic of confirmation and seek to deduce cause and effect relationships to predict patterns of behaviour.  According to structuralists, the goal of knowledge is simply to describe the phenomena, and science is seen as the way to get to the truth (Krauss, 2005).

The ontological assumptions of quantitative research methodologies are post-positivist which summarize as critical realism (Creswell, 2003).

Cohen et al. (2007) regard ontology as the nature of social reality. They argue that the realist regards the social world as tangible, hard, made up of relatively immutable structures that exist independently of our individual descriptions. Thus one can argue that the social life is real and external to the individual.

In this study, the social behaviour of learners towards communication skills, communication apprehension and academic achievement in English as a second language was investigated and relates to human nature and in particular, the relationship between human beings and their environment. This study aimed to investigate the relationship between communication skills, communication apprehension and the achievement in English as the second language in the classroom, and therefore relates to the positivist paradigm of understanding of social structures.

## 3.3    Research design and methodology

A research design is used to determine how to conduct the research and the methods used (Cohen et al., 2007). A research design is the strategy, the plan and the structure of conducting a research problem (Carriger, 2000). The researcher is concerned with where and how the data will be collected and how the data will be analysed. The research design ensures that the evidence the researcher has obtained during the research process enables him or her to answer the research question as clear as possible. The research design will uncover the relationship between communication skills, communication apprehension and the academic achievement in English as the second language in the language class.

The research design of this study relates to a non-experimental quantitative approach. A non-experimental design refers to many possible factors that may influence a particular condition or phenomenon and do not involve any manipulation of the situation or experience of the participant (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), quantitative methodologies are rooted in the belief that the physical and social worlds exist independent of our appreciation of them (realist ontology), and the understanding of that world is found in search for causal relationships and universal laws (positivist epistemology). The methodology uncovers the process how both the physical and human events occur in life. In this research study the human events refer to communication, interacting with other classmates and being physically involved in the communication process in the classroom and school environment.

According to Golafshani (2003), the researcher will be able to familiarise himself or herself with the problem or concept which will be tested during a quantitative research study. Quantitative research is

about quantifying relationships between variables by using effect statistics such as correlations, relatives, frequencies, or differences between means (Hopkins, 2000). Quantitative research involves counting and measuring of events and performing the statistical analysis of a body of numerical data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). From a quantitative research approach more objective conclusions can be made, causality issues can be determined, and subjectivity of judgment will be minimised or eliminated.

### 3.3.1 Research context

The research took place in the Kannaland District which is situated in the South Western District of the Western Cape. It is situated 300 kilometres east from Cape Town on Route 62. Calitzdorp is forty kilometres from Ladismith while the bigger town, Oudtshoorn is hundred kilometres from Ladismith. Geographically the region forms part of the Little Karoo (Figure 3.2 and Figure 3.3). Van Wyksdorp and Zoar form part of the Ladismith area.

The region consists mainly of rural areas. Like most other rural parts of the country unemployment is on an unfavourable level. Seasonal work is the main source of income. This is mainly the results of job losses, retrenchments or school drop-outs. The area also suffers from backyard dwelling and overcrowding in many households (Statistics South Africa, 2012).



**Figure 3.2: Map indicating the geographical location of Ladismith in the Western Cape**

**Figure 3.3: Map indicating the towns of data collection in the Klein Karoo**

It is important to understand and consider the unique South African setting within which the data analysis took place. Subsequently a comprehensive discussion of the setting in the Kannaland District is presented. In the Kannaland municipality 98.0% of residents speak Afrikaans at home, 1.3% speak English, and, 0.4% speak Xhosa; 97.1% of residents are Christian, 1.2% have no religion. One point five per cent (1.5%) have other or undetermined beliefs (Statistics South Africa, 2012). Of the residents aged twenty and older, 11.9% received no schooling; 31.4% had some primary school education, 11.7% completed only primary school, 27.4% have some high-school education, 12.1% finished only high school, and 5.5% has education higher than the high school level. Overall, 17.6% of residents completed high school (Statistics South Africa, 2012).

In the Kannaland district, 38.7% of housing units have a telephone and/or cell-phone in the dwelling, 51.6% have access to a phone nearby, and 9.7% have access that is not nearby or no access. A total of 65.0% of households have flush or chemical toilets. Further on, 4.5% have no rubbish disposal or removal; 67.2% have running water inside their dwelling, 84.6% have running water on their property, and 93.9% have access to running water. In this municipal district, 62.1% of households use electricity for cooking, 49.7% use electricity for heating, and 81.3% for lighting. Seventy three per cent (73.5%) of households have a radio, 58.2% have a television, 7.5% own a computer, 54.9% have a refrigerator, and 19.4% have a cell-phone (Statistics South Africa, 2012).

The unemployment rate between the ages of 15-65 is 6.9% of the population. Of the unemployed, 1.6% is Black African, 93.3% are Coloured, 0.0% are Indian/Asian, and 5.1% are White. The percentage for Black Africans who are unemployed is 4,4%, 7.7% are Coloureds and 2.7% are Whites (Statistics South Africa, 2012).

Thus Kannaland District in the Western Cape (Figure 3.2 and Figure 3.3) is an overall Afrikaans speaking community in the Klein Karoo where English is seldom spoken or heard. This situation

interested me because learners come from homes where they may only hear English on the television and when they come to English classes. Individuals in this environment are usually afraid to speak English. Because of insufficient confidence, learners have a low proficiency in English. Some learners feel inferior when they are forced to speak English.

### 3.3.2 Research strategies

The research strategy is a quantitative approach which is based on some form of logical positivism which assumes there are stable, social facts with a single reality separated from the feelings and beliefs of individuals (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This quantitative research approach tends to establish relationships between measured variables and explains the causes of changes in measured social facts. In this study the measured variables are communication skills, communication apprehension and the achievement in English.

### 3.3.3 Study population and sampling

Neill (2003) explains sampling as the process of selecting individuals or units from a larger population. A sample is representative when it allows the results of the sample to be generalized to the population. The study population is secondary phase male and female learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape. The sample comprises of secondary phase learners from seven schools in Kannaland District, Western Cape. The participants participated voluntarily in the study. These learners were selected with a specific purpose in mind. A purposive sample was used to increase utility of information obtained from small samples (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) also argue that it requires that information be obtained about variations among the sub-units before the sample is chosen. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), purposive sampling is a process where individuals or units are chosen for a particular purpose in mind. In purposive sampling, the researcher selects particular elements from the population (in this research it was the senior phase male and female learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape) to determine their communication skills and the influence of communication apprehension on their academic achievement in English as First Additional Language. In this purposive sampling the learners were selected to participate in the investigation to seek for possible causes of inadequate communication skills, and also for the causes leading to high levels of communication apprehension in the English language classes. The participants voluntarily took part in this study. The random selection of the sample enabled the researcher to confidently generalize from a small sample of a large population.

### 3.3.4 Variables

A variable according to Leedy and Ormrod (2005) is any quality or characteristic in a research investigation that has two or more possible values. They are of the opinion that in research in social science and education the dependent variable is usually some human behaviour. The cause and

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effect relationship was investigated.  According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005) a variable is referred to as a possible cause of something.  The authors also refer to a variable which the researcher manipulates directly as the independent variable.  In this research study the following independent variables were used: communication skills (eleven sub-scales), oral communication apprehension (thirteen sub-scales), Gender, Grades in Phase (three).  The aforementioned authors are of the opinion that the dependent variable is potentially influenced by the independent variable, and to some extent depend on the independent variable.  The dependent variable is the academic achievement(s) in English.

### 3.3.5    Measuring instruments

In quantitative research the researcher needs to construct an instrument to measure what it is supposed to measure.  In this study three measuring instruments will be used which will help to determine the degree of communication apprehension experienced by the secondary phase learners in eight schools in Kannaland District, Western Cape.  The measuring instruments are (i) Communication Skills Scale; (ii) Personal Report on Communication Apprehension; and (iii) the English First Additional Language marks of the first and second term of the participants.

### 3.3.5.1 Communication Skills Scale

A 21-item custom-developed questionnaire adapted from Vreken (1996), and Kok (2003) was used in this study(§1.6.6.1).  The Communication Skills Scale was scored into five scales: listening, formulation and communication of a message, interpersonal communication, group communication and public speaking.  In completing the Communication Skills Scale, the participants indicated their agreement to each of the statements using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (agree), 3 (undecided), 4 (agree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Hopkins (2000) argues that validity represents how well a variable measures what it is supposed to measure.  The construct validity of the questionnaire was determined by means of a principal component factor analysis.  The reliability indicates how producible your measuring instruments are on a retest, so it impacts experimental studies.  The more reliable a measure, the fewer subjects you need to see a small change in the measure.  The reliability was determined by calculating the Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Nunnally, 1978).

### 3.3.5.2 Personal Report on Communication Apprehension (PRCA)

McCroskey et al. (1989) developed a thirty-item internationally-recognised questionnaire which Vreken (1998) adapted for South African circumstances (§1.6.6.2).  Malimabe (1997) used the adapted questionnaire in his studies, and this questionnaire was also used in this study.  Completing the PRCA, the participants were requested to indicate their agreement to each of the statement using

a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The personal report contains five sub-scales; (1) group discussions, (2) meetings, (3) conversations, (4) public speaking and (5) classroom speaking.

The construct validity of the questionnaire was determined by means of a principal component factor analysis. The reliability was determined by calculation the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, (Nunnally, 1978).

### 3.3.5.3 English marks

The participants' EFAL marks in the first and second term (§1.6.6.3) were looked at as one of the measuring instruments to determine the relationship between communication skills, communication apprehension and academic achievement in EFAL.

### 3.4       Data analysis

Quantitative data analysis refers to the process of simplifying collected data in order to make the data more comprehensible (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008). Leedy and Ormrod (2005) hold that we make better sense of the world by using numbers as part of quantitative research. In this research study, statistics was used to represent academic achievement, the strength of personal preferences and beliefs. Statistics were used to summarise and interpret numbers. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) hold that we make better sense of the world by using numbers as part of quantitative research.

The raw data were captured in an Excel™ worksheet. The data analyses transpired as descriptive techniques, specifically frequency tables, factor analysis, reliability of identified subscales and Pearson correlations between these subscales. The statistical analysis of the questionnaires was conducted by Statistical Consultation Services of the NWU.

Statistical Consultation Services of the North-West University processed the data for the current study. A computer-aided statistical analysis was employed. The results of the research were processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (SPSS Inc., 2009). Frequency distributions, including means and standard deviation of the Likert scale on the biographical section of the questionnaire were determined. Factor analyses of the various sections on the questionnaires were determined, and to determine the reliability of the sections of the questionnaire Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Nunnally, 1978).

The initial step in the analysis was to compute the descriptive data for each sample group of the target population. Descriptive statistics are the summaries of large sets of data in an attempt to

organise, describe, and give meaning to the numerical information (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Descriptive statistics are used to describe the group under investigation, thus the results cannot be generalised to any larger group (Borg & Gall, 1983). For this study individual response and averages of the different categories were calculated. Frequency distribution, central tendency (means) and variability (standard deviation) are used to explore the biographical information of the various groups.

Secondly, inferential statistics were employed to make reasonable predictions about the responses of the sample (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008). Inferential statistics are concerned with the precision and reliability of the inferences it draws. Factor analysis is typically adopted to examine the correlations among questionnaire items to discover groups of related items (Nunnally, 1978).

The factor analysis was conducted on the dataset to identify the underlying dimensions (factors) in the questionnaires. The variables used in the communication apprehension questionnaire are categorical of nature and therefore the responses were categorical. Pearson's correlation coefficients were used to identify the relationships between the different variables (Field, 2003). Since a relationship is expected but it is not directional, a two-tail test was used (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008). A cut-off point for practical significance (r>3, medium effect) is set for the correlation coefficients (Cohen, 1988). Lastly, t-tests for independent means were used to examine whether there is a difference between the genders for communication skills as well as for experiences of communication apprehension (Nunnally, 1978).

## 3.5     Data collection and procedure

This study involved the collection of data from secondary phase Afrikaans speaking learners with Afrikaans as their home language and English as their First Additional Language in an overall Afrikaans speaking district. Firstly the research determined the relationship between communication skills and academic achievement of secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape in English. Secondly the relationship was determined between communication apprehension and academic achievement of secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape in English. Lastly the relationship was determined between communication skills and communication apprehension of secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape in English.

The researcher collected the data at seven different schools in Kannaland District in the Western Cape. Pen-paper batteries of questionnaires were completed through structured questions (Annexure 3.1 & Annexure 3.2). All eight schools in Kannaland District in the Western Cape were selected according to their distance from the researcher's base. The four schools that were the furthest away, the schools in the Calitzdorp area, were visited first: three primary schools and one high school. The remaining four local schools, one primary, two high schools and a private school were visited last.

When the researcher collected the questionnaires, one of the schools chose not to take part in the investigation, and the study therefore only comprises seven schools (Table 3.1).

**Table 3.1:** Demographical information of the research respondents

| Type of school | Distance to school | Female respondents | Male respondents | Number of respondents |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Calitzdorp** | | | | |
| Calitzdorp High School | 45 km | 21 | 10 | 31 |
| Gamka-East Primary school (Rural) | 50 km | 22 | 22 | 44 |
| Excelsior Primary school | 40 km | 58 | 47 | 165 |
| **Zoar** | | | | |
| Zoar R.P.Botha Senior Phase School (Rural) | 25 km | 88 | 89 | 177 |
| **Ladismith** | | | | |
| Ladismith Secondary School | 5 km | 35 | 23 | 58 |
| Ladismith High School | 3 km | 25 | 21 | 46 |
| Shalom Academy | 2 km | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| Towerkop Primary School | 2 km | 167 | 122 | 456 |

Table 3.1 indicates the total of 983 participants that took part in the research study. Unfortunately eventually only seven schools took part in this research process. In the end 779 questionnaires were returned.

This study provided information about communication skills that can be developed to improve the learners with underdeveloped communication skills and high communication apprehension to enhance their performance in academic work and increase their motivation. Referring to a study amongst secondary school Sesotho-speaking learners in Qwaqwa, Malimabe (1997) suggests that communication apprehension differs according to the contexts, classroom contexts, different schools and grades, and that the causes of communication apprehension differ according to grades, schools and even amongst genders. Insight generated by the current study will help to enhance the understanding of different factors that affect the degree of communication apprehension in Kannaland District, Western Cape. In addition it can allow for a better understanding of the influence of good oral communication, and could help the teachers to understand more about the learners' fear or distress to communicate. It may assist teachers to understand how problematic communication apprehension for learners can be in the classroom environment.

## 3.6 Ethical aspects

Ethical aspects refer to the ethical procedure or perspective when analysing complex problem issues (Resnik, 2011). According to this author, ethical norms serve the aims or goals for research and apply to individuals who conduct scientific research or other scholarly or creative activities. Ethical norms can be used as a basis to promote the aims of research such as knowledge, truth, and avoidance of error. It is very important to adhere to ethical aspects as these can promote the values that are essential to collaborative work, such as trust, accountability, mutual respect and fairness (Resnik, 2011).

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A researcher should take all ethical aspects into consideration. When working with human respondents, the researcher must bear in mind that the rights of research respondents should be protected. The researcher adhere to informed consent, right to privacy, and honesty with professional colleagues as ethical aspects (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The researcher should not deceive the public with inaccurate or false data. Thus in reporting the findings of study, honesty is very important and the researcher should not mislead others about the nature of the findings. The researcher's integrity is very important as he or she should keep to promises and agreements with participants (Resnik, 2011).

Respondents should not be forced to take part in the study but should take part voluntarily. The researcher should inform the respondents of the nature of the research study and how it will be conducted, as well as of the activities involved in the study. Respondents may also terminate their participation at any stage of the research due to the fact that their participation is voluntary. It is important for the researcher to inform the participants that their participation in the study will be strictly confidential and anonymous (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Every respondent has the right to privacy which has to be respected by the researcher. The nature or quality of respondents' performance or behaviour should be kept strictly confidential. The researcher should assure the participant that the identifying information will not made available to anyone who is not directly involved in the study (Resnik, 2011). The NWU ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the North-West University (Annexure 1.1). In addition the researcher obtained permission for the research from the following relevant stakeholders:

- Western Cape Education Department (Annexure 3.3)
- School principals (Annexure 3.4)
- Parents of the learners (Annexure 3.5).

Letters of permission went out to the above authorities before the study could take place. After the researcher had received permission from the Western Cape Education Department, an appointment was made with the principal of each of the schools that took part in this study. The researcher drew up a schedule for the visits to the schools, and visited the distant schools first. The researcher started at Gamka-East, Calitzdorp, Zoar and ended at the biggest and local area, Ladismith.

During the researcher's visits to the principals she first explained to them what the research study was all about. They all showed interest in the study and agreed to grant permission to the researcher to do her study at their schools. As soon as the researcher got permission from the principals she asked them if she could make an appointment with the learners to explain the purpose of the study as well as their participation in this study. Some of the principals advised the researcher to do this while she was there at the school in order to save time and money. Others said they would get back to the

researcher.  The learners were informed by the researcher about the aim of the research study and she asked them to explain the aim an nature of the research project to their parents (Creese, 2005).

The researcher also informed the learners about the confidentially of the data.  All the learners were assured that the data would be kept confidential and would be used solely for the purpose of this research project (Resnik, 2011).  The right to terminate their participation in this study at any time was also communicated with them.  The researcher gave them the consent letters for both themselves and their parents.  Every consent letter of both learner and parent had a unique number which was the same on both letters.  The researcher gave the participants sufficient time to decide on their participation in this study.  A due date for the letters to be handed in was also given by the researcher and the participants were reminded that the letters should be fully completed and signed by both their parents and themselves.  At each school the researcher had a teacher who helped her with the process of collecting the consent letters.

## 3.7     Value of the research

The value of this research is to inform teachers about the level of communication skills and communication apprehension of secondary phase learners in the EFAL classroom.  The research will be of assistance to teachers because it provides findings about factors that contribute to the communication apprehension of learners when they interact in the classroom, participate in group work, conversation and meetings with peers and others, as well as when they do speeches in EFAL. It is imperative that teachers know of the implications of communication apprehension on the academic achievement of EFAL learners.

## 3.8     Summary

This chapter unpacked the research design and methodology used during this study.  The nature and methodology of the research design were indicated; it was done within the framework of the structuralist paradigm.  The quantitative data collection method and specifically the survey were discussed and reasons were given for choosing this research approach.  It was followed by a discussion on the research context, population and the variables.  This chapter also includes a discussion of the data collection instruments and the techniques used during statistical analysis of the research.  Ethical aspects regarding this study were discussed. The chapter concluded with a look into the value and limitations of this study.

While this chapter covered the methodology of the research, Chapter Five will discuss the statistical information that emerged from the data collection instruments.  Next, the data will be presented by means of description of the biographical information, factor analysis and reliability of the

questionnaires, correlations and comparisons of communication skills and communication apprehension with academic achievement.

# Chapter Four

## Research findings and discussion of findings

### 4.1    Introduction

With this study the researcher aims to determine the relationship between communication skills, communication apprehension and academic achievement of secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape in EFAL.  In the preceding chapter the methodological approach followed to obtain the data, the motivation for this research, the research design and the instruments to collect the data needed were explained.  The intention with Chapter Four is to attach proper meaning and interpretation to the collected data through data analysis.  Responses of the learners to the biographical section of the questionnaires were first dealt with.  Thereafter the responses to the communication skills questionnaire and the oral communication apprehension questionnaires were analysed.  Finally correlations between academic achievement of the learners, communication skills and communication apprehension were drawn and discussed.

### 4.2    Descriptive statistics and frequency analysis

In this section descriptive statistics were used to describe the initial analysis of the data set to provide statistics that were useful for describing the different types of variables by simplifying the large numbers in a meaningful way (Cramer & Howitt, 2006).  Data from the questionnaires were analysed by the Statistical Consultation Services of the North-West University.  The Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS) statistical software (SPSS Inc., 2009) was used to calculate the descriptive (means and standard deviation) and percentage-frequencies of all the items as it appeared on the questionnaires.

The general characteristics of the communication skills and communication apprehension frequency distribution were presented in table form assessed by mean scores while the spread of the distribution for scores were given as standard deviation (Nisbet, Elder, & Miner, 2009).  According to Cramer and Howitt (2006), one of the most common ways to describe a single variable is with a frequency distribution; therefore frequency analysis was applied to the data set to group the values into categories e.g. gender, language, grade, achievement and age of the participants.  The biographical variables were presented in table form as a percentage of the total of the frequencies for the variable and cumulative frequencies to get a clear idea of the results.

### 4.2.1 Descriptive statistics and frequency analysis of biographical variables

A profile of the grades 7-9 learners was compiled through the analysis of the biographical information collected during a survey amongst the secondary phase learners who communicate using EFAL in Kannaland District, Western Cape. Friedman, Furberg, and De Mets (2010) explain that "the study population should be defined in advance, stating unambiguous inclusion (eligibility) criteria, the impact that these criteria would have on the study design ability to generalize and participant recruitment must be considered". To investigate the relationship between communication skills, communication apprehension and academic achievement, the study population represented both male and female secondary phase learners in the Kannaland District, Western Cape. These learners were selected because they all had EFAL as compulsory learning area. The target population refers to the group of individuals the researcher is interested in to determine answers to the research questions (Cramer & Howitt, 2006). The target population for this study comprised eight secondary schools in the Kannaland District with a secondary phase component (§3.3.1). A total of 983 questionnaires were distributed to the schools in the target population. Unfortunately only seven schools took part in this research study, although all schools agreed to participate. Participation was voluntary and 779 questionnaires were returned. The learners who returned questionnaires formed the study population in this research. Since the study population was not randomly drawn from the target population, all conclusions in this study only apply to the study population (Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1        Biographical information**

| A1 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Participating schools** | **Questionnaires returned** | **%** | **Valid %** | **Cumulative %** |
| 1 | 285 | 36.6% | 36.6% | 36.6% |
| 2 | 47 | 6.0% | 6.0% | 42.6% |
| 3 | 69 | 8.9% | 8.9% | 51.5% |
| 4 | 61 | 7.8% | 7.8% | 59.3% |
| 5 | 103 | 7.9% | 13.2% | 72.5% |
| 6 | 182 | 13.2% | 23.4% | 95.9% |
| 7 | 32 | 4.1% | 4.1% | 100% |
| **A2** | | | | |
| **Gender of learners** | **Number of learners** | **%** | **Valid %** | **Cumulative %** |
| Male | 343 | 44.0 % | 44.1% | 44.1% |
| Female | 435 | 55.8% | 55.9% | 100% |
| Missing | 1 | 0.1% | | |
| **A3** | | | | |
| **Home language of learners** | **Number of learners** | **%** | **Valid %** | **Cumulative %** |
| Afrikaans | 765 | 98.0% | 98.2% | 98.2% |
| English | 14 | 1.8% | 1.8% | 100% |
| Missing | 0 | 0 | | |
| **A4** | | | | |
| **Grade of learners** | **Number of learners** | **Total %** | **Valid %** | **Cumulative %** |
| 7 | 279 | 35.8% | 36.0% | 36.0% |
| 8 | 269 | 33.6% | 32.8% | 74.3% |
| 9 | 199 | 25.5% | 25.7% | 100% |
| Missing | 18 | 2.3% | | |

| A5 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Previous achievement of learners in EFAL** | **Number of Learners** | **Total %** | **Valid %** | **Cumulative %** |
| 0-30% | 84 | 10.8% | 10.9% | 10.9% |
| 31-40% | 144 | 18.5% | 18.7% | 29.6% |
| 41-60% | 284 | 36.5% | 36.9% | 66.6% |
| 61-80% | 218 | 28.0% | 28.3% | 94.9% |
| 80+% | 39 | 5.0% | 5.1% | 100% |
| Missing | 10 | 1.3% | | |
| **A6** | | | | |
| **Age of learners** | **Number of Learners** | **Total percentage** | **Valid percentage** | **Cumulative percentage** |
| 11 years and younger | 12 | 1.5% | 1.5% | 1.5% |
| 12 years | 65 | 8.3% | 8.4% | 9.9% |
| 13 years | 181 | 23.2% | 23.3% | 33.2% |
| 14 years | 242 | 31.1% | 31.1% | 64.3% |
| 15 years | 191 | 24.5% | 24.6% | 88.8% |
| 16 years | 66 | 8.5% | 8.5% | 97.3% |
| 17 years | 21 | 2.7% | 2.7% | 100% |
| Missing | 1 | 0.1% | | |

A short description of biographical information will be discussed to provide a profile of the grades 7-9 secondary phase participants (Table 4.1).

### 4.2.1.1  Participating schools

Seven schools in the Kannaland District in the Western Cape participated in this research.  School 1 returned the most questionnaires which was 285 and comprised 36.6% of the received questionnaires.  School 7 returned only 32 questionnaires which was 4.1% of the received questionnaires.

### 4.2.1.2  Gender of participants

From the seven schools in the Kannaland District in the Western Cape, 343 boys participated in this research.  This is 44.0% of the study population.  There were 435 girls which took part in the research which is 58.8% of the study population.  There was one respondent who did not indicate his or her gender, which is 0.1% of the study population.  From the table above it is clear that there were more female learners (14.8%) in the study population than males.

### 4.2.1.3  Use of home language

In the study population for this research, 765 of the 983 of the participants indicated that they use Afrikaans as home language.  This is 98% of the study population.  All the participants take EFAL as a subject.  From the table above it is clear that the majority of learners in the study population used Afrikaans as home language.

**4.2.1.4 Learners in different grades**

In the seven schools in the Kannaland District in the Western Cape 279 grade 7, 269 grade 8, and 199 grade 9 learners participated in this research study. The percentage of learners that participated was 35.8% in grade 7, 33.6% in grade 8 and 25.5% in grade 9. Eighteen respondents did not indicate his or her grade, which was 2.3% of the study population. From the table above it is clear that the majority of participants were in grade 7 (n=279) and in grade 8 (n=269).

**4.2.1.5 Previous achievement in English**

From the study population, 36.5% achieved between 41-60% in EFAL. The percentage of learners in the study population that achieved below 40% in EFAL was 29.3%. Those that achieved between 60-80% were 28%. In the study population 5% achieved above 80%. There were ten respondents who did not indicate his or her marks, which is 1.3% of the study population.

**4.2.1.6 Age**

The biographical information of the seven participating schools indicated that the majority of the learners were fourteen years of age. From Table 4.1 it could be concluded that 1,5% of the learners were younger than the requisite age of twelve years for grade 7 and 11.2% were older than the fifteen years.

The information gathered with the Communication Skills Scale is conferred in the section 4.2.2 below. Descriptive statistics and frequency analysis of the questionnaire are offered.

**4.2.2. Descriptive statistics and frequency analysis of Communication Skills Scale**

To identify possible problematic items, descriptive statistics of individual items were examined. Frequencies, mean scores, standard deviations and missing values were investigated for all items in the Communication Skills Scale. In Table 4.2, frequencies, mean scores (*M*) and their standard deviations (SD) of each item are shown. Because no items were found with extreme scores (highest number of missing values were 58; mean values ranged between 0.80 and 2.49), it was concluded that the set of items were suitable for further analysis.

**Table 4.2          Communication skills information**

| | Question | Percentage | | | | Missing | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Never (0) | Seldom (1) | Sometimes (2) | Always (3) | | | |
| B1 | I nod my head while the teacher explains work in the class | 14.5 | 7.5 | 64.3 | 13.8 | 18 | 1.77 | 0.861 |
| B2 | I listen to the teacher when work is explained on the blackboard | 1.3 | 4 | 29.3 | 65.4 | 5 | 2.59 | 0.633 |
| B3 | I look at the teacher when work is explained in the class | 1.2 | 4.3 | 43.6 | 51 | 8 | 2.4 | 0.635 |
| B4 | I answer the teacher Immediately when I am asked a question | 7.8 | 13.3 | 61.8 | 17.7 | 9 | 1.88 | 0.776 |
| B5 | I sit close to the teacher to hear the teacher | 17.6 | 12.4 | 36.8 | 33.2 | 9 | 1.85 | 1.068 |
| B6 | I complete cross-word puzzles | 22.5 | 13.9 | 34.5 | 29.1 | 7 | 1.70 | 1.116 |
| B7 | I compete in quizzes | 41.6 | 18.1 | 28.3 | 12.1 | 50 | 1.11 | 1.082 |
| B8 | I explain work to my friends | 8 | 11,6 | 52.2 | 28.2 | 53 | 2.01 | 0.848 |
| B9 | I have conversations with individuals in English | 4.9 | 5.4 | 25.5 | 64.2 | 45 | 2.49 | 0.809 |
| B10 | I discuss new topics related to English with my teacher | 34.7 | 20.8 | 36.6 | 7.8 | 39 | 1.18 | 0.999 |
| B11 | I speak to my classmates about work completed in class | 6.9 | 10.8 | 49.5 | 32.8 | 38 | 2.08 | 0.84 |
| B12 | I discuss employment opportunities with my friends outside class | 14.8 | 14.9 | 43.4 | 27 | 34 | 1.83 | 0.99 |
| B13 | I discuss personal issues with my teacher | 56.5 | 12.3 | 18.4 | 12.8 | 39 | 0.88 | 1.117 |
| B14 | I take part in discussions during group work | 6.1 | 8.1 | 33.9 | 51.9 | 41 | 2.32 | 0.863 |
| B15 | I am the only person talking during group work | 32.1 | 20.5 | 38.8 | 8.6 | 37 | 1.24 | 0.999 |
| B16 | I ask the others in the group questions | 11.1 | 14.7 | 48.8 | 25.4 | 58 | 1.88 | 0.912 |
| B17 | I explain work to my fellow group members | 12.3 | 16.4 | 47.2 | 2.3 | 38 | 1.84 | 0.993 |
| B18 | I take part in debates at school | 31.3 | 17.8 | 35.3 | 15.6 | 48 | 1.35 | 1.081 |
| B19 | I discuss the news read in newspapers with individuals | 24 | 17.3 | 36,8 | 21.9 | 40 | 1.57 | 1.079 |
| B20 | I read out loud in front of the class | 23,9 | 13.2 | 37.7 | 25,2 | 44 | 1.64 | 1.102 |
| B21 | I use another language than English to explain my thoughts in class | 18.4 | 11.3 | 38.5 | 31.8 | 44 | 1.84 | 1.068 |

The researcher adapted the questionnaire respectively used by Vreken (1996) and  Kok (2003) to determine the communication skills of the respondents.  A short description on how the self-reported communication skills questionnaire was developed (see Table 1.1) and information will follow to provide a summary of the communication skills that the grade 7-9 secondary phase participants presented (Table 4.2).  The scale rating for the Communication Skills Scale is: 0 = Never, 1 = Seldom, 2 = Sometimes and 3 = Always.  The missing responses were also indicated.  The responses to the relevant items are discussed in the following paragraphs.

B1:  Many (64.3%) of the respondents sometimes *nod their heads while the teacher explains work in the class* and 14.5% of the responses indicated they never nod their heads.  Only 13.8% of the respondents indicated that they always *nod their heads while the teacher explains work in class*.  On the statement *I nod my head while the teacher explains work in class* only 7.5% of the respondents indicated that they seldom do.  It is thus confirmed that the majority of learners sometimes nod their heads during class explanations (*M*=1.77 and SD=0.861).  There were eighteen respondents who did not respond to the item.

B2:  As much as 65.4% of the respondents indicated that they always *listen to the teacher when work is explained on the blackboard*.  On the statement *I sometimes listen to the teacher when work is explained on the blackboard,* 29.3% of the respondents indicated that they sometimes do so.  There were only 4% of the respondents that indicated that they seldom listen to the teacher when work is explained on the blackboard.  Respondents (1.3%) indicated that they never *listen to the teacher when work is explained on the blackboard*.  It is confirmed that the majority of the learners always listen to the teacher when work is explained on the blackboard (*M*=2.95 and SD=0.633).  There were five respondents who did not respond to the item.

B3:  Just more than half of the respondents (51%) indicated that they always *look at the teacher when work is explained in the class;* 43.6% indicated that they sometimes look at the teacher when work is explained in class.  Only 4.3% of the respondents indicated that they seldom *look at the teacher when work is explained*.   A mere 1% of the respondents indicated that they never look at the teacher when work is explained in class.  This confirms that the majority of learners always look at the teacher when work is explained in the class (*M*=2.4 and SD=0.635).  Eight respondents did not respond to the item.

B4:  Of the respondents, 61.8% pointed out that they only sometimes *answer the teacher immediately when they are asked a question.*  On the statement *I answer the teacher immediately when asked a question*, 17.7% indicated that they always do.  Thirteen point three per cent (13.3%) of the respondents indicated that they seldom *answer the teacher immediately when asked a question;* 7.8% indicated that they never *answer the teacher immediately when asked a question*.  This indicated that the majority of the respondents sometimes answer the teacher immediately when asked a question (*M*=1.88 and SD=0.776).  There were nine respondents who did not respond to the item.

B5:  On the statement I *sit close to the teacher to hear the teacher*, 36.8% of the respondents indicated that they sometimes do, and 32.2% of the respondents indicated that they always do.  On the statement *I sit close to the teacher to hear the teacher,* 17.6% indicated they never do.  Only 12.4% of the respondents indicated that they seldom *sit close to the teacher to hear the teacher*.  This confirms that the majority of the respondents sometimes or always sit close to the teacher to hear the teacher (*M*=1.85 and SD=1.068).  Nine respondents did not respond to the item.

B6: Thirty-four point five of the respondents (34.5%) indicated that they sometimes *complete crossword puzzles;* 29.1% of the respondents indicate that they always *complete crossword puzzles* and 22.5% indicated that they never complete crossword puzzles. Thirteen point nine per cent (13.9%) of the respondents indicated that they seldom *complete crossword puzzles.* This confirmed that the majority of the respondents sometimes or always complete crossword puzzles (*M*=1.70 and SD=1.116). There were seven respondents who did not respond to the item.

B7: On the statement I *compete in quizzes,* 41.6% of the respondents indicated that they never do. There were 28.3% of the respondents who indicated that they sometimes *compete in quizzes;* 18.1% indicated that they seldom *compete in quizzes.* Of the study population, only 12.1% of the respondents indicated that they always *compete in quizzes.* This indicated that the majority of the respondents never compete in quizzes (*M*=1.11 and SD=1.082). Fifty respondents did not respond to the item.

B8: Just more than half of the respondents (52.2%) indicated that they sometimes *explain work to their friends;* 28.2% of the respondents indicated that they always *explain work to their friends;* and eleven point six per cent of the respondents (11.6%) indicated that they seldom *explain work to their friends and* 8% indicated that they never *explain work to their friends.* This confirmed that the majority of the respondents sometimes explain work to their friends (*M*=2.01 and SD=0.848). There were 53 respondents who did not respond to the item.

B9: Sixty-four point two per cent of the respondents, (64.2%) indicated that they always *have conversations with individuals.* Of the study population, 25.5% indicated that they sometimes *have conversations with individuals.* There were 5.4% of the respondents that indicated that they seldom *have conversations with individuals.* There were only 4.9% of the respondents that indicated that they never have *conversations with individuals.* This indicated that the majority of the respondents always like to have conversations with individuals (*M*=2.49 and SD=0.809). There were 45 respondents who did not respond to the item.

B10: Thirty-six point six of the respondents (36.6%) indicated that they sometimes *discuss new topics related to English with their teacher.* Of the study population, only 34.7% indicated that they never *discuss new topics related to English with their teacher.* Only 20.8% of the respondents indicated that they seldom *discuss new topics related to English with their teacher,* and 7.8% of the respondents indicated that they always *discuss new topics related to English with their teacher.* This confirmed that the majority of the respondents sometimes discuss new topics related to English with their teacher (*M*=1.18 and SD=0.999). There were 39 respondents who did not respond to the item.

B11: Almost half of the respondents (49.5%) indicated that they *sometimes speak to their classmates about work completed in class.* There were 32.8% of the respondents that indicated that they always *speak to their classmates about work completed in class.* There were 10.8% of the respondents that

indicated that they *seldom speak to their classmates about work completed in class*. From the study population only 6.9% of the respondents indicated that *they never speak to their classmates about work completed in class.* This indicated that the majority of the respondents sometimes like to speak to their classmates about work completed in class (*M*=2.08 and SD=0.84). There were 38 respondents who did not respond to the item.

B12: The number of respondents who indicated that they sometimes *discuss employment opportunities with their friends outside the classroom* was 43.4%. On the statement that they discuss employment opportunities with their friends outside the classroom, 27% of the respondents indicated that they always do. From the study population, 14.8% of the respondents indicated that they never *discuss employment opportunities with their friends outside the classroom,* and 14.9% indicated that they seldom *discuss employment opportunities with their friends outside the classroom*. This confirms that the majority of the respondents sometimes discuss employment opportunities with their friends outside the classroom (*M*=1.83 and SD=0.99). There were 34 respondents who did not respond to the item.

B13: Of the respondents, 56.5% indicated that they never *discuss personal issues with their teacher.* Eighteen point four per cent (18.4%) of the study population indicated that they sometimes *discuss personal issues with their teacher*; 12.8% of the respondents indicated that they always *discuss personal issues with their teacher*. Only 12.3% of the respondents indicated that they seldom *discuss personal issues with their teacher.* This indicates that the majority of the respondents never discuss personal issues with their teacher (*M*=0.88 and SD=0.117). There were 39 respondents who did not respond to the item.

B14: On the statement that they *always take part in group discussions*, 51.9% indicated that they always do. From the study population, 33.9% of the respondents indicated that they sometimes *take part in discussions during group work*. There were 8.1% of the respondents that indicated that they seldom *take part in discussions during group work.* Respondents (6.1%) indicated that they never *take part in discussions during group work*. This confirmed that the majority of the respondents always take part in group discussions (*M*=2.32 and SD=0.863). Forty-one (41) respondents did not respond to the item.

B15: The percentage of the respondents that indicted they are sometimes the only persons talking during group work was 38.8. On the statement *I am the only person talking during group work* 32.1% of the respondents indicated that they never do. Twenty point five per cent (20.5%) of the respondents indicated that they are seldom the only persons talking during group work. Only 8.6% of the respondents indicated that they are always *the only persons talking during group work.* This indicates that the majority of the respondents are sometimes the only persons talking during group work (*M*=0.124 and SD=0.999). There were 37 respondents who did not respond to the item.

B16:  Of the respondents, 48.8% indicated that they sometimes *ask the others questions in the group,* and 25.4% indicated that they always *ask questions to the others in the group.*  From the study population, 14.7% of the respondents indicated that they seldom *ask the others questions in the group.*  Only 11% of the respondents indicated that they never *ask questions to others in the group.*  This confirms that the majority of the respondents sometimes ask the others questions in the group (*M*=1.88 and SD= 0912).  There were 58 respondents who did not respond to the item.

B17:  On the statement, *I explain work to my fellow group members*, 47.2% of the respondents indicated that they sometimes do.  Only 16.4% of the respondents indicated that they seldom explain work to their fellow group members, and 12.3% of the respondents indicated that they never *explain work to their fellow group members in the group.*  Only 2.3% of the respondents indicated that they always *explain work to their fellow group members in the group.*  This confirmed that the majority of the respondents sometimes explain work to their fellow group members in the group (*M*=1.84 and SD=0.993).  Thirty-eight (38) respondents did not respond to the item.

B18:  Thirty-five point three per cent of the respondent indicated that they sometimes *take part in debates at school.*  Only 31.3% of the respondents indicated that they never *take part in school debates,* and 17.8% indicated that they seldom take part in debates at school.  Only 15.6% of the respondents indicated they always *take part in school debates.*  This confirmed that the majority of the respondents take part in debates at school (*M*=1.35 and SD=1.081).  There were 48 respondents who did not respond to the item.

B19:  There were 36.8% of the respondents who indicated that they sometimes *discuss the news read in the newspaper with individuals.*  On the statement *I discuss the news read in the newspaper with individuals,* 24% of the respondents indicated that they never do, and 21.9% of the respondents indicated that they always *discuss the news read in the newspaper with individuals.*  A mere 17.3% of the respondents indicated that they seldom *discuss the news read in the newspaper with individuals discuss the news read in the newspaper with individuals.*  This confirms that the majority of the respondents sometimes discuss the news read in the newspaper with individuals (*M*=1.57 and SD=1.079).  Forty respondents did not respond to the item.

B20:  Thirty-seven point seven per cent (37.7%) of the respondents indicated they sometimes *read out loud in front of the class;* 25.2% indicated that they always *read out loud in front of the class,* and 23.9%. of the respondents indicated that they never *read out loud in front of the class*   On the statement *I read out loud in front of the class* 13.2% of the respondents indicated that they seldom do.  This confirmed that the majority of the respondents sometimes read out loud in front of the class (*M*=1.64 and SD=1.102).  There were 44 respondents who did not respond to the item.

B21:  From table 4.2 it is clear that 38.5% of the respondents indicated that they sometimes *use another language than English to explain their thoughts in class:* 31.8% indicated that they always *use*

*another language than English to explain their thoughts in class,* and 18.4% of the respondents indicated they never *use another language than English to explain their thoughts in the class.* Eleven point three per cent (11.3%) of respondents indicated that they seldom *use another language than English to explain their thoughts in the class.* This confirmed that the majority of the respondents sometimes or always use another language than English to explain their thoughts in class (*M*=1.84 and SD=1.064). There were 44 respondents who did not respond to the item.

### 4.2.2.1 Theoretical underpinning of findings

Communication skills are the skills used by individuals to communicate clearly and stay connected to world they live in. Communication skills put learners in touch with other individuals, allow them to express their ideas and feelings and exert control over their environment (De Vito, 2009). A learner's ability to communicate effectively is a vital part of the whole process of education (Donald et al., 2002). The lack in oral communication skills may inhibit learning and teaching (Blood et al., 2001). Thus, if a learner experiences communication difficulties, it will affect teaching and learning. For effective teaching and learning of languages teachers and learners must be able to speak the language and understand what the message is. Rahman (2010) defines speaking as the mode of communication most often use to express opinions, make arguments, offer explanations and make impressions on others. The intention with speaking is to communicate orally or be able to understand the spoken language, and to provide a meaningful reply in the language used during dialogue (Abdulla, 2006). If the teachers and learners understand the significance of oral communication in the acquisition and development of language (§2.11.2.2) they will be more inclined to become actively involved in conversations and other oral communication activities in the classroom.

Interpersonal communication in the communication skills questionnaire refers to the oral communication skills of the EFAL learners (§2.9). De Vito (2009) explains that classroom talk includes all the elements that form part of interpersonal communication (§ 2.5.1). He states that learners exchange information about a subject by applying different communication skills during intentional, direct and indirect communication. De Vito (2009, p. 2) notes that an "ability to communicate successfully in interpersonal situations gives the learner the power to achieve a wide variety of goals" – to join in during group situations and meetings during classroom activities, to establish and maintain relationships, participate in discussions in and outside the classroom, and to do public speaking with confidence.

Group work provides learners with opportunities to interact with each other in an academic and social way (Sharpe, 1991). During group work learners relax because they do not perform in front of a large group of leaners. Sharpe (1991) explains that learners experience the members of a smaller group as less judgemental. Moreover, group work provides teachers with opportunities to identify the communication difficulties of individual learners. Conversation skills are an important aspect of communication used to overcome fears and anxieties (Malimabe, 1997). Well-developed

conversation skills are the key to development of good social relationships and oral communication, especially during classroom activities. Classroom communication, as explained by Vreken (1998), should involve a clear message, a message that is easily understood while the individual exerts control over the flow of the communication from sender to receiver (§2.7.1). A classroom climate refers to the emotional tone of the relationships between teacher-learner and learner-learner (Malimabe, 1997). Research has found that communicative competence in English as second language correlates with communication climate in the classroom (Glomo-Narzoles, 2013). She suggests that effective learning by learners relies heavily on the classroom atmosphere being open and inviting to involvement, questions, comments, easy communication, constant encouragement and sometimes respectful disagreements. Glomo-Narzoles (2013) explains that a supportive classroom communication environment allows learners flexibility, experimentation, and creativity with regard to communication skills related to teacher-learner and learner-learner. Communication skills difficulties can cause fear, anxiety and stress (§2.9). Fear, anxiety and stress relate to communication apprehension (§2.10).

To obtain an indication about the communication apprehension of the secondary phase learners in the Kannaland District, the Personal Report Communication Apprehension Questionnaire was analysed. The information is discussed by means of descriptive statistics and frequency analysis.

### 4.2.3. Descriptive statistics and frequency analysis of Personal Report Communication Apprehension Questionnaire

To identify possible problematic items, descriptive statistics of individual items were examined. Frequencies, mean scores, standard deviations and missing values were investigated for all items in the Personal Report Communication Apprehension Questionnaire. In Table 4.3 frequencies, mean scores (*M*) and the standard deviation (SD) of each item are shown. Because no items were found with extreme scores (highest number of missing values were 59; mean values ranged between 2.37 and 3.93), it was concluded that the set of items was suitable for further analysis.

**Table 4.3        Communication apprehension information**

| | Statement | Strongly agree (5) | Agree (4) | Undecided (3) | Disagree (2) | Strongly disagree (1) | Missing | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Percentage** | | | | | | | |
| **Group work** | | | | | | | | | |
| C1* | I dislike working in groups* | 35.6 | 7.6 | 13.5 | 19.6 | 23.6 | 46 | 2.88 | 1.622 |
| C2 | Generally I feel comfortable while participating in group discussions | 8.7 | 6.3 | 16.1 | 36.6 | 32.3 | 46 | 3.77 | 1.213 |
| C3* | I am tense and nervous while participating in group discussions* | 28.2 | 9.1 | 18.5 | 26.4 | 17.8 | 53 | 2.96 | 1.482 |
| C4 | I like to get involved in group discussions | 10.4 | 5.2 | 10.1 | 29.3 | 44.9 | 49 | 3.93 | 1.301 |
| C5* | Engaging in group discussions makes me tense and nervous* | 36.5 | 10.3 | 17.7 | 20.7 | 14.7 | 51 | 2.67 | 1.501 |
| C6 | I am calm and relaxed while participating in group discussions | 13 | 7.1 | 14.4 | 29.5 | 36 | 49 | 3.68 | 1.365 |
| **Meetings** | | | | | | | | | |
| C7* | Generally, I am nervous when I have to participate in meetings* | 29.2 | 8.4 | 17.8 | 28.2 | 16.2 | 45 | 2.94 | 1.477 |
| C8 | Usually, I am calm and relaxed when participating in meetings | 15.5 | 10.8 | 22.2 | 24.5 | 27 | 45 | 3.37 | 1.386 |
| C9 | I am very calm and relaxed when I am called upon to express my opinion | 19 | 10.7 | 25.9 | 25.6 | 18.9 | 48 | 3.15 | 1.364 |
| C10* | I am afraid to express myself at meetings* | 20.7 | 13,2 | 21.6 | 27.6 | 16,9 | 51. | 3.07 | 1.383 |
| C11 | Communicating at meetings makes me feel uncomfortable* | 23.3 | 13.1 | 21.7 | 28.6 | 13.3 | 59 | 2.96 | 1.373 |
| C12 | I am relaxed when answering questions at a meeting | 19.5 | 9.9 | 21.1 | 28.6 | 13.3 | 59 | 3.19 | 1.383 |
| **Conversations** | | | | | | | | | |
| C13* | While participating in a conversation with a new friend, I feel nervous | 54.3 | 5.4 | 7.7 | 13.9 | 18.7 | 54 | 2.37 | 1.651 |
| C14 | I have no fear of speaking up in conversation | 15.2 | 8.7 | 21.5 | 22.3 | 32,3 | 54 | 3.48 | 1.408 |
| C15* | Ordinarily, I am very tense and nervous in conversation* | 33.5 | 9.2 | 20.7 | 21.3 | 15,4 | 50 | 2.76 | 1.484 |
| C16 | Ordinarily, I am calm and relaxed in conversation | 11.3 | 6.4 | 16.5 | 31.1 | 34,7 | 46 | 3.71 | 1.307 |
| C17 | While conversing with a new friend, I am very relaxed. | 12.2 | 6.4 | 15.7 | 32.6 | 33.1 | 48 | 3.68 | 1.32 |
| C18* | I am afraid to speak up in a conversation* | 38 | 10.7 | 16.9 | 19.5 | 14.8 | 51 | 2.62 | 1.51 |

| Statement | Percentage | | | | | Missing | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Strongly agree (5) | Agree (4) | Undecided (3) | Disagree (2) | Strongly disagree (1) | | | |
| **Public speaking** | | | | | | | | |
| C19   I have no fear of giving a speech. | 23 | 9.6 | 28.4 | 21.9 | 20.7 | 49 | 3.08 | 1.435 |
| C20*   Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid when I speech* | 15.4 | 8.1 | 17.4 | 34.5 | 24 | 54 | 3.43 | 1.348 |
| C21   I feel relaxed while giving a speech | 18.8 | 13 | 20 | 26.9 | 21.4 | 54 | 3.19 | 1.404 |
| C22*   My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a speech* | 21.8 | 12.7 | 16 | 28.8 | 20.7 | 54 | 3.14 | 1.448 |
| C23   I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence | 16.5 | 11.9 | 24.9 | 23.3 | 23.4 | 57 | 3.25 | 1.373 |
| C24*   While giving a speech I get so nervous, I forget facts that I really know* | 23.6 | 7.9 | 13.7 | 31.3 | 23.6 | 54 | 3.32 | 1.492 |
| **In the classroom** | | | | | | | | |
| C25*   Generally, I get nervous when I have to say something in class* | 31.3 | 8.7 | 13.3 | 26.9 | 19.8 | 51 | 2.95 | 1.549 |
| C26   I like it when the teacher asks a lot of questions. | 17.7 | 8.7 | 19,5 | 25,7 | 28,3 | 52 | 3.38 | 1,43 |
| C27*   Usually my thoughts become confused when I have to answer a question* | 27.7 | 8.3 | 17.7 | 29 | 17.3 | 56 | 3.00 | 1.475 |
| C28   I am never afraid to go to class | 17.1 | 5.8 | 9.4 | 25.2 | 42.6 | 52 | 3.71 | 1.484 |
| C29*   In class, I prefer the teacher to speak a lot so that I only have to listen. | 23.6 | 7.7 | 9.9 | 26.5 | 26.5 | 50 | 3.36 | 1.566 |
| C30   It does not bother me if I have to answer a question in class while the principal/inspector is on a visit to the class. | 29.9 | 7.7 | 21.6 | 20.3 | 20.5 | 51 | 2.94 | 1.515 |

\*   These statements are all reversed phrase items

A short description of the self-reported communication apprehension information is discussed to provide a summary of the apprehension that the grades 7-9 secondary phase participants experience in the EFAL classroom (Table 4.3). The scale rating for the Personal Report Communication Apprehension Questionnaires is: 5 = Strongly agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Disagree and 1 = Strongly disagree. The missing responses are also indicated. The responses to the relevant items are discussed in the following sub-sections.

### 4.2.3.1 Group work (C1-C6)

Two types of group work can be distinguished, i.e. task-oriented group work which could be in a classroom, and a social group of friends (Malimabe, 1997). In the classroom group work is a form of cooperative learning that aims to accommodate individual differences, develop learners' knowledge

and general skills like communication skills, critical thinking skills and attitudes (Benjamin, Bessant, & Watts, 1997). Group work introduces various skills that are valuable to teaching and learning, such as communication and cooperation skills. This is supported by Malimabe (1997, p. 34) who elucidates that a "great deal of teaching is done by means of group work" and learners often have "confidence and some sense of being able to manage their own learning". Learners have different ways in which they relate to group work, based upon their personality, communication skills, culture and experiences (Hall & Walsh, 2002).

The questions on group work ranged from C1-C6, with three of the questions reversed phrase items. First the reversed phrase items (C1, C3 and C5) were discussed. From the table above it is clear that 35.6% of the study population strongly agree that they *dislike working in groups* ($M$=2.88; SD=1.622); 46 respondents did not respond to this statement. On the statement *I am tense and nervous while participating in group discussions,* 28.2% of the study population strongly agree while 26.4% disagree ($M$=2.96 and SD=1.482). There were 36.5% of learners in the study population who indicated that *to engage in group discussions make them tense and nervous* ($M$=2.67 and SD=1.501). Fifty one respondents did not respond to this statement.

Next the positively phased statements will be discussed. On the statement: *Generally I feel comfortable while participating in group discussions,* 36.6% of the study population indicated that they disagree ($M$=3.77 and SD=1.213). Forty six of the respondents did not respond to this statement. From Table 4.3 it can be deduced that 44.9% of the respondents do not *like to get involved in group discussions* ($M$=3.93 and SD=1.301). Another 46 respondents did not respond to this statement. As indicated in the table, 36% of the study population indicated that they strongly disagree about staying *calm and relaxed while participating during group discussions* ($M$=3.68 and SD=1.365). Of the study population, 49 did not respond to this statement.

### 4.2.3.2 Meetings (C7-C 12)

Meetings in this study refer to the gathering of learners for didactic purposes within a school context (Edwards & Mullis, 2003). According to Malimabe (1997, p. 55), there are many people in meetings and the "procedure is more formal" than during groupwork, and "that is why some people become apprehensive". Nonetheless, meetings in the EFAL classrooms are used as opportunities that focus on open dialogue between teacher-learner and learner-learner (Malimabe, 1997). The teacher can act as chair or facilitator during meetings as learners are offered opportunities to learn and practise active listening (De Vito, 2009). Class meetings can be a versatile way to provide the learners with an open and secure space to explore their feelings, ideas and opinions (Erikson, 1959). Arranging for learners to be seated in a circle during meeting activities is an excellent way to get cohesion and provide learners with a conducive environment to communicate with their peers (Edwards & Mullis, 2003).

From Table 4.3, the respondents indicated for the reversed phrase items (C7, C10 and C1) that 29.2% strongly agree that they are nervous when they have to participate in meetings (*M*=2.94 and SD=1.477), while 45 participants that did not respond to this statement. The respondents who strongly agree that that they are afraid to express themselves at meetings were 20.7% (*M*=3.97 and SD=1.383). Another 51 respondents did not respond. It is clear from the table that 23.3% (*M*=2.96 and SD=1.373) indicated that communicating in meetings make them feel uncomfortable.

Next the positively phrased statements were discussed. From the table it is clear that only 15.5% strongly agree that that they are calm and relaxed when participating in meetings while 24.5% disagree and 27% (*M*=3.37 and SD=1.386) strongly disagree. Forty-five of the study population did not respond. Only 19% of the respondents strongly agree that they are calm and relaxed when they are called upon to express their opinions. There were 48 respondents who did not respond to this statement. As indicated in the table, 28.6% of the study population indicated that they strongly disagree about staying *calm and relaxed while answering questions at a meeting* (*M*=3.19 and SD=1.383).

### 4.2.3.3 Conversation (C13-C 18)

Conversation for the purpose of this study can be described as the way learners interact in the classroom with the teacher and with one another (Drinkwater & Vreken, 1997). In the classroom environment there are numerous opportunities for conversations between teacher-teacher and learner-learner (Grambrell, 2004). Learners have the opportunity to share their prior knowledge and integrate it into new information on the topic or concept in order to extend their understanding of the topic or concept (Grambrell, 2004). When the teacher gives learners opportunities to think deeply, articulate their reasoning and listen with purpose, their verbal interaction with each other will increase (Vreken, 1998). Thus it is vital for teachers to encourage learners' understanding of certain issues and link it to their prior knowledge.

First the reversed phrase items (C13, C15 and C18) were discussed. From the table above it is clear that 54.3% (*M*=2.37 and SD= 1651) of the study population strongly agree that they feel nervous while communicating with a new friend. Fifty four participants of the study population did not respond to this statement. There were 33.5% of learners in the study population who indicated that *ordinarily they are tense and nervous in conversations* (*M*=2.76 and SD=1.484). Fifty of the respondents did not respond to this statement. On the statement *I am afraid to speak up in a conversation,* 38% (*M*=2.62 and SD=1.51) of the learners who strongly agreed with this statement. Fifty one individuals of the study population did not respond to this statement.

The positively phased statements were discussed. Only 15.2% (*M*=3.48 and SD=1.408) of the respondents strongly agree that they have no fear of speaking up in a conversation. Of the study population, fifty four did not respond to this statement. There were 34.7% (*M*=3.71 and SD=1.32) who

strongly disagree that *ordinarily they are calm and relaxed in conversation* and only 11.3% strongly agree to this statement.  Forty six respondents did not respond on this statement.  From the table above it is clear that there were 31.1% (*M*=3.68 and SD=1.651) of the study population who strongly disagree that they are very relaxed while conversing with a new friend.

### 4.2.3.4  Public speaking (C19-C 24)

Public speaking refers to the need to practise communicating with an audience by giving a speech in the classroom (Vreken, 1998).  If learners present speeches they will learn the significance of public speaking outside the classroom situation (Tubbs & Moss, 2008, p. 424).  Public speaking in this context refers to the opportunities that learners have to address an audience that mostly comprises teachers or learners (Drinkwater & Vreken, 1997).  Grubaugh (1990, p. 226) explains that learners are plagued with a fear of public speaking, presenting physical and emotional symptoms of anxiety, and states that "anticipating a presentation can be worse than making it."  McLuhan and Flore (1967) are of the opinion that positive responses from a teacher can support the learner to sound like a confident speaker, since the medium is the message."

From Table 4.3, 29.2% (*M*=3.43 and SD=1.345) of the respondents strongly agree with the reversed phrase items (C20, C22 and C24) that certain parts of their bodies feel very tense and rigid when giving a speech.  Fifty four of the study population did not respond to this statement, and 21.8% (*M*=3.14 and SD=1.448) of the learners strongly agree that their thoughts become confused and jumbled when giving a speech.  Of the study population, 54 did not respond to this statement.  On the statement *While giving a speech I get so nervous I forget facts that I really know,* 23.6% (*M*=3.32 and SD=1.492) strongly agree.  Fifty four of the study population did not respond to this statement.

Next the positively phrased statements were discussed.  Twenty point seven (20.7%) (*M*=3.08 and SD=1.435) of the participants strongly disagree on *I have no fear of giving a speech.*  Forty nine respondents did not respond on this statement, and only 18.8% (*M*=3.19 and SD=1.404) strongly agree that they feel relaxed and while giving a speech.  There were fifty four of the learners who did not respond to this statement, while 23.4% (*M*=3.25 and SD=1.373) trongly disagree that they face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence.

### 4.2.3.5  In the classroom (C25-C30)

Vreken and Vreken (1989) explain that classroom communication is more than asking and answering questions.  Classroom communication is regarded as the interactive language and response between teacher-learner and learner-learner (Smith, 1990).  Smith states that this kind of communication helps learners to express their thoughts about subject content orally.  The purpose of classroom communication is to transmit meaning about knowledge and experiences; also to express opinion about those experiences and offer opinions (Hamm, 2006).  Through classroom communication

opportunities are available for learners and teachers to learn from one another in a safe atmosphere (Drinkwater, 2002).

First the reversed phrase items (C25, C27 and C29) are discussed. From the table above it is clear that 31.3% (*M*=2.95 and SD=1.549) of the study population strongly agree that generally they get nervous when they have to say something in class. Fifty one of the study population did not respond to this statement. There were 27.7% (*M*=3.00 and SD=1.475) who strongly agree that their thoughts usually become confused when they have to answer a question. Fifty six of the study population did not respond to this statement. On the statement, *In class I prefer the teacher to speak a lot so that I only have to listen,* 23.6% (*M*=3.36 and SD=1.566) strongly agree.

Subsequently the positively phrased statements are discussed. Only 17.7% (*M* = 3.38 and SD=1.43) of the respondents strongly agree that they like the teacher to ask a lot of questions. Fifty- two (52) of the study population did not respond to this statement. There were 42.6% (*M*=3.71 and SD=1.484) who strongly disagreed that they were never afraid to go to class and only 17.1% strongly agreed with this statement. Fifty two respondents did not respond on this statement. From the table above it is clear that there were 20.5% (*M*=2.94 and SD=1.515) of the study population who strongly disagree that it does not bother them if they have to answer a question in class while the principal or inspector is on a visit in the class.

### 4.2.3.5.1    Theoretical underpinning of findings

Malimabe (1997, p. 87) reports that learners in secondary schools experience high levels of oral communication apprehension when communicating in English. The result of this research study concurs with Malimabe's research. Learners in the EFAL classroom in the secondary phase in Kannaland District, Western Cape, similarly experience high levels of oral communication apprehension. Not everyone is an effective communicator (§2.4). Rahman (2010) is of the opinion that learners need to speak well in their personal lives, future workplace and social interactions. Learners may have to attend meetings, make presentations, participate in discussions and arguments, or work in groups in their workplace (Rahman, 2010). Communication apprehension affects the communication choices as well as the performance of learners in the classroom (McCroskey & Anderson, 1976). Klopf and Cambra (1979b) assert that the apprehensive learner not only experiences nervousness when giving public speeches, but is also anxious and fearful when talking to a peer or participating in a group session (§2.5). Interaction among learners in the classroom is affected by levels of communication apprehension (Drinkwater & Vreken, 1997). Communication apprehension differs from individual to individual as learners experience vulnerability in different contexts (Blood et al., 2001). Because of their fear to communicate, learners may do everything possible avoiding to speak or participate in the EFAL classroom situation.

**4.3    Factor analysis and reliability analysis of Communication Skills Questionnaire**

Reliability means that a questionnaire should consistently reflect the construct that it is measuring (Field, 2013).  Therefore reliability analysis was used to measure the consistency of the communication skills questionnaire.  Scale reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha) was performed to eliminate inconsistent items from the relevant factors.  Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient normally ranges between 0 and 1 and is used to describe the reliability of the factors extracted from the multi-point formatted questions in the communication skills questionnaire (scale: 0 = never and 3 = always).  Two reliability indices will be reported for the constructs measured in this research.  Clark and Watson (1995) indicate that a mean inter item correlation between 0.15 and 0.5 shows sufficient reliability.

For the complete questionnaire, the reliability indices are as follows:

| Cronbrach's Alpha | 0.777 |
|---|---|
| Mean inter item correlation | 0.145 |

The Cronbach's alpha of 0.777 indicates sufficient reliability, since Clark and Watson (1995) indicate that a mean inter item correlation between 0.15 and 0.5 shows sufficient reliability.  Although Cronbach's alpha indicated sufficient reliability, the mean inter item correlation was slightly below the 0.15 minimum guideline given by Clark and Watson (1995).  We noted that item B1 had a negative item-total correlation ($r=-0.25$).  All other items had item-total correlations of 0.194 or higher.

We therefore removed item B1 and then obtained the following reliability indices.

| Cronbach's Alpha | 0.790 |
|---|---|
| Mean inter-item correlation | 0.162 |

These measures indicate sufficient reliability and we therefore worked with this scale, leaving out item B1 in our aggregation.  Briggs and Cheeck (1986) suggest that the mean of inter-item correlations for a scale provides information about whether that scale is one-dimensional or not.  An average score for each participant was therefore calculated in this questionnaire (Items B2-B21).  The descriptive statistics of the aggregated score of the Communication Skills Questionnaire followed:

| | Mean | Standard deviation |
|---|---|---|
| Communication skills | 1.796 | 0.427 |

Next the factor analysis and reliability analysis of the Personal Report Communication Apprehension Questionnaire are presented and discussed.

**4.4    Factor analysis and reliability analysis of Personal Report Communication Apprehension Questionnaire**

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on each of the sections of the Personal Report Communication Apprehension Questionnaire to determine the factors contained in each section for this study population.  Cramer and Howitt (2006) describe exploratory factor analysis as the examination of data to identify highly interrelated variables that reflect how specific factors group together.

Principal axis factoring was used with oblimin rotation.  Principal axis factoring is a form of factor analysis in which only the variance shared between variables is analysed (Nisbet, Robert, Elder, Miner, & Gary, 2009).  The number of factors to be extracted was determined by Kaizer's criterion, which involves that factors with eigenvalues larger than one were retained.  Factors with an eigenvalue of more than one are considered to explain "a worthwhile amount of variance to represent the amount of variance a variable would have on average" (Cramer & Howitt, 2006, p. 60).

The following measures were reported for each factor analysis:

- The Kaizer-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy which indicates whether the study population was sufficiently large for factor analysis.  According to Field (2013), the KMO measure can be interpreted as follows :

| | |
|---|---|
| 0.5-0.7 | Mediocre |
| 0.7-0.8 | Good |
| 0.8-0.9 | Great |
| >0.9 | Superb |

- Bartlett's test which is an indication whether the correlations between the items were sufficiently large for exploratory factor analysis. A value of $p \leq 0.05$ for this test indicated sufficient correlations (Field, 2013)
- The determinant of the correlation matrix, which indicates whether multicollinearity was not too severe.  If the determinant is $\geq 0.00001$, the multicollinearity is not too severe (Field, 2013)
- Number of factors extracted using Kaizer's criterion.
- The percentage variance explained by the extracted factors.  For this study it was deemed desirable that this value should be $\geq 50\%$.
- The range of the communalities; the smallest and largest communalities will be reported.  The ideal is that all communalities should be larger than 0.3 (Field, 2013)
- The pattern matrix after rotation.
- Reliability index (Cronbach's Alpha).  Field (2013) notes that Cronbach's Alpha values of less than 0.7 can realistically be expected in social sciences research. In this study, the reliability of subscales with alpha values larger than 0.5 was deemed acceptable and items were therefore aggregated to obtain subscale scores, while subscales with alpha values less than

0.5 were not seen as sufficiently reliable and items for such subscales were analysed individually.

- Descriptive statistics of aggregated factor scores on reliable factors.

### 4.4.1 Group work

For the group work subscale the KMO was 0.603 which indicated that the size of the study population was mediocre for the purpose of exploratory factor analysis. Bartlett's test's p-value was ≤0.001 which indicates sufficient correlations. The determinant of the correlation matrix was 0.474>0.00001 and therefore indicates that there was not too severe multicollinrearity.

Two factors were extracted and the percentage variance explained by the two factors was 55.674%. The communalities ranged between 0.053 (C1 *dislike working in groups*) and 0.553 (C5 *engaging in groups discussions makes me tense and nervous*). The pattern matrix is presented in Table 4.4.

**Table 4.4       Pattern Matrix 1 — Group work**

| Short description | Item | Factor 1* | Factor 2** |
|---|---|---|---|
| tense and nervous | C3 | 0.724 | |
| tense and nervous to engage | C5 | 0.721 | |
| dislike working in groups | C1 | 0.223 | |
| like to get involved | C4 | | 0.615 |
| calm and relaxed | C6 | | 0.589 |
| generally comfortable | C2 | | 0.545 |

Note. All factor loadings less than 0.2 is not presented.
Factor 1*            - Negative emotions experience by learners during group work participation
Factor 2**          - Positive experience of group work participation

The Conbrach's alpha values of the two factors were summarized as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Entire subscale: Group work | 0.514 |
| Negative emotions experience by learners during group work participation | 0.542 |
| Positive experience of group work participation | 0.601 |

Since the reliabilities were better for the factor separately, all further analysis were conducted on these factors rather than the entire subscale.

The descriptive statistics of the aggregated scores for the participants on these factors are:

| | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|
| Negative emotions experience by learners during group work participation | 2.831 | 1.111 |
| Positive experience of group work participation | 3.800 | 0.965 |

### 4.4.2 Meetings

For the meetings subscale the KMO was 0.643 which indicated that the size of the study population was mediocre for the purpose of exploratory factor analysis. Bartlett's test's p-value was ≤0.001

which indicated sufficient correlation.  The determinant of the correlation matrix was 0.539>0.00001 and therefore indicates that there was not too severe multicollinrearity.

Two factors were extracted and the percentage variance explained was 55.029.  The communalities ranged between 0.239 (C12 *relaxed when answering questions*) and 0.447 (C8 *calm and relaxed when participating in meetings*).  The pattern matrix is presented in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5          Pattern Matrix 2 — Meetings**

| Short description | Item | Factor 1* | Factor 2** |
|---|---|---|---|
| afraid to express myself | C10 | 0.595 | |
| uncomfortable when communicating | C11 | 0.570 | |
| nervous to participate | C 7 | 0.484 | |
| calm and relaxed | C 8 | | 0.616 |
| easy express myself when call upon | C 9 | | 0.569 |
| relaxed when answering questions | C12 | | 0.485 |

Note. All factor loadings less than 0.3 is not presented.
Factor 1*          Learners experience a sense of anxiety
Factor 2**         Learners display signs of self-assurance

The Conbrach's Alpha the two factors separately can be summarised as follows:

| Entire scale: Meetings | 0.543 |
|---|---|
| Learners experience a sense of anxiety | 0.561 |
| Learners display signs of self-assurance | 0.568 |

The descriptive statistics of the aggregated scores for the participants on these factors are:

| | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|
| Learners experience a sense of anxiety | 2.995 | 1.046 |
| Learners display signs of self-assurance | 3.237 | 1.008 |

### 4.4.3    Conversations

For the conversations the KMO was 0.639 which indicated that the size of the study population was mediocre for the purpose of exploratory factor analysis.  Bartlett's test's p-value was ≤0.001 which indicated sufficient correlations. The determinant of the correlation matrix was 0.602>0.00001 and therefore indicated that there is not too severe multicollinrearity.

Two factors were extracted and the percentage variance explained was 52.265%.  The communalities ranged between 0.95 (C17 *while conversing with a new friend I am relaxed*) and 0.468 (C15 *ordinarily I am very tense and nervous in a conversation*).  The pattern matrix is presented in Table 4.6.

**Table 4.6      Pattern Matrix 3 — Conversations**

| Short description | Item | Factor 1* | Factor 2** |
|---|---|---|---|
| usually tense and nervous | C15 | 0.677 | |
| afraid to speak | C18 | 0.605 | |
| nervous with new friends with others | C 13 | 0.550 | |
| calm and relaxed | C 16 | | 0.543 |
| nor fear of speaking up | C 14 | | 0.449 |
| not afraid to convert with new friend | C17 | | 0.305 |

Note. Factor loadings less than 0.3 are not presented.
Factor1*          Tension experience during conversations with others
Factor2**         Learners express a positive association with others

The Cronbach's Alpha values of the two factors can be summarized as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Entire subscale: Conversations | 0.490 |
| Tension experience during conversations with others | 0.640 |
| Learners express a positive association with others | 0.401 |

Since the reliability of the positive association with other factors was very low, the items in this construct could not be aggregated. An aggregated score for the tension during conversations factor was used further on, but items 14, 16 and 17, which constituted the positive association with other factors were analysed as individual items.

The descriptive statistics of the aggregated score of the tension in conversation factor are:

| | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|
| Tension experience during conversations with others | 2.590 | 1.829 |

### 4.4.4    Public speaking

For the public speaking the KMO was 0.631 which indicates that the size of the study population was mediocre for the purpose of exploratory factor analysis. Bartlett's test's p-value was ≤0.001 which indicates sufficient correlations. The determinant of the correlation matrix was 0.471>0.00001 and therefore indicates that there was not too severe multicollinrearity.

Two factors were extracted and the percentage variance explained was 56.828%. The communalities ranged between 0.191 (C20 *certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid when giving a speech*) and 0.448 (C22 *my thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a speech*). The pattern matrix is presented in Table 4.7.

**Table 4.7          Pattern Matrix 4 — Public speaking**

| Short description | Item | Factor 1* | Factor 2** |
|---|---|---|---|
| confidence when giving a speech | C23 | 0.660 | |
| relaxed while giving a speech | C21 | 0.603 | |
| no fear of giving a speech | C 19 | 0.526 | |
| thoughts get confused and jumbled when giving a speech | C 22 | | 0.649 |
| get nervous and forget facts when giving a speech | C 24 | | 0.647 |
| parts of body feel tense and rigid when giving a speech | C20 | | 0.444 |

Note. All factor loadings less than 0.3 are not presented
Factor 1*          - Learners' positive involvement and participation of learners during public speaking
Factor 2**          - Learners' experience sense of pressure and nervousness during public speaking

The Conbach's Alpha values of the entire subscale and the two factors separately after the reversal of the reversed phrase items can be summarized as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Entire subscales - Public speaking | 0.640 |
| Positive involvement and participation of learners during public speaking | 0.603 |
| Learners experience sense of pressure and nervousness during public speaking | 0.622 |

Since the reliabilities are better for the factors separately, all further analyses will be conducted on these factors rather than on the entire subscale. The descriptive statistics of the aggregated scores for the participants on these factors are:

| | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|
| Positive involvement and participation of learners during public speaking | 3.173 | 1.062 |
| Learners experience sense of pressure and nervousness during public speaking | 3.267 | 1.073 |

### 4.4.5    Classroom

For the classroom subscale the KMO was 0.593 which indicates mediocre study population size. Bartlett's test's p-value was ≤0.001 which indicates sufficient correlations. The determinant of the correlation matrix was 0.687>0.00001 and therefore indicates that there is not too severe multicollirearity.

Two factors were extracted and the percentage variance explained was 50.132%. The communalities ranged between 0.130 (C28 *I am never afraid to go to class*) and 0.496 (C30 *it does not bother me if I have to answer a question in class while the principal/inspector is on a visit to the class*). The pattern matrix is presented in Table 4.8.

**Table 4.8    Pattern Matrix 5 — Classroom**

| Short description | Item | Factor 1* | Factor 2** |
|---|---|---|---|
| get nervous when having to say something | C25 | 0.589 | |
| thoughts become confused when answering a question | C27 | 0.588 | |
| prefer to listen while teacher speaks a lot | C 29 | 0.411 | |
| not bothered to answer questions in front of principal | C 30 | | 0.706 |
| likes when teacher asks lot of questions | C 26 | | 0.361 |
| never afraid to go to class | C28 | | 0.359 |

Note. All factor loadings less than 0.3 are not presented.
Factor 1*          Embarrassment experienced by learners and feeling of low self-esteem
Factor 2**         increase in self-belief of learners

The Chronbach's Alpha values of the entire subscale and the two factors separately after the reversal of the reversed phrase items can be summarized as follows:

| Entire subscales – classroom | |
|---|---|
| Embarrassment experienced by learners and feeling of low self-esteem | 0.529 |
| Increase in self believe of learners | 0.444 |

Since the reliabilities were better for the factors separately, all further analyses were conducted on those factors rather than on the entire subscale.  The descriptive statistics of the aggregated scores for the participants on these factors are:

| | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|
| Embarrassment experienced by learners and feeling of low self-esteem | 3.106 | 1.102 |

Since the reliability of the entire subscale on the positive association with the classroom factor was very low, these constructs could not be aggregated.  Rather an aggregated score tension in conversation factor was used further on, but items 26, 28 and 30, which constituted the positive association, were analysed as individual items.


## 4.5    Correlations

In the current study the study population predominantly speak Afrikaans.  The researcher presumed that the communication skills of the learners decreased and the communication apprehension increased during EFAL lessons and that this might have an effect on their academic achievement in English.  To address the research questions (i) How do communication skills correlate with the academic achievement of secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape in English? and (ii) How does communication apprehension correlate with the academic achievement of secondary phase learners in Kannaland Distict, Western Cape in English?, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to investigate the correlations between the variables.  Pearson's correlation (r) is defined as the covariance of two variables divided by the product of the variables' standard deviations (Cramer & Howitt, 2006).  The closer the r value is to 1 or -1, the stronger the linear relationship between the two variables.  The closer the r value is to 0, the weaker the relationship.  For the purpose of this investigation, an effect size r≈0.3 was considered a medium effect which tended

towards a practically visible correlation, an effect size r≈0.5 was considered a large effect which indicated a practically significant correlation, and an effect size r≈0.1 was considered a small effect which meant no practically significant correlation (Field, 2003).

**Table 4.9**
**Pearson's correlation**

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1.** EFAL marks - Term 1 | 1 | .784** | .091* | -.219** | .111* | -.120** | .016 | -.324** | -.006 | -.001 | -.244** | .047 | .100* | .045 | .060 | .039 | .009 |
| **2.** EFAL marks - Term 2 | | 1 | .123** | -.229** | .133* | -.131** | .045 | -.332** | .025 | -.020 | -.239** | .077 | .137** | .061 | .090* | .076* | .069 |
| **3.** Communication skills F B | | | 1 | -.047 | .369** | -.047 | .336** | -.009 | .300** | -.079 | -.038 | .150** | .233** | .136** | .293** | .149** | .308** |
| **4.** Group work (1,3,5) F C1 | | | | 1 | -.094* | .430** | -.025 | .438** | -.029 | .282** | .380** | -.127** | -.076 | .030 | -.052 | .040 | .039 |
| **5.** Group work (2,4, 6) F C1 | | | | | 1 | -.076 | .429** | -.095* | .348** | -.087 | -.139** | .281** | .331** | .166** | .229** | .091* | .203** |
| **6.** Meetings (7,10,11) F C2 | | | | | | 1 | -.150** | .356** | -.142** | .376** | .410** | -.139** | -.082* | .021 | -.032 | .065 | -.023 |
| **7.** Meetings (8,9,12) F C2 | | | | | | | 1 | .035 | .468** | -.049 | -.071 | .273** | .317** | .170** | .243** | .085 | .267** |
| **8.** Conversations (13,15,18) F C3 | | | | | | | | 1 | .017 | .227** | .481** | -.081* | -.108** | .031 | .008 | -.017 | .019 |
| **9.** Public Speaking (19,21,23) F C4 | | | | | | | | | 1 | -.138** | -.065 | .279** | .356** | .123** | .314** | .074* | .212** |
| **10.** Public Speaking (20,22 24) F C4 | | | | | | | | | | 1 | .427** | -.052 | .003 | .086* | -.037 | .092* | -.053 |
| **11.** In the classroom (25,27,29) F C5 | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | -.111** | -.085* | -.014 | -.112** | .036 | -.003 |
| **12.** I take part in discussions during group work (C14) | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | .254** | .125** | .174** | .116** | .186** |
| **13.** I ask others in the group questions (C16) | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | .163** | .226** | .142** | .148** |
| **14.** I explain work to my fellow group members( C17) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | .233** | .051 | .134** |
| **15.** I like it when the teacher asks a lot of questions (C26) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | .119** | .257** |
| **16.** I am never afraid to go to class (C28) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | .254** |
| **17.** It does not bother me if I have to answer a question in class while the principal or inspector is on a visit to the class (C30) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

### 4.5.1  Correlations between communication skills, communication apprehension and academic achievement

Table 4.9 reveals that the majority of the correlations coefficients were small to medium and account for 9% of the variance.  This indicated a tendency towards practically visible correlations.  The sign of the Pearson's correlations coefficient displayed the direction of the relationship between the two variables (Field, 2003).  These correlations showed linear relationships between the factors.  A negative linear relationship indicates, like in the case of academic achievement term 1 and group work factor C1 (Items 1, 3 and 5), that if the value of academic achievement term 1 increased the value of the group work factor C1  decreased.  If a positive linear relationship was indicated between academic achievement term 1 and group work factor C1, an increased in the value of the value of academic achievement term 1 was associated with an increase in the value of group work factor C1.  In this section the Pearson's correlations between communication skills, communication apprehension and academic achievement was discussed.  The various correlations were explained in three sub-divisions: academic achievement, communication skills and communication apprehension.  The researcher discusses only small to medium correlations (tends towards practically visible) and medium to large correlations (practically visible) in the following section.

### 4.5.1.1  Academic achievement

Small to medium negative correlations were found between academic achievement and group work factor C1 which is *negative emotions experienced by learners during group work participation* (Items 1, 3 and 5) (r=-0.219 for the first term and r=-0.229 for the second term).  The correlation showed a tendency towards practically visible.  This would indicate the learners with high tension and nervousness and who dislike working in groups tend to attain lower academic achievement in EFAL.

A medium effect, which tends towards practically visible correlations between academic achievements in the first term (r=-0.324) and the second term (r=-0332) and conversation factor C3 (*tension experience during conversation with others*) (Items 13, 15 and 18) was found.  Pearson's correlation reveals that learners in the EFAL lessons who experience tension during conversations with others are more likely to have poor academic achievement.

Small to medium negative correlations were discovered between the first term (r=-0.244) and second term (r=-0.239) and in the classroom factor C5 which is *embarrassment experienced by learners and feelings of low confidence* (Items 25, 27 and 29).  We can postulate that learners who are embarrassed and have feelings of low confidence classroom during lessons are inclined to have poor EFAL academic achievement.

**4.5.1.2 Communication skills**

A correlation that tends towards practically visible was discovered, which shows a medium effect (r=-0.369) between communication skills and group work factor C1 *negative emotions experienced by learners during group work participation* (Items 1, 3 and 5). This would indicate a possibility that learners with poor communication skills in EFAL are likely to experience negative emotions during group work participation.

A medium correlation (r=0.336) was found between communication skills and meetings factor C2 *learners display signs of self-assurance* (Items 8, 9 and 12). It can be deduced that learners with good communication skills tend to display signs of self-assurance in the classroom, while those with poor communication skills tend to have a sense of anxiety in EFAL.

A medium effect (r=0.300), which tends towards a practically visible correlation, was found between communication skills and public speaking factor C4 (Items 19, 21 and 23) *positive involvement and participation of learners during public speaking.* This indicates that learners with good communication skills are more likely to be positive towards public speaking in the EFAL classroom and effortlessly take part in public speaking.

Table 4.9 indicates that a medium effect size was found between communication skills and *I ask other in the group questions* (Item 16). The r-value was 0.233, which shows a positive correlation that tends towards practically visible. It can be construed that learners with good communication skills tend to be more inclined to ask their peers questions in the course of EFAL lessons.

For communication skills and *I like it when the teacher asks a lot of questions* (Item 26) a medium effect (r=0.293) was found. This indicates a positive practically visible correlation. The Pearson correlation revealed that learners with well-developed communication skills are expected to like it when the EFAL teacher asks many questions.

A medium effect (r=0.308), which tends towards positive practically visible correlation between communication skills and *it does not bother me if I have to answer a question in class while the principal or inspector is on a visit to the class* (Item 30) were found. This correlation revealed that learners with good communication skills in EFAL are inclined to answer questions posed by the teacher more willingly in the presence of familiar or unfamiliar individuals.

**4.5.1.3 Communication apprehension**

A medium to large effect size (r=0.430) was found between group work factor C1 *negative emotions experienced by learners during group work participation* (Items 1, 3 and 5) and meetings factor C2 *learners experience sense of anxiety* (Items 7, 10 and 11). The Pearson correlation revealed a

positive practically visible correlation.  Learners who are tense and dislike participating in EFAL group work may similarly experience anxiety during meeting.

Table 4.9 shows a positive tendency towards practically visible correlation (r=0.438), between group work factor C1 *negative emotions experienced by learners during group work participation* (Items 1, 3 and 5) and conversations factor C3 *learners experience tension during conversations with others* (Items 13, 15 and 18).  A positive correlation was found, indicating that EFAL learners who are tense and nervous during group work participation tend to experience tension during conversations.

A small to medium positive correlation (r=0.282) was found between group work factor C1 which is *negative emotions experienced by learners during group work participation* (Items 1, 3 and 5) and public speaking factor C4 *learners experience a sense of pressure and nervousness during public speaking* (Items 20, 22 and 24).  This indicates a tendency towards practically visible correlation. Those learners present in EFAL classes who dislike taking part in group work due to tension and nervousness are likely to experience pressure and nervousness during speaking, facing teachers and peers.

A positive correlation that tends towards practically visible (r=0.380) was found between group work factor C1 which is *negative emotions experienced by learners during group work participation* (Items 1, 3 and 5) and in the classroom factor C5 which is *embarrassment experienced by learners and feelings of low confidence* (Items 25, 27 and 29).  The learners are tense, nervous and dislike taking part in group work; they tend to experience embarrassment and feelings of low confidence in the classroom during EFAL lessons.

A medium to large effect, which tends towards a positive practically visible correlation (r=0.429) between group work factor C1 *positive experience of group work participation* (items 2, 4 and 6) and meetings factor C2 *learners display signs of self-assurance* (Items 8, 9 and 12) was found.  The Pearson correlation revealed that besides being calm and relaxed during group work participation during EFAL lessons; learners tend to be comfortable, composed and express themselves during meetings.

Another medium effect (r=3.48) that tends towards a positive practically visible correlation was discovered between group work factor *C1 positive experience of group work participation* (Items 2, 4 and 6) and public speaking factor C4 *positive involvement and participation of learners during public speaking* (Items 19, 21 and 23).  It is possible that learners who like taking part in group work are also confident, secure and relaxed when giving a speech in the EFAL classroom.

Table 4.9 shows a medium effect (r=0.281) between group work factor C1 *positive experience of group work participation* (Items 2, 4 and 6) and factor C14 *I take part in discussions during group work* (Item 14).  This Pearson correlation revealed a positive tendency towards practical visibility.  This

correlation shows that learners who are calm and relaxed during group work during EFAL lessons tend to participate more freely in discussions in groups.

A medium positive correlation (r=0.331) was discovered between group work factor C1 *positive experience of group work participation* (Items 2, 4 and 6) and factor C16 *I ask other in the group questions* (Item 16). This shows that EFAL learners experience group work positively and as a result possibly will ask questions freely in the group.

For group work factor C1 *positive experience of group work participation* (items 2, 4 and 6) and *I like it when the teacher asks a lot of questions* (Item 26), a medium effect (r=0.229) was found. This indicates tendency toward a positive practically visible correlation. Calm, relaxed and comfortable learners taking part in group work tend to like it when teachers ask many questions during EFAL lessons.

A medium to large positive correlation (r=0.468) was found between meetings C2 *learners display signs of self-assurance* (Items 8, 9 and 12) and public speaking C4 *positive involvement and participation of learners during public speaking* (Items 19, 21 and 23). This presents a practically visible correlation. The Pearson correlation indicates that calm and relaxed EFAL learners tend to be confident, relaxed and unafraid when presenting speeches in the class.

Another medium effect size (r=0.273) was found between meetings C2 *learners display signs of self-assurance* (Items 8, 9 and 12) and factor C14 *I take part in discussions during group work* (Item 14). This indicates a tendency towards a positive practically visible correlation. Learners with self-assurance during meetings with peers and teachers will usually take part in dialogues during EFAL group work sessions.

A medium positive correlation (r=0.331) that tends towards practically visible correlation was discovered between meetings C2 *learners display signs of self-assurance* (Items 8, 9 and 12) and C16 *I ask other in the group questions* (Item 16). Those EFAL learners that are confident in giving speeches in the presence of their peers might not hesitate to ask questions to others in the group.

Table 4.9 indicates that a medium effect size was found between meetings C2 *learners display signs of self-assurance* (Items 8, 9 and 12) and *I like it when the teacher asks a lot of questions* (Item 26). The r-value was 0.243 which shows a positive correlation that tends towards practically visible correlation. It can be deduced that learners who are self-assured, relaxed and secure during meetings tend to like it when the teacher asks many questions during EFAL lessons.

Another positive small to medium correlation (r=0.267) was found between meetings C2 *learners display signs of self-assurance* (Items 8, 9 and 12) and *it does not bother me if I have to answer a question in class while the principal or inspector is on a visit to the class* (Item 30). Learners with self-

assurance during meetings possibly experience no difficulty in answering questions in the presence of familiar or unfamiliar individuals in the EFAL class.

A medium positive correlation (r=0.227) was found between conversations C3 *learners experience tension during conversations with others* (Items 13, 15 and 18) and public speaking C4 *learners experience a sense of pressure and nervousness during public speaking* (Items 20, 22 and 24). The Pearson correlation reveals that learners who experienced pressure and stress during talks with other persons possibly will not be on edge when participating during EFAL oral lessons.

As indicated in Table 4.9, a medium to high positive correlation (r=0.481) was found between conversations C3 *learners experience tension during conversations with others* (Items 13, 15 and 18) and in the classroom C5 *embarrassment experienced by learners and feelings of low confidence* (Items 25, 26 and 29). This indicates a practically visible correlation. It can be deduced that if EFAL learners are not calm during conversations but they are tense, nervous and afraid to speak; they similarly will be nervous, confused and quiet in classroom situations.

A small to medium effect (r=0.279) that tends towards positive practically visible correlation between public speaking C4 *positive involvement and participation of learners during public speaking* (Items 19, 21 and 23) and *I take part in discussions during group work* (Item 14). It is possible that learners who readily take part in debates and argue during group work because they believe in themselves, tend to be comfortable and courageous enough to do public speaking in the EFAL classroom.

It is deduced from Table 4.9 that there is a medium to large positive correlation (r=0.356) between public speaking C4 *positive involvement and participation of learners during public speaking* (Items 19, 21 and 23) and *I ask others in the group questions* (Item 16). EFAL learners who like to take part in public speaking likewise ask questions in the group.

The correlation between public speaking C4 *positive involvement and participation of learners during public speaking* (Items 19, 21 and 23) and *I like it when the teacher asks a lot of questions* (Item 26) tends towards a positive practically visible correlation (r=0.314). It can be interpreted that learners who freely take part during oral EFAL lessons possibly like it when the teachers ask a lot of questions giving them an opportunity to participate.

A medium effect (r=0.212) was found between public speaking C4 *positive involvement and participation of learners during public speaking* (Items 19, 21 and 23) and *it does not bother me if I have to answer a question in class while the principal or inspector is on a visit to the class* (Item 30). This indicates a tendency towards a positive practically visible correlation. Learners who are imperturbable to participate during public speaking in the EFAL lessons may not be uneasy to speak when the principal or inspector visits the class and ask questions.

There tends to be a practically visible correlation (r=0.427) between public speaking C4 *learners experience a sense of pressure and nervousness during public speaking* (Item 20, 22 and 24) and in the classroom C5 *embarrassment experienced by learners and feelings of low confidence* (Items 25, 27 and 29). The secondary phase learners who are apprehensive during EFAL oral periods likewise display discomposure and insecurity during EFAL lessons when they have to communicate with the teacher or peers.

The correlation between *I take part in discussions during group work* (Item 14) and *I ask others in the group* (Item 16) tends towards positive practically visible (r=0.254). Learners who take part in dialogues about the work during group work in the EFAL class tend to have no uneasiness to ask questions to peers in the group.

Between *I ask others in the group questions* (Item 16) and *I like it when the teacher asks a lot of questions* (Item 26) a small to medium effect (r=0.226) was found that indicates that learners who are calm and relaxed when they ask questions in the group tend to like it when the EFAL teacher asks many questions.

It is clear from Table 4.9 that *I explain work to my fellow group members* (Item 17) and *I like it when the teacher asks a lot of questions* (Item 26) display a tendency towards a positive practically visible correlation (r=0.233). When learners are not afraid to converse with a new friend they possibly do not mind if the teacher questions them a lot during EFAL lessons.

A medium effect (r=0.257) was found between *I like it when the teacher asks a lot of questions* (Item 26) and *it does not bother me if I have to answer a question in class while the principal or inspector is on a visit to the class* (Item 30). This indicates a tendency towards a positive practically visible correlation. The result is that learners who like it when teachers ask many questions during the EFAL lessons might not mind if familiar or unfamiliar individuals are in class when questions are asked.

Table 4.9 indicates that a medium effect size was found between *I am never afraid to go to class* (Item 28) and *it does not bother me if I have to answer a question in class while the principal or inspector is on a visit to the class* (Item 30). The r-value is 0.254 which indicates a tendency towards a positive practically visible correlation. It can be deduced that learners who are unafraid to attend the EFAL lessons likewise tend to be confident when questions are asked with the principal and inspector visiting the class.

The above correlations were used to attempt to determine the relationship between communication skills, communication apprehension and academic achievement of secondary phase learners during EFAL lessons. In terms of the research questions it can be concluded that only three factors identified in communication apprehension correlate negatively to academic achievement in term 1 and term 2. The three factors, *negative emotions experienced by learners during group work participation*,

*tension experienced during conversation with others* and *embarrassment experienced by learners and feelings of low confidence* in the classroom during lessons are the only factors that produced negative correlations with academic achievement. All the other factors show a small effect which means no practically significant correlation with academic achievement in term 1 and term 2. It can be concluded that academic achievement is influenced by three negatively stated factors.

From the literature it has been deduced that communication apprehension can influence the academic achievement of learners when communicating in a second language. Tianjian (2010) argues that learners suffering from communication apprehension are likely to have a lower efficiency of learning and consequently a lower achievement. In a study amongst secondary school learners in Malaysia it is concluded that there is a weak relationship between interpersonal communication skills and academic achievement (Yahaya, 2009). According to the literature, Amogne and Yigzaw (2013), communication apprehension is a crucial academic success determinant. Learners may find it difficult to express themselves in EFAL and experience tension, anxiety, discomfort and insecurity. They explain that learners may fear negative evaluation from the teacher as well as from their classmates.

### 4.5.2 Comparison between academic achievement, communication skills and communication apprehension of male and female learners

McCroskey and Richmond (1982) explain that no significant differences have been found between the communication apprehension of male and female, although females are generally more anxious during public speaking. However, females have a slightly higher communication apprehension than men. Conversely, Borzi and Mills (2001) elucidate that male accounting students have higher levels of communication apprehension than their female counterparts. Therefore the researcher compared the academic achievement, communication skills and communication apprehension of male and female secondary phase learners in EFAL classes.

Independent t-tests were conducted to compare academic marks, communication skills and communication apprehension of male and female learners. Note that in this study the study population was not a random sample from the target population. Therefore statistical inference and p-values are not applicable (Ellis & Steyn, 2003), since inference to the target population cannot be done. The p-values were reported for the sake of completeness, but effect size (Cohen's d-value) will be reported and used for interpretation and conclusions. Cohen's d-value represents a standardised difference between mean scores.

Guidelines for the interpretation of Cohen's d-value are (Ellis & Steyn, 2003)

d≤0.2          Small effect size:          no practically significant correlation

d=0.2≤0.5     Medium effect size:      practically visible correlation

d=0.5≤0.8     Large effect size:          practically significant correlation.

The results are summarised in Table 4.10

**Table 4.10    Comparison between academic achievement, communication skills, communication apprehension and gender**

| Construct | Mean | | SD | | P-value | D-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Female | Male | Female | Male | | |
| EFAL mark Term 1 | 45.883 | 49.666 | 19.249 | 18.220 | 0.008 | -0.2 |
| EFAL marks Term 2 | 49.263 | 51.948 | 18.653 | 18.469 | 0.008 | -0.14 |
| Factor B Communication skills | 1.727 | 1.851 | .452 | .399 | 0.009 | -0.28 |
| Factor C 1 Group work(1, 3, 5) Negative emotions experience by learners during group participation | 2.792 | 2.860 | 1.085 | 1.132 | 0.010 | -0.06 |
| Factor C 1 Group work(2, 4, 6) Positive experience of group work participation | 3.764 | 3.830 | .971 | .961 | 0.011 | -0.07 |
| Factor C 2 Meetings (7, 10, 11) Learners experience a sense of anxiety | 2.943 | 3.033 | 1.034 | 1.054 | 0.012 | -0.09 |
| Factor C2 Meetings (8, 9, 12) Learners display signs of self-assurance | 3.252 | 3.231 | 1.016 | .999 | 0.012 | 0.02 |
| Factor C3 Conversations ( 13, 15, 18) Tension experience during conversations with others | 2.527 | 2.637 | 1.168 | 1.192 | 0.013 | -0.09 |
| Factor C4 Public Speaking (19, 21, 23) Positive involvement and participation of learners during public speaking | 3.141 | 3.202 | 1.085 | 1.043 | 0.014 | -0.06 |
| Factor C4 Public Speaking (20, 22,24) Learners expression sense of pressure and nervousness during public speaking | 3.186 | 3.328 | 1.061 | 1.080 | 0.015 | -0.13 |
| Factor C5 In the classroom (25, 27, 29) Embarrassment and low self-esteem | 3.040 | 3.154 | 1.092 | 1.107 | 0.015 | -0.10 |
| C14 I take part in discussions during group work | 2.289 | 2.333 | .864 | .862 | 0.016 | -0.04 |
| C16 I ask others in the group questions | 1.763 | 1.983 | .986 | .839 | 0.017 | -0.22 |
| C17 I explain work to my fellow group members | 1.781 | 1.878 | .947 | .921 | 0.018 | -0.10 |
| C26 I like it when the teacher asks a lot of questions | 3.350 | 3.407 | 1.480 | 1.390 | 0.019 | -0.04 |
| C28 I am never afraid to go to class | 3.656 | 3.744 | 1.488 | 1.483 | 0.019 | -0.06 |
| C30 It does not bother me if I have to answer a question in class while the principal/inspector is on a visit to the class | 2.932 | 2.938 | 1.504 | 1.527 | 0.020 | 0.00 |

When considering the effect sizes it is clear that the male and female learners did not differ practically significantly on any of the constructs, with the highest d being 0.28 in absolute value.

**4.5.3   Comparison between academic achievement, communication skills and communication apprehension of grades 7-9 learners**

ANOVA tests were conducted to compare academic marks, communication skills and communication apprehension for grades 7, 8 and 9.  For the ANOVA tests, omnibus tests are conducted first to see whether the groups differ on a construct.  If differences are indicated by the omnibus test ($p \leq 0.05$) post hoc test are conducted to determine between which groups the differences lie.

For this study, the p-values of the omnibus tests are presented in Table 4.11 and were as follows.

**Table 4.11    Comparison between academic achievement, communication skills, communication apprehension and grades in the senior secondary phase**

| Construct | Grade 7 | | Grade 8 | | Grade 9 | | P-value | D-Value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Mean** | **SD** | **Mean** | **SD** | **Mean** | **SD** | | |
| 1$^{st}$ Quarter | 49.17 | 18.10 | 47.41 | 19.59 | 47.12 | 18.26 | 0.429 | -0.11 |
| 2$^{nd}$ Quarter | 52.11 | 16.68 | 52.36 | 18.95 | 46.27 | 19.96 | 0.001 | -0.29 |
| Factor B Communication skills | 1.82 | 0.45 | 1.82 | 0.42 | 1.72 | 0.41 | 0.025 | -0.21 |
| Factor C 1 Group work(1,3,5) Negative emotions experience by learners during group participation | 2.86 | 1.16 | 2.91 | 1.06 | 2.70 | 1.10 | 0.118 | -0.31 |
| Factor C 1 Group work(2,4,6) Positive experience of group work participation | 3.82 | 1.00 | 3.82 | 0.93 | 3.74 | 0.97 | 0.554 | -0.09 |
| Factor C 2 Meetings (7,10,11) Learners experience a sense of anxiety | 3.32 | 1.05 | 3.33 | 0.85 | 3.01 | 1.10 | 0.001 | -0.28 |
| Factor C2 Meetings (8,9,12) Learners display signs of self-assurance | 2.86 | 1.08 | 3.15 | 0.97 | 2.98 | 1.08 | 0.006 | -0.11 |
| Factor C3 Conversations ( 13,15,18) Tension experience during conversations with others | 2.62 | 1.24 | 2.69 | 1.13 | 2.44 | 1.17 | 0.074 | -0.15 |
| Factor C4 Public Speaking (19,21,23) Positive involvement and participation of learners during public speaking | 3.22 | 1.10 | 3.14 | 0.99 | 3.15 | 1.10 | 0.695 | -0.06 |
| Factor C4 Public Speaking (20,22,24) Learners expression sense of pressure and nervousness during public speaking | 3.18 | 1.11 | 3.43 | 1.03 | 3.18 | 1.06 | 0.010 | -0.07 |
| Factor C5 In the classroom (25,27,29) Embarrassment and low self-esteem | 3.05 | 1.15 | 3.26 | 1.01 | 2.97 | 1.13 | 0.013 | -0.01 |
| B14 I take part in discussions during group work | 3.42 | 1.38 | 3.47 | 1.42 | 3.54 | 1.44 | 0.714 | -0.08 |
| B16 I ask others in the group questions | 3.87 | 1.26 | 3.64 | 1.33 | 3.61 | 1.32 | 0.046 | -0.20 |
| B17 I explain work to my fellow group members | 3.92 | 1.24 | 3.54 | 1.34 | 3.52 | 1.36 | 0.001 | -0.29 |
| C26 I like it when the teacher asks a lot of questions | 3.66 | 1.41 | 3.30 | 1.41 | 3.12 | 1.44 | 0.000 | -0.38 |
| C28 I am never afraid to go to class | 3.64 | 1.55 | 3.79 | 1.45 | 3.66 | 1.46 | 0.463 | -0.01 |
| C30 It does not bother me if I have to answer a question in class while the principal/inspector is on a visit to the class | 2.89 | 1.58 | 3.07 | 1.49 | 2.82 | 1.46 | 0.175 | -0.04 |

However, as indicated before, p-values are not really interpretable since the study population was not randomly drawn from the target population. Therefore, post hoc tests were conducted for all constructs to determine whether any of the pair wise grade combinations differ practically significantly. The largest d-value that was obtained was 0.38. It can therefore be concluded that there are no practically significant differences on any of the constructs between the three grades in the senior secondary phase for EFAL learners.


## 4.6 Summary


This chapter provided the researcher with a general view regarding the relationship between communication skills, communication apprehension and learner achievement of learners in the EFAL classroom in the secondary phase in Kannaland District, Western Cape. The validity and reliability of the communication skills questionnaire and Personal Report on Communication Apprehension Questionnaire were scrutinised and analyses in different categories were evaluated. Data were analysed in the empirical section of the research study to determine the self-reported communication skills and communication apprehension of the learners in grades 7-9. The relationships between the learners' communication skills, communication apprehension and academic achievement, were explored. Furthermore the researcher compared gender to establish if differences were to be found in the relationship between academic achievement, communication skills and communication apprehension. Additionally the researcher analysed the relationship of academic achievement, communication skills and communication apprehension across grades 7-9.

Chapter Five is devoted to the summary of the study and the findings, and provides suggestions and recommendations as the outcome of the study.

# Chapter Five

## Conclusions and recommendations

### 5.1    Introduction

Chapter Five wraps up this non-experimental quantitative research study.  This research study aimed at investigating the relationship between communication skills and communication apprehension of secondary phase learners and their achievement in EFAL in Kannaland District, Western Cape.  Firstly, compacted overviews of the preceding chapters are used to epitomise and outline the research that has been conducted, i.e. problem statement, motivation for research, research questions and aims (Chapter One); theoretical framework and conceptual foundation (Chapter Two); world-view, research design and methodology (Chapter Three); and quantitative findings (Chapter Four).  Key findings (obtained from the data-analyses of Chapter Four) were used to address the research questions, and consequently, to meet the research aims.  In Chapter Five the researcher provides an overview of the research study and the implications of the findings are explored.  The rest of the study provides recommendations drawn from the key research findings, recommendations are made for future study and limitations are discussed.  Conclusions round off the study.

### 5.2    Outline of the study

An overview of the first four chapters is rendered:

### 5.2.1   Chapter One

Chapter One introduced the research study and presented the problem statement and motivation (§ 1.2).  Kannaland District, Western Cape is a predominantly Afrikaans speaking community where learners have to cope with English in the EFAL classroom.  Clarification of concepts related to the research study were presented (§ 1.3).  Human communication is at the heart of learning and teaching Ineffective communication hinders the learning and teaching process.  Good communication, adequate communication skills, and cognitive comprehension are required in the EFAL class in order to reach educational goals as identified in the CAPS (§. 1.4).  Three research aims guided this study (§ 1.5):

- Explore the relationship between communication skills and academic achievement of secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape in EFAL.
- Explore the relationship between communication apprehension and academic achievement of secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape in EFAL.
- Explore the relationship between communication apprehension and communication skills of secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape in EFAL

The quantitative research methodology was captured (§1.6), the conceptualisation of the communication skills questionnaire was presented (1.6.6.1) and the oral communication apprehension questionnaire was described (§1.6.6.2). The researcher explained the statistical techniques used to analyse the data (§1.6.7). Ethical aspects adhered to during this research study were clarified (§1.6.8). Finally the chapter outline of the study was presented (§1.7).

**5.2.2  Chapter Two**

In Chapter Two the researcher unpacked the theoretical framework and identified the contextual gap of the study. Theoretical aspects of human communication were rendered and the communication process explained in detail. The contextual space of the research study was identified and presented in §2.2. The researcher explained the motivation for the study in more detail (§2.3). Different kinds of human communication were discussed to give a broader insight into the communication process (§2.4). The communication contexts were explored to provide a better understanding of communication as practised in our everyday lives (§2.5). Furthermore the researcher deliberates on the different types of communication that may have an effect on communication skills, and communication apprehension (§2.6). To offer a better perspective of the communication process, focus was placed on two classroom communication models (§2.7). To underline the importance of communication during learning and teaching two relevant communication models were discussed. Vreken's model of classroom communication was presented (§2.7.1). The South African education system and the Western culture communication model of second language learning were outlined (§2.7.2). These concepts were conceptualised in terms of the school context, specifically EFAL classes. Firstly, CAPS pertaining to EFAL was explained and provided background for the importance of communication in effective teaching and learning of EFAL as the global language. The facets of the communication models were discussed in detail. Secondary phase learners are in the adolescent stage and to underline the kind of learner the researcher was dealing with the Psychosocial model of Erikson (1968) was discussed (§2.10.3). As English is the learners' FAL, it was important to focus on Krashen's (1985) active communication model of second language acquisition (§2.11.2.2). In the EFAL classroom, communication skills of the learners were assessed as the learners' ability to use the language and presented as their academic performance (§2.12). It is more difficult to assess the level of communication skills of learners in EFAL as it is based on the subjective communication between learners and teachers or learners and their peers. Chapter Two concluded with a discussion of communication skills, communication apprehension and academic achievement (§2.13).

**5.2.3  Chapter Three**

In Chapter Three the world view and research design of this research study were discussed (§3.1 & §3.2). To investigate the relationship between communication skills, communication apprehension and academic achievement a quantitative non-experimental quantitative design rooted in the

ontological assumptions of post-positivism was employed. Initially, a description of the research context was stated and clarified. The study population was discussed (§3.3.3). The empirical investigation developed from a quantitative research paradigm was used in order to quantify the relationship between the variables (§3.3.4). Independent variables included communication, communication skills and communication apprehension; gender, and grade and were measured against academic achievement as the dependent variable. The researcher made use of two measuring instruments, and first and second term EFAL marks of the learners (§3.3.5). A 21-item adapted custom-developed questionnaire on communication skills, the thirty-item internationally-recognised PRCA questionnaire and the participants' EFAL marks of the first and second term were analysed (§3.3.5). During the data collection procedure the researcher ensured the participants of the confidentiality of, and explained all the ethical aspects related to this research study (§3.4 - §3.7). Finally a summary of the chapter is provided (§3.8).

### 5.2.4    Chapter Four

Chapter Four presented the findings of the quantitative non-experimental study in detail. This research arrived at answers to the two research questions that guided the study. The chapter commences with a clear description of the descriptive statistics of the biographical variables and include frequency analysis (§4.2.1). The analysis of the communication skills of the learners was presented in Table 4.1 and the self-reported communication skills information was discussed to provide an indication of the perceived skills of the grades 7-9 EFAL learners (§4.2.2). The researcher deliberated on the information of the PRCA Questionnaire (Table 4.2). A summary of learners' experiences of apprehension in the EFAL classroom presented results with regard to five sub-scales (§4.2.3). The analysis computed descriptive data, and factor analyses of the various sections on the questionnaires were done (§4.3). Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated to determine the reliability of sections of the questionnaires (§4.3). Finally, Pearson's effect sizes calculated meaningful relationships between the different variables (Table 4.5). In addition, differences between gender (Table 4.10) and grades (Table 4.11) were explored.

### 5.3    Key findings related to the research questions

The findings of this study were reliable and are offered according to the research questions set at the beginning of this study: (1) What is the relationship between communication skills and academic achievement of secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape in EFAL? (2) What is the relationship between communication apprehension and academic achievement of secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape in EFAL? (3) What is the relationship between communication skills and communication apprehension of secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape in EFAL? Summaries of the findings are based on literature and the empirical study (Tables 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3) and followed by a broad discussion of the empirical findings.

**Table 5.1        Summary of results relating to research question 1**

| Research Question | Literature | Communication skills - descriptive statistics | Correlations | Research aim obtained |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| What is the relationship between communication skills and the academic achievement of secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape when communicating by means of EFAL? | Various researchers indicate that there is a positive practically visible relationship between communication skills and academic achievement (§2.10.4 and §2.10.5)<br><br>This indicates that learners should have high levels of communication skills to perform well in EFAL.  Nevertheless, it is stated that only if effective measures are taken to help learners overcome communication apprehension, it will be possible to develop their communication skills<br><br>Literature reveals contradictive results related to communication skills and academic achievement (§2.7)<br><br>There are indications that the relationship between communication skills and academic achievement are associated with specific subjects in a teaching and learning setting | The majority of secondary phase learners in the EFAL classroom in the Kannaland District, Western Cape demonstrated high communication skills (Table 4.2) | There is no significant relationship between communication skills and academic achievement (Table 4.9). | The researcher explored the relationship between communication skills and academic achievement of secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape when communicating by means of EFAL.  The results of this group of secondary learners indicate no significant correlation between the two variables. |

**Table 5.2      Summary of results relating to research question 2**

| Research question | Literature | Communication apprehension: descriptive statistics | Correlations | Research aim obtained |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| What is the relationship between communication apprehension and the academic achievement of secondary phase learners in Kannaland Distict, Western Cape, when communicating by means of EFAL? | Various researchers explain that some learners realise less academic achievement than other learners when they experience high levels of communication apprehension (§2.10.4 and 2.10.5)<br><br>Some researchers have discovered that there is a negative practically visible relationship between communication apprehension and academic achievement specifically in a second language (§2.11) | From the data it can be concluded that the majority of EFAL secondary phase learners in the Kannaland District, Western Cape experience high levels of communication apprehension (Table 4.3) | There is a negative practically visible relationship between some factors of communication apprehension and academic achievement.<br><br>There is a correlation between academic achievement and (Table 4.9):<br>• group work<br>• conversation<br>• in the classroom | The researcher explored the relationship between communication apprehension and academic achievement of secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape when communicating by means of EFAL.  The results of this group of secondary learners indicate significant correlation between the communication apprehension and academic achievement of three of the negatively stated variables: oral communication during group work, conversations and oral communication in the classroom |

**Table 5.3        Summary of results relating to research question 3**

| Research question | Literature | Communication apprehension: descriptive statistics | Correlations | Research aim obtained |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| What is the relationship between communication skills and the communication apprehension of secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape, when communicating by means of EFAL? | Various researchers explain that some learners realise less academic achievement than other learners when they experience high levels of communication apprehension and poor communication skills (§2.10)<br><br>Some researchers discovered that there is a positive practically visible relationship between communication apprehension and communication skills specifically in a second language (§2.10.4) | From the data it can be concluded that the majority of EFAL secondary phase learners in the Kannaland District, Western Cape experience high levels of communication skills and low levels of communication apprehension (Table 4.3) | There is a positive practically visible relationship between communication skills and some factors of communication apprehension<br><br>From the correlations it could be established that there is a positive practically visible relationship between communication skills and communication apprehension (Table 4.9): related to:<br>•      group work<br>•      meetings<br>•      public speaking | The researcher explored the relationship between communication apprehension and oral communication skills of secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape when communicating by means of EFAL.  The results of this group of secondary learners indicate significant correlation between the communication skills and communication apprehension in three of the negatively stated variables: oral communication during group work, meetings and public speaking |

### 5.3.1   Descriptive data

Descriptive data augmented the perspective about the EFAL learner's communication skills and communication apprehension.

#### 5.3.1.1  Communication skills

The majority of the participants indicated that they liked group discussions, asking questions in the group, and explaining work to their peers in the group.  They showed interest in what the teacher explained on the blackboard, and the majority nodded their heads when they listened to the teacher and answered questions.  The participants liked to take part in conversations with their friends and other individuals.  The majority of the participants did not take part in quizzes or debates, and many were not interested in crossword puzzles.  From the participants' responses, one could conclude that the majority of EFAL secondary phase learners in the Kannaland District, Western Cape indicated high levels of communication skills in English.

#### 5.3.1.2  Communication apprehension

Learner-participants indicated that most of them were nervous and tense when working in groups and they did not like to make decisions in the group.  A clear majority of the participants did not like meetings and would not express themselves as they felt uncomfortable and uneasy during meetings.  During conversations, the majority of the participants were tense and afraid to speak in the presence of others.  It was evident that the majority avoided giving public speeches because they were anxious and uneasy.  Most of the participants became nervous when they had to say something in class and disliked to be asked questions.  The participants correspondingly preferred that the teacher spoke continuously because they wanted to avoid speaking in class.  According to the participants' responses, it could be concluded that the majority of EFAL secondary phase learners in the Kannaland District, Western Cape experienced high levels of communication apprehension.

### 5.3.2   Factor analysis and correlations

The variables of the Communication skills and PRCA (PRCA) questionnaire were categorical in nature.  The relationships between communication skills and academic achievement, communication apprehension and academic achievement, communication skills and communication apprehension as well as the relationships between gender and between the different phases were identified by the results of correlations between the relevant variables.  This section concludes with the findings according to the research aims of the study (§1.5).

**5.4 The relationship between communication skills, communication apprehension and academic achievement of secondary phase EFAL learners**

The secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape experience high levels of communication skills and high levels of communication apprehension in EFAL. As illustrated in Figure 5.1, there is no practically visible relationship between communication skills and academic achievement for this specific sample using the Communication Skills Scale. Three communication apprehension factors relate to academic achievement and three communication apprehension factors relate to communication skills.

**5.4.1 Research aim 1: To explore the relationship between communication skills and academic achievement of secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape when communicating by means of EFAL**

The relationship between communication skills and the academic achievement of the EFAL learners was identified by the results of the correlations between the different factors. The results indicated a small effect (r=0.091# and r=0.128) between communication skills and academic achievement. Therefore it can be deduced that there is no practically visible relationship between communication skills and academic achievement of secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape.

In addition, the researcher explored the relationship between communication skills and communication apprehension to provide a broader perspective. A practically visible correlation (r=0.369) was indicated between the positively phrased statements with regard to group work and communication skills. During group work learners should engage in group discussions and express their opinions. Learners with well-developed communication skills would experience group work in a positive way and would be able to convey messages with confidence.

Meetings in the EFAL classroom were a combination of verbal activities and active listening between teachers and learners or peers, both important elements of communication skills. A practically visible correlation (r=0.336) were indicated between positively phrased meeting statements and communication skills. This positive relationship between communication skills and meetings indicated that learners with well-developed communication skills would use opportunities for open dialogue with teacher and peers in EFAL.

A practically visible correlation was found between communication skills and public speaking (r=0.300). The exposure of leaners with well-developed communication skills to public speaking provided opportunities to address an audience effortlessly in EFAL. This indicated that learners with good communication skills were more likely to be positive towards public speaking in the EFAL classroom.

From this research it can be deduced that learners with high communication skills in oral communication during group work, meetings and public speaking had low communication apprehension. In contradiction to most of the literature it could be concluded that there was significant relationship between the three variables of communication skills and academic achievement of learners in the secondary phase in the Kannaland District, Western Cape.

**5.4.2    Research aim 2:  To explore the relationship between communication apprehension and academic achievement of the secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape when communicating by means of EFAL**

The relationship between communication apprehension and the academic achievement of the EFAL learners was identified by the results of the correlations between the different factors.  The results indicated that there were relationships between various factors of communication apprehension and academic achievement.

There tended to be a negative practically visible correlation between group work and academic achievement in both terms (r=-0.229[#] and r=-0.219[##]).  This indicated that learners who experience group work as an intimidating, tense and stressful situation were more inclined to have lower EFAL academic achievement than those who experience group work in a positive way.  Learners who were relaxed and calm during group work, would freely take part in group discussions and ask questions in the group, were likely to attain higher EFAL academic achievement.  Thus a positive relationship was identified between communication apprehension during meetings and academic achievement.

Practically visible correlations were found between conversations and academic achievement in both terms (r=-0.332[#] and r=-0.324[##]).  There were many opportunities for verbal academic conversations in EFAL between learners and teacher or learners and peers.  The EFAL learners who experienced nervousness and tension during conversations with others were more likely to attain lower academic achievement in EFAL.  Thus a relationship was identified between conversations as a factor of communication apprehension and academic achievement

There are practically visible correlations between learners' communication apprehension in the classroom and academic achievement (r=-0.239[#] and r=-0.244[##]).  Due to the pressure and stress experienced in the EFAL classroom, learners tended to be quiet and aloof in class and preferred teacher-centred lessons so that they could only listen.  Learners who became nervous and confused when they had to communicate in class tended to achieve poor academic achievement in EFAL. Subsequently calm and relaxed learners in the EFAL class, and those who preferred the teachers to ask questions were expected to achieve better in EFAL.  A relationship was identified between meetings as a factor of communication apprehension and academic achievement.

From this research it could be deduced that learners with high communication apprehension had lower academic achievement as opposed to those learners with low communication apprehension. In addition it could be concluded that there was a positive significant relationship between three of the variables of communication apprehension and academic achievement of learners in the secondary phase in the Kannaland District, Western Cape.

### 5.4.3    Research aim 3:  To explore the relationship between communication apprehension and communication skills of secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape when communicating by means of EFAL

The relationship between communication apprehension and the communication skills of the EFAL learners was identified by the results of the correlations between the different factors.  The results indicated that there were relationships between various factors of communication apprehension and communication skills.

A correlation that tends towards practically visible was discovered, which shows a medium effect (r=-0.369) between communication skills and the negatively phrased group work factor.  A medium correlation (r=0.336) was found between communication skills and negatively phrased meetings factor C2.  A medium effect (r=0.300), which tends towards a practically visible correlation, was found between communication skills and negatively phrased public speaking factor C4.

From this research study it could be concluded that there was a positive practically visible relationship between some negatively phrased factors of communication apprehension and communication skills of learners in the secondary phase in the Kannaland District, Western Cape.  Therefore it is deduced that learners with low communication apprehension presented good communication skills as opposed to those learners with high communication apprehension.

### 5.5    Schematic representation of findings

The convergent findings presented in Figure 5.1 are in line with research aims of the study and the empirical results.

As explained in § 4.5, for the purpose of this investigation, an effect size r≈0.5 is considered a large effect which indicates a practically visible correlation, an effect size r≈0.3 is considered a medium effect which tends towards a practically visible correlation and an effect size r≈0.1 is considered a small effect which means no practically visible correlation.
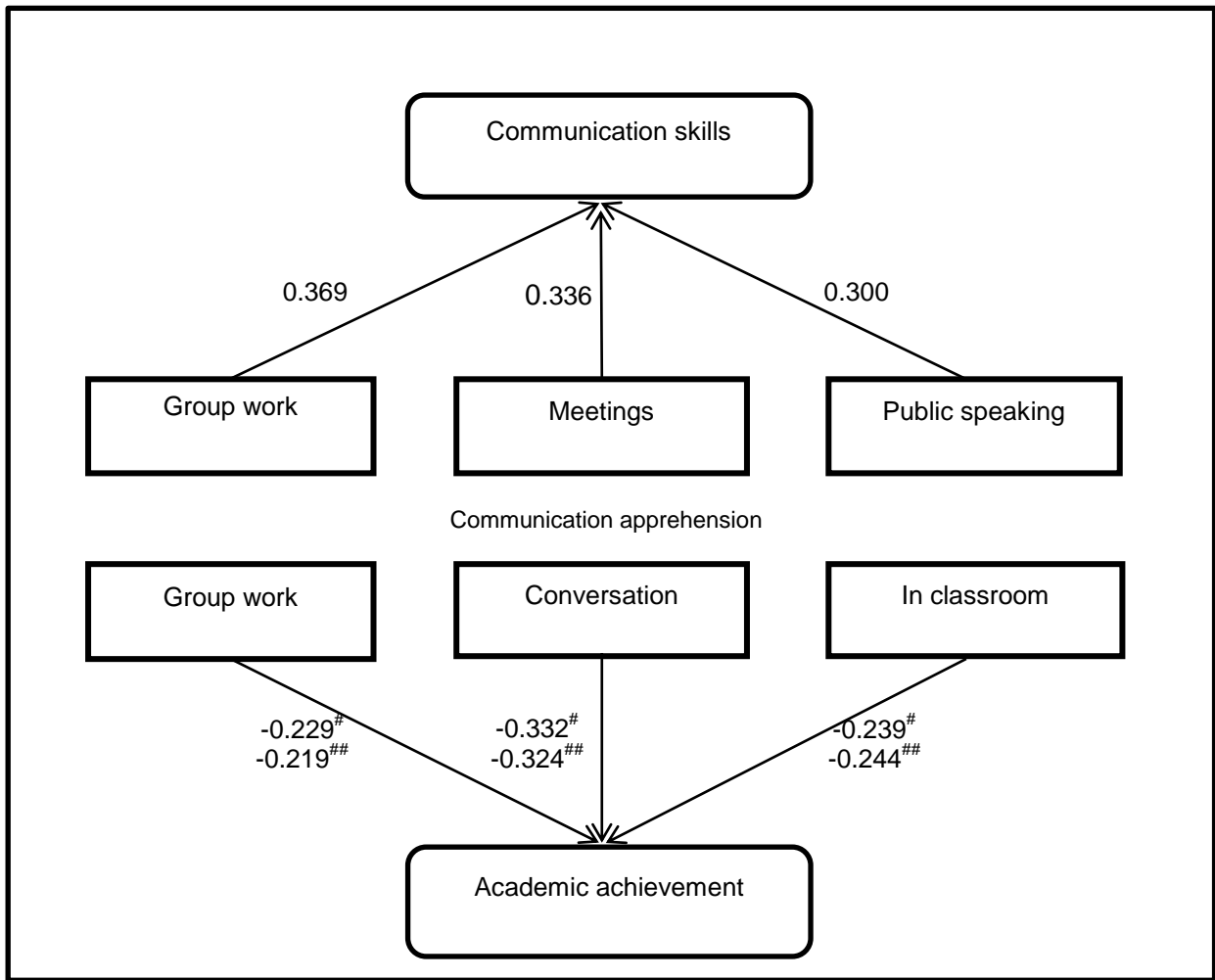
**Figure 5.1    Schematic representation of the relationship between communication skills, communication apprehension and academic achievement**

As highlighted from the literature, an academic achievement gap existed between learners with good communication skills and low levels of communication apprehension and those learners with poor communication skills and high levels of communication apprehension in EFAL.  In concurrence with research performed in Nigeria, the researcher is of the opinion that it may be concluded from the literature that learners' communication skills may differ in different subjects (§2.7).  The secondary phase learners in Kannaland District, Western Cape, reported high levels of communication skills in EFAL with the Communication Skills Scale.  It can be reasoned that the Communication Skills Scale measured only general communication skills and not necessarily English communication skills.

The majority of learners experienced comprehension apprehensions in certain situations during EFAL class activities that could affect their academic achievement.  Finally it could be concluded that there are challenges associated with communication skills and communication apprehension in the South African education system.  More emphasis should be placed on communication skills development

and more supplementary support be provided to learners who experience communication apprehension during EFAL teaching and learning in order to improve their academic achievement.

## 5.6    Recommendations

As a result of the literature study and research findings, the following recommendations are proposed.

### 5.6.1    Recommendations from findings

Teachers should be able to identify communication skills and communication apprehension in EFAL learners and should endeavour to enhance communication skills and reduce communication apprehension. The following areas should be considered:

- Personal development training should be made available to all teachers.  Specific development of interpersonal communication skills should be attempted.
- Workshops, seminars and in-service training courses on development of communication skills and identification of communication apprehension for teachers should be presented.
- Teachers should strive to identify learners with low levels of communication skills and try to develop communication skills in the EFAL classroom.
- Learners with high levels of communication apprehension should be identified by teachers to employ remedial and support strategies in the EFAL classroom.
- Teachers' attention to group discussions during teaching and learning is essential because during group work, meetings and conversations learners are restricted to express themselves.

### 5.6.2    Recommendations for further study

With this study the relationships between communication skills, communication apprehension and academic achievement were investigated.  The following areas are recommended for further research relating to the communication skills and communication apprehension in EFAL.

- Relationship between all-inclusive communication skills and wide-ranging communication apprehension of EFAL learners and teachers in predominantly Afrikaans speaking schools
- Causes of oral communication apprehension among EFAL secondary phase learners in predominantly Afrikaans speaking schools
- Relationship between the antecedents of oral communication skills and oral communication apprehension in EFAL classes to shed light pertaining to the influence thereof on academic achievement of the secondary phase learners
- The longitudinal effect of oral communication apprehension on EFAL achievement in predominantly Afrikaans speaking schools

**5.7      Limitations of the study**

In this research study the participants were limited to secondary phase (grades 7-9) learners of the schools in the Kannaland District of the Western Cape. The group of participants could have been expanded to the Further Education and Training Phase (grades 10-12) learners of the schools in the Kannaland District of the Western Cape. This investigation was limited to the secondary phase learners' communication skills and experiences of communication apprehension without taking the teacher's communication skills and levels of communication apprehension into consideration.

This study only focused on learner's oral communication skills and other communications skills such as listening, reading and writing should also be taken into consideration to determine the relationship between communication skills and academic success in the EFAL class.

Teachers may also have insufficient communication skills and experience communication apprehension themselves that may hamper their ability to teach effectively. A similar study with teacher participants could yield interesting results that can be compared to this study.

Qualitative observational data to supplement the test battery would serve to enhance the perspective pertaining communication apprehension in EFAL classes. The use of a single non-experimental survey design was a limitation of this research. The influence of communication skills and communication apprehension was only measured once without a follow up.


**5.8      Conclusion**

This study indicated that learners in secondary schools in Kannaland District, Western Cape experience communication apprehension communicating by means of EFAL. This study outlined the relationship between communication skills and academic achievement in EFAL as well as the relationship between communication apprehension and academic achievement in EFAL of the secondary phase learners. Firstly, the study revealed that communication skills relate to communication apprehension during group work, meetings and public speaking. There was no practically visible relationship between communication skills and academic achievement for the learners in EFAL for this sample of learners. Secondly, there is a practically visible relationship between academic achievement and some factors of communication apprehension. Communication apprehension experienced during group work, conversations and in the EFAL classroom, relates to academic achievement in EFAL (§5.8). Communication skills in EFAL should be improved to provide teachers and learners with more confidence and less anxiety during verbal activities. Thirdly, a practically visible relationship between communication apprehension (group work, meetings and public speaking) and communication skills was established for this group of secondary phase learners.

Communication skills and communication apprehension remain a challenge in language education in South Africa. Teachers could use the principles encompassed in this research to recognise learners with problems related to communication skills and communication apprehension in an effort to implement remedial and support strategies during the planning of EFAL lessons in a predominately Afrikaans speaking environment.

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**Ethics Committee**
Tel     +27 18 299 4850
Fax    +27 18 293 5329
Email  Ethics@nwu.ac.za

## ETHICS APPROVAL OF PROJECT

The North-West University Ethics Committee (NWU-EC) hereby approves your project as indicated below. This implies that the NWU-EC grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the project may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Project title : An analysis of the relationship between communication skills, communication apprehension and academic achievement of secondary phase learners** | |
| **Project Leader: Prof. A.S. Blignaut - Student : ZM Mentoor** | |

**Ethics number:**

| N | W | U | - | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | - | A | 2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Institution — Project Number — Year — Status

Status:  S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation

**Approval date:** 2011/06/23          **Expiry date:** 2016/06/22

Special conditions of the approval (if any): None

General conditions:

*While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following:*

- *The project leader (principle investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the NWU-EC:*
  - *annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project,*
  - *without any delay in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project.*
- *The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the NWU-EC. Would there be deviated from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.*
- *The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date, a new application must be made to the NWU-EC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.*
- *In the interest of ethical responsibility the NWU-EC retains the right to:*
  - *request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project;*
  - *withdraw or postpone approval if:*
    - *any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected,*
    - *it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the NWU-EC or that information has been false or misrepresented,*
    - *the required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately,*
    - *new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.*

The Ethics Committee would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your project. Please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Committee for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely

Prof Amanda Lourens
*(chair NWU Ethics Committee)*

**Questionnaire A: Communication skills**

**SECTION 1**

The aim of **SECTION 1** of the questionnaire is to gather information about the communication skills of learners.

There are no corrector wrong answers to the questions. You are expected to **give your honest option** on each statement.

### ALL INFORMATION WILL BE REGARDED AS CONFIDENTIAL

**Communication Questionnaire**

**Grade 7-9 *English Second Additional Language* Learners**

The aim with this research is to gather information regarding your communication skills and communication apprehension in *English Second Additional Language.*

There are no correct or wrong answers to the questions. You are expected to give **your honest opinion** on how you experience your situation in the classroom.

**ALL INFORMATION WILL BE REGARDED AS CONFIDENTIAL**

**SECTION A: Biographical information**

**Mark with a (X) in the appropriate block**

| 1.Gender | Girl | | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Boy | | 2 |

| 2.Home language | Afrikaans | | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | English | | 2 |
| | Other | | 3 |

| 3.Grade | 7 | | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 8 | | 2 |
| | 9 | | 3 |

| 4.Previous mark obtained in English | 0-30% | | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 31-40% | | 2 |
| | 41-60% | | 3 |
| | 61-80% | | 4 |
| | 80+% | | 5 |

| 5.Age | Younger than 11 | | 1 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | 12 | | 2 |
| | 13 | | 3 |
| | 14 | | 4 |
| | 15 | | 5 |
| | 16 | | 6 |
| | 17 | | 7 |

**HOW TO ANSWER SECTION B**

**EXAMPLE:**

If you **always** like to get up early in the morning mark "always" with a (X) in the appropriate block

| STATEMENT | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Always |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| I like to get up early in the morning | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

If you **never** like to get up early in the morning mark "never" with a (X ) in the appropriate block

| STATEMENT | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Always |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| I like to get up early in the morning | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

**SECTION B: COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

Mark with (X) in the appropriate block as indicated in the example

Read each statement and decide to what extend you agree or disagree with the statement:

**STATEMENTS:**

| | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I nod my head while the teacher explain work in the class | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 2. I listen to the teacher when work is explained on the black-board | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 3. I look at the teacher when work is explained in the class | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4. I answer the teacher immediately when I am asked a question | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 5. I sit close to the teacher to hear the teacher | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 6. I complete cross-word puzzles | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 7. I compete in quizzes | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 8. I explain work to my friends | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 9. I have conversations with people | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 10. I discuss new topics related to English with my teacher | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 11. I speak to my classmates about the work completed in class | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 12. I discuss employment opportunities with my friends outside class | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 13. I discuss personal issues with my teacher | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 14. I take part in discussions during group work | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 15. I am the only person talking during group work | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 16. I ask the others in the group questions | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 17. I explain work to my fellow group members | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 18. I take part in debates at school | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 19. I discuss the news read in newspapers with people | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 20. I read out loud in front of the class | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 21. I use another language than English to explain my thought in the class | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

**THANKS FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION**

## QUESTIONNAIRE B: Communication apprehension

**Home language:**

| English | Afrikaans |
|---------|-----------|
|         |           |

**Please note:**

For each of the statements, indicate the degree to which you agree with the statement e.g. 'I like to go to school'. If you disagree strongly with this statement, encircle the appropriate number e.g. 1

| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | (1) |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly disagree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Group work** | | | | | | |
| 1. I dislike working in groups | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| 2. Generally, I feel comfortable while participating in group discussions | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| 3. I am tense and nervous while participating in group discussions | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| 4. I like to get involved in group discussions | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| 5. Engaging in groups discussions makes me tense and nervous | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| 6. I am calm and relaxed while participating in group discussions | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Total |
| **Meetings** | | | | | | |
| 7. Generally, I am nervous when I have to participate in meetings | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| 8. Usually, I an calm and relaxed when participating in meetings | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| 9. I am very calm and relaxed when I am called upon to express an opinion | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| 10. I am afraid to express myself at meetings | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |

| | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11. Communicating at meetings makes me feel uncomfortable | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| 12. I am relaxed when answering questions at a meeting | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Total |
| **Conversations** | | | | | | |
| 13. While participating in a conversation with a new friend, I feel very nervous | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| 14. I have no fear of speaking up in conversation | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| 15. Ordinarily, I am very tense and nervous in conversation | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| 16. Ordinarily, I am calm and relaxed in conversation | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| 17. While conversing with a new friend, I am very relaxed | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| 18. I am afraid to speak up in conversation | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Total |
| **Public speaking** | | | | | | |
| 19. I have no fear of giving a speech | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| 20. Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while giving a speech | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| 21. I feel relaxed while giving a speech | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| 22. My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a speech | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| 23. I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| 24. While giving a speech, I get so nervous, I forget facts that I really know | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Total |
| **In the classroom** | | | | | | |
| 25. Generally, I get nervous when I have to say something in class | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| 26. I like it when the teacher asks a lot of questions | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| 27. Usually, my thoughts become confused when I have to answer a question | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| 28. I am never afraid to go to class | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| 29. In class, I prefer the teacher to speak a lot so that I only have to listen | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| 30. It does not bother me if I have to answer a question in class while the principal/inspector is on a visit to the class | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Total |
| | | | | | | **Grand total** |

WESTERN CAPE
Education Department

Provincial Government of the Western Cape

awyngaar@pgwc.gov. za
tel: +27 021 476 9272
Fax:  0865902282
Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000
wced.wcape.gov.za

**REFERENCE:** 20110811-0023
**ENQUIRIES:**    Dr A T Wyngaard

Mrs Zelda Mentoor
Van der Vywerlaan 19
Ladismith
6655

**Dear Mrs Zelda Mentoor**

 **RESEARCH PROPOSAL: AN ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNICATION SKILLS, COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF SECONDARY PHASE LEARNERS**
Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:
1.      Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2.      Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3.      You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4.      Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5.      The Study is to be conducted from  **01 August 2011 till 30 September 2011**
6.      No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7.      Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number.
8.      A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9.      Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10.     A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director:  Research Services.
11.     The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:
             **The Director: Research Services**
             **Western Cape Education Department**
             **Private Bag X9114**
             **CAPE TOWN**
             **8000**
We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.
Signed: Audrey T Wyngaard
for: **HEAD: EDUCATION**
**DATE: 11 August 2011**

---

**MELD ASSEBLIEF VERWYSINGSNOMMERS IN ALLE KORRESPONDENSIE / PLEASE QUOTE REFERENCE NUMBERS IN ALL CORRESPONDENCE /
NCEDA UBHALE IINOMBOLO ZESALATHISO KUYO YONKE IMBALELWANO**

**GRAND CENTRAL TOWERS, LAER-PARLEMENTSTRAAT, PRIVAATSAK X9114, KAAPSTAD 8000
GRAND CENTRAL TOWERS,  LOWER PARLIAMENT STREET, PRIVATE BAG X9114, CAPE TOWN 8000**

**WEB: http://wced.wcape.gov.za**

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**INDIENSNEMING- EN SALARISNAVRAE/EMPLOYMENT AND SALARY QUERIES ☎0861 92 33 22**
**VEILIGE SKOLE/SAFE SCHOOLS ☎ 0800 45 46 47**

19 van der Vyferlaan
Ladismith
6655
[date] 2011

**Principal of the school**/
**School Management Team**/
**Chairperson of the School Governing Body**
[Address of school]


Dear Madam / Sir [name]

### Permission to do research at [name] School

I, ZM Mentoor, am a MEd student enrolled at the School for Continuing Teacher Education, North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus.  I intend to collect data for my research study relating to Learning and Teaching.  The title of my proposed dissertation is:  *An analysis of the relationship between communication skills, communication apprehension and academic achievement of secondary phase learners.*

I hereby request your permission to conduct research by means of questionnaires with the secondary phase learners.  My empirical study is based on quantitative research data.  I intend to study the relationship between communication skills, level of communication apprehension and the relationship thereof on academic achievement of the learner in English Additional Secondary Language.  To determine the relationship between the communication skills, level of communication apprehension and academic achievement, the researcher will also require the English Second Additional Language marks of the learners at the end of the $2^{nd}$ term.

I pledge to maintain professional and research ethical codes.  This signifies that:
- The participation of all respondents in this research remains voluntary
- Anonymity and confidentiality of all participants' personal information is guaranteed
- No demands will be made on academic teaching programmes
- The research findings will be made available to your school, should you request it.

I plan to conduct this research between May and June 2011.  I, as well as Prof Seugnet Blignaut (018 299 4566) or my supervisor, Dr Illasha Kok (018 299 2143) will be available to answer any questions you may have.

Could you please provide me with your written consent by filling-in the sections on the next page.  Please return the consent form to me, or to the principal.

Your support of my research is highly appreciated!

Yours sincerely


_____
**Ms ZM Mentoor**
Student number:       120215711
Mobile:                    0835610826
zmentoor72@gmail.com

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT

**Permission for Research Project:**

**An analysis of the relationship between communication skills, communication apprehension and academic achievement of secondary phase learners**

**LETTER OF PERMISSION:  PRINCIPAL / SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM / CHAIR OF THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY**

I, _____  (name and surname)

Principal of School / Chairman of Governing Body / School Management Team

(please circle appropriate)

of [name] School hereby give permission that the research may be carried out at the school, and that I / we voluntarily participate in the study.  I understand that at any time, the participants may withdraw from the research and that the participants' personal information will be treated as confidential.

_____
Name and signature

_____

Date

19 van der Vyferlaan
Ladismith
6655
05 April 2011

**Parent / Guardian of learner at:**
[Name] Secondary/Intermediate School
Address


Dear Madam / Sir

## Permission to conduct research

I, ZM Mentoor, am a MEd student enrolled at the School for Continuing Teacher Education, North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus.  I intend to collect data for my research study relating to Learning and Teaching.  The title of my proposed dissertation is: *An analysis of the relationship between communication skills, communication apprehension and academic achievement of secondary phase learners .*

I hereby request your permission to conduct research by way of questionnaires with your child, or the child in your care on his/her communication skills, level of communication apprehension and the relationship thereof on academic achievement of the learner.  The questionnaire will last about 30 minutes and will not interrupt his/her academic program at the school.  To determine the relationship between the communication skills, level of communication apprehension and academic achievement the researcher the English Second Additional Language marks of the learners at the end of the 2nd term will be required from the school.

I pledge to maintain professional and research ethical codes.  This signifies that:
- The participation of all learners in this research remains voluntary
- Anonymity and confidentiality of all learners' personal information is guaranteed
- No demands will be made on academic teaching programmes
- The research findings will be made available to the School.

I plan to conduct this research from May to June 2011.  I, as well as Prof Seugnet Blignaut (018 299 4566) or my supervisor, Dr Illasha Kok (018 299 2143) will be available to answer any questions you may have.

Could you please provide me with your written consent by filling-in the sections on the next page.  Please return the consent form to me or the principal.

Your support of my research is highly appreciated!

Yours sincerely


_____
Ms ZM Mentoor
21215711
Mobile number: 0835610826
Zmentoor72@gmail.com

**Permission for Research Project:**

**An analysis of the relationship between communication skills, communication apprehension and academic achievement of secondary phase learners**

**LETTER OF PERMISSION:  PARENTS / GUARDIAN (LEARNERS)**

I, _____ (name and surname)

parent / guardian of (please circle appropriate) of

_____ (learners' name and surname)

hereby give permission that an interview may be conducted with abovementioned learner at the school.  I understand that the participation is voluntarily participation; that at any time, the learner may withdraw from the research; and that the learner's personal information will be treated as confidential.

_____

Name and signature

_____

Date